



Opinion

Our Amir's decisions aim to serve the public, not any tribe, sect, or family

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah
Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

WITHOUT a doubt, His Highness Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad's bold, courageous, and transformative decisions have effectively halted political chatter in the country, irrespective of whether they were stemming from partisan or sectarian agendas, narrow interests, or the deep state, which has been seeking to exert control over the state's functions for decades.

Prior to these significant actions, it was implied from the situation that institutions were under the influence of several detrimental factors, including appointments driven by a corrupt system based on graft and nepotism. This gave Kuwait the impression of being a directionless state, with its institutions plagued by corruption.

Many citizens expressed their disapproval of this issue. Newspapers, media outlets, and social media took the opportunity to highlight it, even identifying those involved in corruption. However, this outcry was met with deafening silence and resistance from those benefiting from the corruption. This is why we see people being parachuted into positions with neither oversight nor accountability.

The current political leadership was aware of

this issue and believed that reform must begin with the selection of a qualified individual who could work without being affiliated with any political parties or movements.

In order to improve the process of placing the right individuals in the right positions to serve the public interest instead of cronies, sects, tribes, or families, the leadership instructed the Council of Ministers to establish clear criteria for nominating officials.

Going forward, no official will be appointed without a thorough review of their criminal history, as well as reports from the State Security Service and the Criminal Investigation Department.

This initiative marks a decisive end to nearly 50 years of self-interest, corruption, looting, and other practices that have weakened Kuwait due to inefficiency, even in its domestic and international relations as well as its foreign investments.

In management science, this is referred to as "the determination to commit corruption by appointing those lacking the ability to effectively manage an institution."

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Al-Jarallah

HRW presses Kuwait to end sponsorship system

'Kafala leaves workers vulnerable to abuse'

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: The Human Rights Watch has accused Kuwait of continuing discriminatory practices against women and migrant workers, citing male guardianship over women and the abusive sponsorship system for workers, which often leads to serious violations such as wage 'theft', reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a memorandum submitted to the Universal Periodic Review of Kuwait during the 49th session of the United Nations, the organization acknowledged Kuwait's progress, including the introduction of a law protecting against domestic violence.

However, it stated that these reforms are insufficient, particularly since Kuwait has not taken steps to protect the rights of the Bedoun (stateless) people.

The organization criticized the sponsorship system (kafala), which ties the legal status of their workers to their employers, making it difficult for workers to seek redress and leaving them vulnerable to abuses,

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Ministry of Defense photo

First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior receives the US Ambassador to Kuwait.

Sheikh Fahad discusses cooperation with US ambassador

First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah met with US Ambassador to Kuwait Karen Sasahara on Monday, where they discussed various topics of mutual interest, along with the latest regional and international developments. (KUNA)

According to a press statement from the Ministry of Defense, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef welcomed Ambassador Sasahara at Bayan Palace on Monday, where they discussed various topics of mutual interest, along with the latest regional and international developments. (KUNA)

NewsWatch

TEHRAN: Iran's Foreign Ministry stated on Monday that the country will utilize all its capacities to hold Israel accountable for the "crime" of assassinating a senior Iranian commander in Lebanese capital Beirut late last month.

In a statement, the ministry expressed condolences over the death of Abbas Nilforoushan, who was killed on September 27 alongside Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah during a meeting when Israel launched a large-scale targeted strike on the group's headquarters in Dahieh, a southern suburb of Beirut. (Xinhua)

BAGHDAD: The Islamic Resistance in Iraq, a Shiite militia group, on Monday claimed responsibility for carrying out two drone strikes on Israeli sites in the Jordan Valley, which forms Jordan's western border with Israel and the West Bank.

The group said in separate statements that the strikes were carried out "in solidarity with our people in Palestine and Lebanon," pledging to continue targeting "the enemy's strongholds at an escalating pace." (Xinhua)

KABUL: Afghan counter-narcotics police have demolished three drug processing labs and arrested 38 suspects for involvement in the drug business in six of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, the Ministry of Interior Affairs said on Monday.

The police conducted operations on the outskirts of Firoz Koah city, the provincial capital and in Dawlat Yar district of the western Ghor province, discovering and destroying three drug labs, the ministry said in a statement. (Xinhua)

NEW DELHI: The local government of the Indian capital territory Monday imposed a complete ban on the manufacturing, storage, sale and use of firecrackers in the national capital until Jan. 1, 2025.

The efforts to combat air pollution were announced by Delhi's department of environment through an official order. "There will be a complete ban on all kinds of firecrackers on manufacturing, storage, selling (including delivery through online marketing platforms) and bursting of all kinds of firecrackers up to 01.01.2025 in the territory of National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi," said the order. (Xinhua)

Kuwait's robust safety net helps curb inflation to 3.6%

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14, (KUNA): Despite the significant rise in inflation rates all over the world and reaching new records that exhausted peoples and economies, Kuwait was able to slow down inflation locally due to its robust social security safety network and government support.

According to the annual plan follow-up report (2023/2024) issued by the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development recently, the domestic inflation growth rate for the year 2023 slowed to about 3.6 percent in accordance with the decrease in global inflation rates.

The report said that the Central Bank of Kuwait has taken many monetary policies since 2019, as the interest rate was recorded at 2.94 percent, then it was decreased in 2020 and 2021 to 1.79 and 1.5 percent respectively, then it rose again in 2022 and 2023 to about 2.35 percent and 4.13 percent.

It noted that the Central Bank of Kuwait took these decisions and measures to change local interest rates based on an analysis of the latest available economic, monetary and banking information and data, including general economic rates,

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Jobs, shares await Kuwaitis in new fixed telecom project

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14, (KUNA): Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Communications, Eng. Mishal Al-Zaid, said the Fixed Telecommunications Network Project will provide new job opportunities for citizens wishing to work in the field of the digital economy with a plan to develop their skills.

In June, the Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects announced the list

of companies and alliances of companies qualified to participate in this project, Al-Zaid added during an interview with KUNA on Monday.

He noted that the project aims to develop the fixed communications network and establish a partnership between the public and private sectors to include the design, financing, construction, operation and maintenance

of the fixed communications network in Kuwait.

The project company will operate the current fixed communications network of the Ministry of Communications and will work to improve it and spread it in areas that have not yet been covered, he added.

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Dietary supplements 'friend, foe' based on usage & medical plan

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14, (KUNA): "Get this dietary supplement and it will increase your energy, and cognitive abilities, and probably make you 'fly'!" One might have encountered such claims while browsing the internet, using apps, or casually flipping television channels, but is it true or are such claims bogus?

Welcome to the world of dietary supplements where it is hard to discern "friend from foe", however, medicine and science might provide a clearer picture based on evidence and data.

The use of dietary supplements is on the rise worldwide and that is not an understatement, Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad -- Health Ministry spokesman -- told KUNA in an interview, citing the World Metrics Organization, the global spending on such products would at USD 306.8 billion by 2026. It was at USD 140 billion in 2020, an increase of 118.67 percent.

On why the demand is going up, Dr. Al-Sanad hypothesized that the need to increase immunity, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, was one of the main drives for people to purchase dietary supplements.

Some have a sincere intention to better their lives, avoiding all unhealthy habits and focusing on physical well-being through exercise and proper nutrition, he added.

According to the Washington D.C.-based Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN) in a 2019 survey, 77 percent of adults in the US consume dietary supplements on a daily basis; Dr. Al-Sanad hammered the point further, saying that such a high number put the American market at the top supplements consumers.

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Day by Day

THERE are significant questions surrounding the delays in major development projects in Kuwait, such as the Kuwait International Airport, the Shaddadiya University, and sports stadiums.

What factors are contributing to the escalating costs of these projects? For instance, the construction of Sabah Al-Salem University City began 30 years ago but remains unfinished. Similarly, although it took 10 years to develop the Kuwait International Airport, an additional five years are now projected for its completion.

It is essential to acknowledge the pervasive issue of corruption across various sectors and institutions. As time passes, the truth will become clearer.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

Airstrike in northern Lebanon kills at least 18 people

Kuwait slams Israeli land seizure in Jerusalem

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14, (Agencies): The State of Kuwait condemned Monday the Israeli occupation's confiscation of lands belonging to UNRWA in occupied east Jerusalem, which would be turned into a new illegal settlement.

In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the State of Kuwait rejects all of the occupying entity attempts that seek to change the legal and historical status quo in Jerusalem.

The ministry also stressed the importance of standing up to the ongoing Israeli aggression against the brotherly Palestinian people, which affects the lives of innocent people and the important humanitarian role of UNRWA.

Meanwhile, an Israeli airstrike hit an apartment building in northern Lebanon on Monday, killing at least 18 people, according to the Lebanese Red Cross.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military and it was not clear what the target was. The strike hit a small apartment building in the village of Aito, far from the Hezbollah



Palestinians look at the damage after an Israeli strike hit a tent area in the courtyard of Al Aqsa Martyrs hospital in Deir al Balah, Gaza Strip, Monday, Oct. 14, 2024. (AP)

militant group's main strongholds in the south and east of the country.

The strike came a day after a Hezbollah drone attack on an army base in northern Israel killed four soldiers - all of them 19 years old - and severely

wounded seven others in the deadliest strike by the militant group since Israel launched its ground invasion of Lebanon nearly two weeks ago.

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Kuwait to join historic GCC-EU summit

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14, (KUNA): The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and the European Union member states will hold in Brussels, on Wednesday, the first summit at the level of heads of states and governments since the launch of official relations between the two sides in 1989.

In remarks to KUNA Monday, Ku-

wait Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya said that the representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, will head the State of Kuwait's delegation during this summit.

Minister Al-Yahya stressed that this summit represents an important

historical milestone in the path of the strategic partnership between the GCC countries and the European Union and reflects the commitment of both sides to strengthening relations in light of the increasing regional and international challenges.

The ministry stressed that Kuwait

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Spain, Kuwait ties built on foundations of shared values and cultural affinities

8
Boursa general index dips slightly by 0.01%



9
NBK signs cooperation agreement with AASU



12
After years of wait, Foreigner enters Rock Hall

Prayer Timings

Fajr 04:29 Asr 14:52
Sunrise .. 05:48 Maghrib .. 17:19
Zohr 11:34 Isha 18:36

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Hot and relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate southeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-30 km/h.

By Night: Rather hot to mild and humid with light to moderate

Weather

southeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-26 km/h with a chance for fog forming over some areas.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	37	23
Kuwait Airport	37	22

Abdaly	39	23
Bubyan	35	21
Jahra	39	26
Failaka Island	35	22
Salmiyah	34	28
Ahmadi	34	20
Jal Aliyah	38	24
Nuwaisib	38	23

Road repairs to begin by mid-Nov; MPW gets nod

Contracts signed with 18 companies

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: The State Audit Bureau (SAB) has approved the Ministry of Public Works' request to sign contracts with 18 companies that won road repair tenders, affirming the approval is valid for a maximum of 90 days.

Sources said the ministry is expected to sign the contracts before the end of this month, and that road maintenance works will begin in mid-November at the latest.

Sources disclosed SAB affirmed in its correspondence with the ministry that it does not object to the signing of such contracts under certain conditions, the most significant of which are as follows:

■ Accounting should be done according to the actual quantities executed for each work order.

■ Ensure the availability of bitumen quantities required for paving works throughout the contract period to cover the needs of all road maintenance contracts.

■ Public treasury should not be overburdened with time or money related claims as a result of

the bitumen shortage -- applies to both internal and external sources,

■ Measures must be taken to ensure that traffic flow is not obstructed during the implementation of road maintenance contracts.

■ Supervise all road maintenance contract works (18 contracts) in accordance with the terms and specifications while guaranteeing public health and safety.

■ Commitment to respond to the bureau regarding the requirement to ensure that contractors meet the conditions stated in the documents before signing the contracts and that the required certificates are approved and valid.

■ Prepare the contract schedule (master schedule) in coordination with the ministry, guaranteeing the most damaged sites and priorities after the contractor completed all required testing.

■ Confirm that all required tests are completed in order to prepare the general work program.

■ Ensure the inclusion of all works to guarantee the safety of the road and its sustainability when preparing the work order program.

■ None of the works should be repeated or overlapped with the scope of any work stipulated in current or future contracts.

■ Do not carry out any maintenance work for sites that are still subject to the warranty period.

■ Refrain from using additional laborers, ma-

chines and equipment unless it is extremely necessary.

Charities show assets: Based on direct instructions from the Ministry of Social Affairs, particularly the Charity Societies and Endowments Department, the majority of the country's registered charity societies, which is over 80 in total, especially the largest and oldest, have begun publishing their annual budgets and final accounts on their websites. This initiative aims to enhance transparency and implement institutional governance in charity and humanitarian work, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting sources from the Ministry of Social Affairs.

They indicated that this important step is in line with the recent circular issued to civil and charity public benefit societies, mandating that they obtain prior approval from the ministry before approving any internal disbursement permits. This includes approvals related to salaries, wages, monthly bonuses, granting aid, and implementing internal projects, as well as any other financial matters related to the work of the societies.

The sources affirmed that this new mechanism ensures monitoring of every penny spent by the societies and following up the purpose of their expenditures.

They revealed that local banks will not accept any disbursement requests that lack prior approval of the ministry.



KUNA photo

Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi at the presentation ceremony.

Digital Platform 51 attracts 10 million viewers in five months

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14, (KUNA): Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi attended a presentation on the updates of the digital Platform 51 and the successes it made in the first stage of its strategy.

The presentation was given on Sunday by FASTeleco in the presence of CEO of Ooredoo Abdulaziz Al-Babtain and Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information and Culture Nasser Al-Mheisen as well as a number of leaders of the Ministry.

FASTeleco, an internet service provider founded in 2001, is an affiliate of Ooredoo, according to a statement from the Ministry.

The entertainment platform grew in popularity with the number of viewers amount-

ing to 10 million in the last five months and the registrations growing rapidly.

The first stage of the Ooredoo Kuwait's strategy for digital innovation saw the platform being easily accessible and operating efficiently on all smartphones, smart TVs and tablets, the statement noted.

The platform uses advanced audio and visual technologies, including superior picture resolution and high quality sound, to deliver high-quality entertainment solutions, which made it a trailblazer in digital media.

The presentation also dealt with the second stage and timeline of the strategy aiming to bring about a quantum leap in Kuwaiti media and promote innovation, the statement added.

'42,217 services for citizens in Sept'

PAHW plans to build 3 life-long air quality monitoring stations

By Mohammad Al-Musleh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) has announced a new tender for the supply and installation of three permanent air quality monitoring stations in Jaber Al-Ahmad City, West Abdullah Al-Mubarak Suburb, and Qairawan.

According to informed sources, PAHW has stipulated that the bidding companies must submit one or two similar projects, each valued at no less than KD 250,000. The tender is set to close early next month.

Meanwhile, Deputy Director General of the Public Relations and Development Sector and official spokesperson for PAHW Omar Al-Ruwaih revealed that PAHW provided 42,217 services to citizens in September. This included several services accessible via the Sahel application and PAHW's website.

In a statement issued yesterday, Al-Ruwaih said the total number of allocation requests for the South Saad Al-Abdullah project reached 4,512 for owners of registered requests up to June 2007.

Regarding the implementation status of ongoing housing projects, he indicated that the actual completion rate for the South Sabah Al-Ahmad project stands at 30.92 percent, and the completion rate for the main roads contract for the South Saad Al-

Abdullah City project is at 7.43 percent.

In terms of the East Sabah Al-Ahmad project, which includes the construction of 1,184 houses, Al-Ruwaih said the actual completion rate for the first contract reached 96.97 percent, while the second contract stands at 89.02 percent as of the end of last month.

Meanwhile, Al-Ruwaih revealed that a total of 32,157 certificates for building permits have been issued to citizens as of the end of last month. This includes 27,520 certificates for Mutlaa plots, followed by 3,238 for South Abdullah Al-Mubarak and 1,399 for Khaitan plots.

He indicated that PAHW is actively working to complete 122 government buildings in six residential areas. This includes 68 buildings in Mutlaa City, 31 in South Abdullah Al-Mubarak, 7 in East Sabah Al-Ahmad, and one in the South Khaitan Project.

Concerning the contracts signed last month, Al-Ruwaih explained that PAHW has finalized the signing of three construction contracts. The first is an infrastructure contract for four suburbs in South Sabah Al-Ahmad City, which will serve 6,568 residential plots. The second contract is related to the construction of ten main transformer stations serving these suburbs, and the third is for establishing a youth center in Sector E of Sabah Al-Ahmad City.

In addition, he revealed that PAHW has issued four construction tenders. The first is for the implementation of three air quality monitoring stations in Jaber Al-Ahmad City, West Abdullah Al-Mubarak, and Qairawan. The other three tenders are related to infrastructure development within the South Saad Al-Abdullah City project.



Al-Ruwaih

Student, teacher links vital to boost education process

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education Mansour Al-Daihani has approved the plan to organize school seminars and lectures during the 2024/2025 academic year in order to develop the educational process and enhance communication between teachers and students by addressing various educational, scientific and religious issues.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the circular addressed to the directors of educational districts and private schools, in which Al-Daihani emphasized the importance of holding these lectures and seminars.

He explained this is part of the ministry's ongoing efforts to improve the educational environment, stating that strong coordination between the school administrations and Educational Activities Department is necessary to achieve the goals of these seminars and lectures.

He said the plan includes the exchange of experiences, as seminars contribute to developing the skills of employees in the educational field -- academic or administrative; and providing content that enriches students' knowledge of scientific, educational and religious topics which promote educational and national values.

He added the number and timing of seminars and lectures will be determined in line with the school calendar without affecting classes. He said the schools must submit periodic reports on the seminars and lectures for the evaluation and improvement of performance.

He urged the educational administrations to adhere to the conditions stated in the circular like the need to coordinate with the Educational Activities Department to choose appropriate topics and specialists to conduct the lectures.

He went on to say that the ministry will closely follow up these activities to guarantee the achievement of educational goals.

He added the ministry will release a schedule to organize these events throughout the school year, with specific times to ensure they do not affect the school day.

He affirmed each event will be coordinated with the concerned educational administrations to ensure the provision of content that meets the needs of all educational stages.

He also pointed out the importance of cooperation between all concerned parties to ensure the success of this initiative, which aims to develop education and raise awareness among students and teachers. He stressed that this approach is in line with the ministry's strategy to improve the quality of education and develop an integrated educational environment.

Biometrics mandatory for 'religious education' staff

By Abdulrahman Al-Shimmari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: The Ministry of Education has begun implementing the fingerprint attendance system for employees in the Religious Education Department.

The Ministry requested the department to provide lists of assigned workers to be sent to the Information Systems Center in preparation for enrolling them in the fingerprint system. This confirms the report published by Al-Seyassah, on October 10, under the title 'Education tightens its grip on evening shifts using fingerprints.'

The Undersecretary of the Financial Sector at the Ministry, Matrouk Al-Mutairi, indicated in a letter obtained that bonuses for workers in adult education and training centers, as well as those in the Religious Education Department, will not be paid unless their attendance is registered through the fingerprint system. This is in accordance with instructions from the financial sector.

Al-Mutairi explained that this procedure responds to comments from the Financial Controllers regarding the importance of recording attendance and departure via fingerprints as proof of work commencement.

The Information Systems Center will add the fingerprint data of assigned workers based on the submitted lists to ensure that bonuses are paid fairly and systematically.

This decision is part of an effort to regulate the attendance and departure of religious education employees, prevent administrative or financial issues, and ensure proper management across various educational centers.

Kuwait, Egypt discuss ties boost

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14, (KUNA): Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs

Sharida Al-Maousherji held talks on Sunday with Egyptian Ambassador Osama Shaltout, focusing on bilateral relations across numerous fields.



Al-Maousherji

The talks delved into Kuwait's "exceptional" ties with Cairo and efforts to propel bilateral cooperation to greater levels, according to a statement by the minister's office.

Cable sent: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent recently a cable to President of Ethiopia Teye Atske, expressing his sincere congratulations on being elected as president and taking the constitutional oath.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished president Atske good health and wellbeing.



KUNA photo

Chairman of the General Authority for Combating Corruption (Nazaha) Abdulaziz Al-Ibrahim airs his views at the meeting.

Meetings to boost GCC cooperation in anti-corruption war, says Nazaha

DOHA, Oct 14, (KUNA): The Chairman of the General Authority for Combating Corruption (Nazaha) Abdulaziz Al-Ibrahim underlined Sunday, the importance of participating in the 10th ministerial committee meeting of the Anti-Corruption Agencies of the Gulf Cooperation Council in the Qatari capital, Doha.

In a statement, Al-Ibrahim told KUNA that the meetings covered various topics, which would in turn support and strengthen the bonds of cooperation, enhancing integrity, and combating corruption, which are, in general, procedures and measures "through which we seek to develop and modernize our capabilities, policies, systems and national legislation in line with regional and international developments."

Al-Ibrahim congratulated the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on its presidency

of the Global Operational Network of Law Enforcement Authorities concerned with combating corruption, as well as the United Arab Emirates obtaining a seat on the network's steering committee last September in China, indicating that this matter is an achievement for the Gulf system.

He also pointed out that the winners from the GCC countries were honored in the first competition for research and studies in the field of integrity protection and combating corruption, expressing his wishes for their success and for the continuation of these activities that would support scientific research and enrich practitioners concerned in this field.

At the end of his statement, Al-Ibrahim welcomed the Gulf delegations to the upcoming meetings in the State of Kuwait next year. zx



Al-Seyassah photo

Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad meets the Kenyan ambassador, discusses ways to boost bilateral ties.

Ahmadi Gov meets Kenyan envoy

Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad received the Ambassador of the Republic of Kenya to Kuwait, Halima Mahmoud, in his office, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

During the meeting, both sides discussed the strong bilateral relations between Kuwait and Kenya, and explored ways to further enhance cooperation across various sectors.

The discussion also focused on opportunities to expand joint cooperation and exchange expertise, particularly in the realm of local administrative systems, with a special emphasis on collaboration at the governorate level.

Both parties expressed a mutual commitment to strengthening ties and fostering development.

'GCC train project underway'

Kuwait eyes rail link with Riyadh

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan has highlighted the importance of sustainable logistics services as a key focus of Kuwait's National Strategy for 2035, noting the country's commitment to the expansion of regional and global logistics, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Speaking at the ministerial meeting of the World Logistics Forum 2024, held under the theme "Redrawing the Map of Global Logistics Services" in Saudi Arabia, Dr. Al-Mashaan emphasized Kuwait's efforts in advancing sustainable railway projects.

Kuwait is actively working on railway linkage projects, including the GCC train project and a railway connecting Kuwait to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, she said.

Dr. Al-Mashaan also discussed local initiatives, such as expanding land shipping routes to northern Kuwait, specifically to Mubarak Port, underscoring the strategic integration of seaports with railways to improve logistics efficiency and support land transport.

She emphasized that the diversity of shipping methods requires efficient management, highlighting the growing role of artificial intelligence in optimizing transportation routes and enhancing logistics services.

The forum, held from October 12 to 14, was inaugurated by Saudi Arabia's Minister of Transport and Logistics, Eng. Saleh Al-Jasser and featured participation from over 130 speakers, 80 exhibitors, and representatives from 30 countries.

LOCAL

2 expatriates injured in fall

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: An expatriate sustained serious injuries when he fell from an under construction house in Abu Halifa, reports Al-Anba daily.

The expatriate is now confined at the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) in Adan Hospital and investigations are ongoing to establish the circumstances that led to the incident.

On the other hand, another expatriate was rushed to Amiri Hospital after falling from an under construction building in the Capital Governorate.

Emergency medical technicians administered first aid on the expatriate who got injuries in various parts of his body.

Investigations are underway to determine the causes of the fall.

Wanted man held: Jahra Security Directorate support patrols referred a person with a criminal record to the Sentences Enforcement General Department at the Interior Ministry after arresting him at a security checkpoint along Kabad Expressway, reports Al-Anba daily.



KUNA chief with Maj-Gen Abusaleeb and his delegation.

KUNA photo

KUNA, Mol aim to deepen media cooperation

Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Dr. Fatma Al-Salem and a delegation from the Ministry of Interior held talks on Monday aiming to bolster media cooperation between the two state bodies.

The talks examined efforts to push forward bilateral cooperation, in addition to matters of mutual concern, with KUNA's chief underlining that a greater rapport between the two sides would lead to the more efficient delivery of state news to the public.

She went on to commend the efforts of the ministry's media office in putting together national campaigns to generate awareness about a slew of pressing matters, chief among them the need to cooperate with security personnel.

Leading the ministry's delegation amid the gathering, Major General Nasser Abusaleeb praised the significant role of the state-run Kuwait news agency, saying greater bilateral cooperation would be instrumental in pushing forward the ministry's efforts to communicate with the public. (KUNA)

Court sentences Saudi national to 7 years in jail for citizenship fraud

Ex-MP's imprisonment suspended, ordered to pay KD 3K

By Jaber Al Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: The Court of Cassation, presided over by Judge Sultan Bourselli, yesterday sentenced a Saudi national to seven-year imprisonment for forging Kuwaiti citizenship in 1993 and using fraudulent documents until 2020 to unlawfully receive KD 253,000 in the form of salaries and KD 16,000 as bank loans. The court also sentenced in absentia his father to seven-year imprisonment.

It is worth highlighting that the Court of First Instance court had previously sentenced the accused in absentia and issued a similar ruling against his father for the same duration.

Imprisonment suspended: The Court of Appeals, rejecting the prosecution's appeal, has ruled to suspend the enforcement of the ruling to imprison former MP Abdullah Fahad Al-Enezi for insulting the judiciary. He was ordered to pay a bail of KD 3,000.

During the court session, Lawyer Abdullah Al-Kandari, who was representing Al-Enezi urged for the cancellation of the initial ruling and rejecting the Public Prosecution's appeal.

Previously, the Criminal Court had sentenced former MP Abdullah Fahad to six-month imprisonment with hard labor for insulting the judiciary during a televised press interview, in addition to imposing a fine of KD 500.

Order to pay KD 280K to buyer: The Commercial Court has ordered a real estate company to pay KD 280,000, which is the value of a chalet in the "Pearl of Khairan", to a Kuwaiti citizen. It also ordered the cancellation of the sale contract.

According to the case file, Lawyer Ali Al-Ali, who was representing the plaintiff, explained that the first defendant sold the chalet to his client, who paid the full price of KD 280,000. However, his client was surprised to find that ownership had not been transferred due to violations associated with the chalet, which resulted in financial loss and moral damage as she could not utilize or invest in the property. The second and third defendants are partners in the first defendant company.

Prior to ruling on the case, the court referred the matter to the Experts Department at the Ministry of Justice. The department appointed a specialized expert to investigate. The expert submitted a report detailing new violations in the property that contravened the approved plan from Kuwait Municipality, suggesting that these violations were the reason for reversing the ownership transfer to the second defendant.

The report concluded that the second defendant was responsible for the violations, which hindered the transfer of ownership.

Case against former MP adjourned: The Criminal Court has adjourned to December 15 the case filed against former MP Mohammed Al-Mutair for allegedly offending the status of the Amir and insulting the judiciary. The court has also lifted the travel ban imposed on him. This decision followed a hearing during which he addressed the charges against him.

Airport employees assaulted: A citizen, in his 30s, was referred to Jleeb Police Station for insulting airport employees when he returned from another country, reports Al-Anba daily.

A security source revealed the airport employees reported that a traveler assaulted them and uttered expletives when they had a dispute with him. Interior Ministry officers controlled him and then referred him to the police station.

A case was registered against him, as he exhibited unusual behavior.

Kuwait partakes in UNTOC confab

VIENNA, Oct 14, (KUNA): The 12th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) kicked off Monday with a Kuwaiti participation.

The five-day conference is expected to discuss series of draft resolutions, including crimes that affect the environment, ways to combat the trafficking of firearms, organized fraud, and the sharing of electronic resources.

The draft resolutions would also address the issue of implementing international cooperation provision, as well as reviewing the implementation of the convention and protocols.

More than 63 side-events would take place in UNTOC, covering various aspect of addressing and countering organized crimes, United Nations stated said in a statement.

The Kuwaiti delegation to the gathering is headed by Kuwait's Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Representative to International Organizations, Talal Al-Fassam.



Lieutenant General Al-Rifai during the inspection of the registration procedures.

'Committed to uphold principles of justice'

Lieutenant General Hashem Al-Rifai, the Undersecretary of the National Guard, conducted an inspection of the registration procedures for applicants seeking to enroll in the diploma holders course for non-commissioned officers, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He emphasized the leadership's commitment to upholding principles of

justice, transparency, and equal opportunities for all applicants.

During the inspection tour, Al-Rifai highlighted the importance of ensuring that everyone is given a fair chance and that the registration process is facilitated in accordance with the established rules and admission criteria.



Accompanied by the Deputy Director for Project Affairs at Kuwait Municipality Engineer Maisa Boushahri, Commander of the Kuwait Fire Force Major General Talal Muhammad Al-Roumi visited Souk Mubarakia. According to a press statement issued by the Kuwait Fire Force, the visit was part of the cooperation between the Kuwait Fire Force and Kuwait Municipality with the aim of developing the market while preserving its historical character. The visit was held in the presence of several senior officials from both the Kuwait Fire Force and Kuwait Municipality.



Kuwait Municipality officials conduct demolition of one of the encroachments.

Municipality removes 35 encroachments

The Kuwait Municipality announced the launch of several field tours by teams from the Violations Removal Department in the six governorates to curb negative phenomena of encroachments on state property and take all regulatory measures against violators.

The municipality said in a press

statement on Monday that today's field campaign resulted in the removal of 35 encroachments on state property for canopies adjacent to electricity transformers that hinder the work of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy. (KUNA)

diwaniya



A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Ensuring adequate support is vital for all with mental health disorders'

"ON October 10, the world celebrated World Mental Health Day, with this year's theme being 'It's time to prioritize mental health in the workplace,'" columnist **Dr. Hind Al-Shoumer** wrote for Al-Anba daily.

"Mental health is defined as a state of psychological well-being that enables individuals to cope with life's stresses, realize their potential, learn and work effectively, and contribute to their local communities."

"It is an integral part of overall health and well-being, supporting our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships, and shape the world we live in."

"Mental health issues can significantly disrupt daily life and hinder individuals from engaging in their favorite activities. The negative impacts of feelings such as loneliness, anxiety, and stress on mental health cannot be underestimated."

"Several factors influence mental health, including poverty, low social status, isolation, discrimination, racism, unsafe working conditions, living in polluted or hostile environments, discouraging work settings, and unsupportive family environments."

"Moreover, the inability to adapt to changes in the surrounding environment, coupled with an unsupportive or uncooperative supervisor who does not understand employees' circumstances, contributes to poor mental health and its consequences."

"It is essential to promote mental health by building strong relationships with supportive individuals who can offer help when needed."

"Additionally, individuals should ensure they get enough rest and allocate time for leisure activities, such as play, physical exercise, and developing resilience against stress."

"Common mental health disorders include anxiety disorders, depression, schizophrenia, disruptive behavior disorders, oppositional defiant disorders, neurodevelopmental disorders, and obsessive-compulsive disorder."

"Mental health plays a crucial role in a person's overall well-being, affecting their physical, emotional, psychological, and social health. It helps individuals manage life's challenges, recognize their strengths, and achieve success in both personal and professional lives, while also making positive contributions to society."

"Of every four individuals experiencing mental health disorders, three receive inadequate treatment or none at all, facing stigma and discrimination."

"It is important to affirm that mental health is not a privilege but a fundamental human right. It must be included in comprehensive health coverage to achieve the sustainable development that everyone aspires to."

Also:

"As I wrapped up my remarks at the second dialogue session of the Kuwait Sustainability Solutions Forum, I felt a mixture of satisfaction and curiosity," columnist **Dr Turki Al-Azmi** wrote for Al-Rai daily.

"I had delved into the concept of sustainability, addressing its current reality in education and health, and sharing my hopes for a brighter fu-

ture.

"Stepping outside, I was met by a group of eager university students, but one stood out. He was a PhD candidate at UCL University in London, a prestigious institution ranked ninth globally according to the QS 2025 index."

"Despite his impressive credentials, he shared that he had been overlooked for a teaching assistant position. With a hint of frustration, he posed a thought-provoking question: 'Why does no one talk about sustainability anymore?' The conversation seems to have shifted from achieving the United Nations' sustainable development goals to a broader concept of regeneration."

"His words struck a chord with me, reflecting a new global trend that I had sensed but hadn't fully articulated during the forum. While we still debated sustainability, the notion of renewal was emerging as a more expansive and dynamic approach. Unfortunately, time had constrained my ability to elaborate further on this during the session."

"To support this idea, I recalled a report from Navi Radjou published on the World Economic Forum website on June 6, 2024. He stated, 'Renewable businesses seek to enhance the health and vitality of people, places, and the planet in a synergistic way. Evidence is growing that these businesses can achieve significantly better financial performance and impact than their sustainability-focused counterparts.'

"This observation highlighted the radical shift needed in our concepts and practices surrounding the environment, education, health, and more. While sustainability focuses on meeting future generations' needs, renewal urges us to thrive actively in the present."

"The pandemic had catalyzed rapid changes around us, emphasizing the urgency of reformulating our vision to embrace renewal. It was time for officials and consultants to adopt this mindset. We shouldn't let institutions like the World Bank or the World Health Organization dictate our strategies."

"If we must adhere to certain guidelines, that's understandable, but we don't need to implement everything without questioning its applicability to our unique context."

"I stressed that what works in the West may not necessarily fit our societal norms and characteristics. It's crucial to seek insights from experienced and competent individuals attuned to the latest developments. Otherwise, we risk remaining trapped in a mental framework that values compliments over genuine progress."

"As I turned to the student and the group surrounding us, I emphasized that renewal is essential. Our society is predominantly young -- over 70 percent of us are under the age of 30. Yet, many remain skeptical about the concept of renewal."

"To foster this change, we must think outside the box. We need to tap into the potential of bright minds that feel marginalized, deprived of opportunities to contribute meaningfully to our nation and its citizens. With this collective effort, we can embrace a renewed vision and pave the way for a better future."

"God is our helper," I concluded, hoping to inspire the students to join in this important conversation and take action towards a regenerative future."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

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Accessibility code gets a green light

Joint task force formed

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: Kuwait Municipality Director General Saud Al-Dabous has approved the proposal of Municipal Council member Alia Al Farsi to form a joint committee to monitor the application of Kuwait Code for Accessibility and the regulations for individuals with disabilities.



Al Farsi

The newspaper obtained a copy of the Municipality's official statement about the proposal, affirming that the chairman of the committee tasked to study and review the building regulations has no objection to the formation of the proposed joint committee.

The Municipality also confirmed that it met with representatives of the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA), during which they reached an agreement to form the joint committee; provided its members include PADA representatives -- Head of the Planning Department Aisha Bu Hamad and Senior Legal Specialist Mohammad Al-Khazami.

The authority also suggested to invite a number of government agencies that play a major role in applying the Kuwait Code for Accessibility according to the general design of new cities and existing buildings as follows: Public Authority for Housing Welfare, ministries of Public Works, Education and Health, Public Authority for Sports and Public Authority for Youth, in addition to public benefit associations working in the field of people with disabilities.

The agreement stipulates the following tasks of the joint committee:

1. Lay down a work plan, including a timetable, for the renovation of buildings and facilities for public use.

2. Develop mechanisms to ensure the implementation of the Kuwait Code for Accessibility to new and old governmental and private buildings for public use.

3. Submit proposals to renovate existing buildings according to the priorities and begin renovating the buildings most used by the public.

4. Submit proposals that ensure the implementation of the Kuwait Code for Accessibility, remove obstacles, make the built environment accessible to all segments of society, and create an accessible environment that suits all people.

5. Coordinate with the concerned authorities to include the Kuwaiti General Design Code in future tender documents for building design and attach an accessibility assessment statement to be completed by the engineering office/consultant, which specifies the standards to be adhered to in the design phase.

6. Follow up the progress of the renovation plans with the concerned authorities, provide the necessary support to follow up the work and the concerned authorities' assessment of accessibility and availability in buildings, and ensure their commitment to the accessibility standards in buildings.

Meanwhile, according to an informed source, Kuwait Municipality is studying the possibility of increasing its service fees and is planning to form a team to review all the currently effective fees.

The source explained that Kuwait Municipality has included a set of measures in the updated work plan of the government, with the aim of increasing non-oil revenues and diversifying income sources. This initiative follows more than 20 years since the existing fees for municipal services were determined for the services it provides.

In addition, necessary amendments are being made to municipality Law No. 33/2016 to allow the municipality to directly launch its projects, in contrast to the current provisions of Law No. 116/2014.

Steadfast defense of international law commended

Spain, Kuwait ties built on foundations of shared values and cultural affinities

By Paulo Francisco X. Fernandes

Arab Times/Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: The Spanish Embassy in Kuwait Sunday celebrated the country's National Day at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel at the Avenues Mall.

The event was attended by distinguished members of the diplomatic corps and international organizations and media representatives. The guest of the evening was Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador HE Sheikh Jarah Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah.

Speaking on the occasion, the Spanish Ambassador to Kuwait HE Manuel Hernández Gamallo, his voice carrying the weight of centuries of history said, "Spain is one of the oldest nation-states in the world, a union of diverse lands with different languages and cultures that, over five centuries, have strengthened our shared national identity."

His face beaming with pride as he addressed the gathering, he added, "it is a great honor for me to speak on such an important occasion."

The diplomat's words struck a chord with the audience, especially as he spoke about Spain's deep ties to Spanish-speaking nations across the Atlantic. "On this day," he said, "we also commemorate our profound historical links with the Spanish American countries. These connections are a source of immense pride for us."

Foundation

He went on to say, Spain's ties go beyond just the Americas as he turned his focus to the Arab world. He added, "Spain shares a long, rich history with the Arab world. Our language, our culture, and even our heritage are deeply intertwined with Arab influences. This bond has always been the foundation of the excellent relations Spain enjoys with Arab countries, including Kuwait, no matter the political shifts or historical changes."

"Spain, situated at the crossroads of cultures -- between the Atlantic and Mediterranean, between the Old and New Worlds -- stands as a beacon of unity. This geographical position," he added, "isn't just a fact of our land; it is a symbol of our foreign policy. Against the dark predictions of civilizational clashes, Spain champions the idea of peaceful coexistence, the rule of international law, and the principles of the UN Charter."

The diplomat then addressed the global conflicts that weighed heavily on the minds of all those present. "In a world filled with dangerous dynamics -- from Ukraine to Gaza, Sudan, and beyond -- Spain," he said, "advocates for peace based on UN resolutions. We recognize Palestine as a state and remain committed to a two-state solution. There must be no double standards in the pursuit of justice."

Speaking of Spain and Kuwait, he said, "This year marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Spanish Embassy in Kuwait, a symbol of the deep and solid relations between our two nations, built on shared values and cultural affinities. Spain salutes Kuwait for its steadfast defense of international law and its outstanding contributions to humanitarian causes in the Middle East and beyond."

He spoke warmly of the visit by King Philip of Spain to Kuwait last December, where the king had personally extended condolences to Kuwait following the passing of the former Amir, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al Jaber Al-Sabah.

Solidified

The diplomat noted how this gesture had solidified the bond between their royal families. "The political consultations between our Vice-Ministers of Foreign Affairs, held just last July, further demonstrate the strength of our diplomatic ties."

As he highlighted the growing economic cooperation between the two countries, he said, "Over the years, Spain and Kuwait have signed agreements on economic cooperation, infrastructure, transportation, and tourism."

"Spanish companies are eager to contribute to Kuwait's progress, particularly in fields like energy, water management, health, and high-speed railways, all part of Kuwait's Vision 2035. We look forward to hosting a joint economic committee in Kuwait next year to further strengthen our collaboration," he disclosed.

Of the 450 Spaniards now living in Kuwait, he called them a well-integrated community active in various fields like education, business, health, and sports.

"Our people-to-people relations are flourishing. Last year, 150,000 Kuwaitis traveled to Spain, and they are leading the real estate investments from the Gulf in our country. We are thrilled that more flexible visa regulations to the Schengen area were approved, benefiting Kuwaiti citizens."

He announced plans to reestablish direct air connections between Kuwait and Madrid in 2025, which would complement the already existing route to Barcelona.

The evening was a celebration not only about Spain's rich history but of the enduring friendship between Spain and Kuwait -- a partnership destined to grow even stronger in the years to come.



Photos by Samer Shiqer

Photos during the Spanish Embassy in Kuwait celebration of Spain's National Day.

Fingerprint integration

MoE tackles attendance issues in private schools

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: The Ministry of Education in Kuwait, in coordination with the Civil Service Bureau, is working to resolve technical challenges regarding the integration of fingerprint attendance systems for principals and their assistants in private Arab schools affiliated with the ministry, reports Al-Jarida daily.

According to sources, the integration has revealed issues related to entering work schedules, leave requests, and relief hours for employees, particularly those employed by private entities but considered government employees. The primary issue arises from the unique status of these employees, who work in private educational institutions but are also affiliated with the Ministry of Education.

The ministry is collaborating with the Civil Service Bureau to make the necessary adjustments to address these discrepancies. It is expected that the problem will be resolved by early next week.

The recent bulletin from the ministry clarified regulations regarding relief hours, noting that employees are entitled to either reduced working hours or flexible working hours, but not both.

The employees working in seven-hour work environments are eligible for a two-hour reduction, while those working six-hour days receive a one-hour reduction. Employees in five-hour work environments are not eligible for any relief.

Additionally, as part of its efforts to ensure proper work monitoring and preserve public funds, the Ministry of Education has initiated the installation of fingerprint devices in adult education centers, literacy programs, and religious institutes.

These devices will monitor attendance and departure according to the official work schedules of these centers. Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Financial Affairs Matrouk Al-Mutairi emphasized the importance of linking attendance data to payroll, ensuring that payments are only made to those who have their attendance registered through the fingerprint system.



Al-Mutairi

News in Brief

MoH vacancies open: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) has agreed to lift the ban on filling up 1,118 vacant positions at the Ministry of Health; including 1,017 general posts, 58 special posts, 41 support posts and two technical support posts, reports Al-Anba daily.

The CSC's approval is on the condition that these positions are not part of those proposed to be cancelled in the draft budget of the ministry for the next fiscal year. The CSC said the abovementioned posts will be filled in accordance with the centralization of appointment policy after the legal period for the payment of indemnity to those who previously occupied these positions and whose services have ended without any unused leave days.

Investor applications open: Kuwait Municipality has announced the opening of the pre-qualification application for all investors who meet the qualification criteria and wish to qualify to submit bids for the development, design, implementation, investment, operation, management, and maintenance of the second phase of the Mubarakia Market project and its parking facilities, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The project was launched based on the Council of Ministers' directive for the municipality to proceed with development projects, in order to provide opportunities for a wide range of investors and to encourage private sector participation in these projects.

October

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Al-Seyassah photo

Ahmadi Governor with the Ambassador of Belgium.

Ahmadi Governor hosts Belgian envoy for talks on cooperation

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received in his office the Ambassador of Belgium to Kuwait His Excellency Christian Doms, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to a press statement, they engaged in friendly discussions about the strong bilateral relations and the ties connecting the political leadership and citizens of both countries. They also talked about ways to promote these ties, and focus on

opportunities for enhancing cooperation and the exchange of experiences in administrative systems at the regional and governorate levels.

The governor wished Ambassador Doms success in developing the relationship into new horizons. In turn, Ambassador Doms expressed his gratitude for the warm reception he received and appreciation for the care extended to the Belgian diplomatic delegation and community in Kuwait.

9 million square meters allocated

Council greenlights site for Desert Adventure Project in North Mutlaa

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: Today, the Municipal Council has approved the allocation of a site for the Desert Adventure Project in the North Mutlaa area, covering 9 million square meters.

During a meeting held last Wednesday, the Jahra Governorate Committee in the Municipal Council had reviewed and approved the request from the Projects Sector of the municipality to reduce the project site area from 13 million square meters to 9 million square meters.

This adjustment was made to ensure the site remains a safe distance from the borders of the Sabah Al-Ahmad Reserve and the regional road.

The committee also endorsed the Projects Sector's request to allocate the revised site for investment opportunities, allowing for private sector involvement following the completion of the necessary consulting study.

This allocation aligns with the ratios and usage plans included in the approved study for the structural plan of the third regional area. The final plan from the technical consulting study for the project will be submitted for approval.

The Desert Adventure Project will feature a global village, theaters, car racing tracks, hotels, an adventure city, camping areas, chalets, an exhibition area, sand dune skiing zones, a space dome, desert-themed resorts, oases, green spaces, and a children's play city.

plan would have dire consequences, which might include poison, negative side effects, and complications, especially for pregnant women with chronic disease.

HRW presses

Continued from Page 1

including wage theft and debts from illegal recruitment fees.

It also pointed out that migrant domestic workers remain excluded from Kuwait's labor law, and the protections provided under the 2015 Domestic Workers Law are weaker and poorly enforced compared to the general labor law.

Human Rights Watch recommended full implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including amending laws to allow Kuwaiti women to pass their nationality to their children and spouses.

Moreover, it called for a transparent process to address citizenship claims for the Bedoun or to establish a clear path to citizenship.

The organization also urged the abolition of the sponsorship system and the adoption of risk-based heat protection measures, such as the Wet Bulb Temperature Index, to create evidence-based work and rest schedules.

Lastly, it called for strengthening the domestic workers law to align with international standards and for Kuwait to ratify International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention No. 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers.

Kuwait's robust

Continued from Page 1

inflation levels and local liquidity indicators, as they are the most important factors that determine the need to move interest rates.

The report stated that the decision has been made after considering various elements affecting the consumer price index to identify and evaluate the factors that constitute pressure on prices, as well as taking into account the nature of the Kuwaiti economy that is open to the outside world.

Regarding demand rates for goods and services, the report said that 2019 witnessed an increase of 0.3 percent, while it recorded a shrinkage in 2020 by (-3.4) percent, after which demand have increased clearly at about 6.8 percent and continued to rise in 2022 to about 8.5 percent.

It added that in 2023, the demand rates growth had decreased to about 3.2 percent, while the level of supply of goods and services was clearly affected by geopolitical developments, which was clearly reflected in the rise in production costs due to the rise in energy prices.

Moreover, the report said that inflation was able to maintain acceptable levels during the fiscal years, in light of the relative stability of indicators of

Our Amir's

Continued from Page 1

Corruption tends to spread within administrations, with employees often dancing to the tune of their superiors.

An undesirable practice has long prevailed in Kuwait – suspects, embezzlers, or looters are often asked to resign from their positions, and they are rewarded for their betrayal of trust rather than facing imprisonment.

When accountability began to take root, we witnessed many shocking verdicts revealing the innovative methods of theft and exploitation of legal loopholes used to pass decisions favoring the corrupt. This resulted in delays in project implementation and huge financial waste.

In contrast, offenders or corrupt individuals in other countries are publicly exposed and identified, with their crimes and infractions brought to light. They are typically fined multiple times the amount they embezzled or stole, and are permanently barred from holding positions of authority.

No employee can evade an integrated system in nations that respect their citizens and uphold the law, and where there is no room for favoritism or self-interest.

Despite the commendable action taken by the political leadership today, the Council of Ministers still has a lot of work ahead to complete its reform journey. Transparency is essential, as ambiguity enables those operating in troubled waters to undermine the reform efforts.

We must acknowledge that there are many individuals who have been affected by these changes and are attempting to sabotage progress, and using offices, social media, and other platforms to incite dissent. The Council of Ministers needs to proactively address this issue.

Dietary supplements

Continued from Page 1

He noted that the consumers of dietary supplements in China and Japan were also amongst the top, revealing that supplements such as Vitamin D and C as well as Omega-3 were the most popular.

On the recent hype in dietary supplement consumption, Dr. Al-Sanad attributed it to a push from social media influencers, sports personalities, and people of fame, saying that "prevention is better than the cure," might be a motto that all would agree upon.

However, Dr. Al-Sanad implored people to take dietary supplements based on medical and nutritious expertise and not haphazardly to avoid any possible complications.

For proper use of supplements, one must include them in meals to boost efficacy and this includes vitamins D, C, and Alpha, he said.

He pointed out that taking supplements without an adequate medical

On-site inspections required for guarantee money release

Municipality tightens demolition permit protocols

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: Kuwait Municipality has confirmed that it will not release guarantee money for demolition permits until an on-site inspection is conducted to ensure the safety of surrounding facilities and state properties, following the issuance of a cleanliness certificate, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In response to a question submitted by the Municipal Council member Eng. Munira Al-Amir regarding

the safety and security procedures in place during building demolitions, Director General of Kuwait Municipality Eng. Saud Al-Dubbous explained that a committee has been formed to review the current terms and conditions for demolition. This committee will also study the latest methods in use and develop proposals for enhancing the effectiveness of monitoring demolition work.

He revealed that the licensing pro-

cedures are conducted through the safety program for safety and storage licenses.

Al-Dubbous revealed that the Municipal Council members can be granted access to this program to view all relevant data through the Information Systems Department.

He explained that demolition work is monitored, and warnings or violations are issued by municipal inspectors during their ongoing field

inspections if any infractions occur.

Electronic demolition permits are not issued without prior approval from a safety engineer. Clear penalties are established for any contractor who begins demolition without coordinating and notifying the Safety Department in advance.

Al-Dubbous affirmed that contracting companies must meet specific conditions before they can proceed with demolition work.

Kuwait Teachers Association organizes landmark 45th educational conference

Amir's support boosts education transformation, says Dr. Al-Jalal

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and acting Minister of Education Dr. Nader Al-Jalal has affirmed the political leadership's commitment in following up educational issues, as reflected in the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah of the 45th Teachers Association Conference.

Al-Jalal asserted: "I am honored

to represent His Highness the Amir in sponsoring the conference, which reflects the extent of our need to know how to start developing education."



Dr. Al-Jalal

In a statement to reporters after attending the conference as the representative of HH the Amir on Monday, Al-Jalal pointed out that "developing education requires time, in a large educational system of teachers, students and schools."

He indicated that any change in the programs of this system must be done in a proper manner to introduce educational developments correctly, includ-

ing modern technology.

He explained that education is one of the most important issues in the country, which requires the concerted efforts of everyone; considering the challenges. He expressed appreciation for the role of the Teachers Association in following up educational issues and organizing conferences to discuss such issues.

He cited the theme of the conference – "Problems, Challenges and Future Paths," as the embodiment of challenges in developing education under the current circumstances.

He hopes to benefit from the recommendations presented at the conference, the workshops held on its sidelines and the participating teachers to reach results that can be applied and reflected on education, students and the educational system in general.

He continued: "I am pleased to convey to you the greetings of His Highness the Amir and his wish for your success in this conference. Your gathering will be an important step towards achieving the lofty goals sought by the educational sector, and to move forward on the path of goodness and blessed renaissance, to complete the building and creation of promising generations, aware of their national, professional, social and personal responsibilities and duties towards this dear country."

He described the Amir's patronage of the conference, which is the first to receive such patronage, as an extension of the commitment of the political leadership to focus on education, as per his directives to enhance and support everything that contributes to the advancement of education and to achieve the desired goals.

He added it also comes from a standpoint of great care that His Highness gives in supporting the educational process; emphasizing the support of the high leadership for all efforts aimed at developing education, while appreciating the pivotal role of teachers in shaping the future of this country. "We believe that education is the main pillar of the country's development, and the cornerstone of the renaissance of nations. It is the axis on which building generations is based," he explained.

He confirmed that the theme of the conference accurately reflects the challenges that require innovative and realistic solutions. "We aspire to achieve this in terms of paths toward the future, which requires developing well-thought out plans that respond to the needs of the era, and enhance the capabilities of students and teachers. We rely on scientific research, innovation, modern technology and a clear vision based on a strong partnership between the government and private sectors, and between academic institutions and civil society, to ensure the provision of distinguished education, and an educational environment that embraces creativity, stimulates innovation, and keeps pace with global changes," he stated.

He confirmed that the theme of the conference accurately reflects the challenges that require innovative and realistic solutions. "We aspire to achieve this in terms of paths toward the future, which requires developing well-thought out plans that respond to the needs of the era, and enhance the capabilities of students and teachers. We rely on scientific research, innovation, modern technology and a clear vision based on a strong partnership between the government and private sectors, and between academic institutions and civil society, to ensure the provision of distinguished education, and an educational environment that embraces creativity, stimulates innovation, and keeps pace with global changes," he stated.

Kuwait to

Continued from Page 1

will work to enhance its role as an international partner in promoting sustainable development, noting that "the representative of His Highness the Amir, will deliver a speech in which he will emphasize the importance of concerted international efforts to enhance the security and stability of the region."

The Representative of His Highness the Amir will shed light on Kuwait's vision towards the horizon of expanding areas of cooperation between the Cooperation Council and the European Union.

His Highness will hold a number of bilateral meetings with the heads of the participating delegations to discuss a number of issues of common interest, the minister added.

Kuwait slams

Continued from Page 1

A total of 61 people were wounded in Sunday's attack. Hezbollah has fired thousands of rockets, missiles and drones into Israel over the past year but most have been intercepted or hit in open areas, disrupting daily life but causing few casualties.

Even as attention has shifted to Lebanon, Israel is still battling Hamas in the Gaza Strip more than a year after its Oct. 7 attack into southern Israel triggered the war there and set off escalations across the region. Hezbollah and Hamas are allies, and both are backed by Iran.

Jobs, shares

Continued from Page 1

Further, he stated that according to the Public-Private Partnership Projects Authority Law, 50 percent of the shares in the project company will be offered to Kuwaiti citizens after the project is fully operational, noting that the size of the project will be large.

Al-Zaid noted that the conclusion of the partnership contract will be between the ministry and the project company in accordance with the provisions of Law (2014/116) regarding the partnership between the public and private sectors and its executive regulations, provided that the duration of the partnership agreement between the two sectors will be 50 years.

The project aims to provide a network with record speeds and to spread a high-performance fiber optic network in all areas of Kuwait, in line with the lofty vision and to support the implementation of the digital transformation strategy in Kuwait, he added.



KUNA photo

Caring for the school library has become a must at all educational levels.

Efforts to enrich students' lives

MoE's Al-Enezi advocates Mama Anisa Library in primary schools

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: The Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Development and Activities at the Ministry of Education Maryam Al-Enezi urged educational zones to cooperate and facilitate the entry of the Mama Anisa for Children Library's team into primary schools.

She affirmed the importance of this project in promoting a culture of reading and instilling values of volunteering and charity work in children.

Al-Enezi explained that such initiatives enhance education and develop students' personal skills at the start of the school year. The goal is to motivate students to participate in cultural and educational activities and achieve positive interactions between students and the library.

It is worth explaining that the Gen-

eral Secretariat of Awqaf launched an initiative as part of the Mama Anisa for Children Library's activities for the 2024/2025 academic year, which involves the library team visiting primary schools in all governorates of Kuwait. These visits are part of the secretariat's efforts to promote a culture of reading, charity work, and volunteerism among children, as well as to encourage them to engage with libraries and cultural centers.

Through these activities, the library aims to enhance students' writing and creativity skills as well as encourage positive social habits that contribute to the development of a well-rounded personality among children.

It is worth highlighting that the "Mama Anisa Children Library" is an annual project designed to spread knowledge and instill values of charity and volunteerism, particularly among elementary students.

Cooperatives assess food supply

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: The Cabinet Services Committee will soon meet

with Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, acting Undersecretary of the Social Affairs Ministry Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi, acting Assistant Undersecretary for Cooperative Affairs Ahmad Al-Furaj and a representative of the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies to determine if the strategic stock of goods, food and consumer products in the warehouses of cooperatives is enough to cover the needs of the entire nation in case of any international or regional emergency that could negatively affect the delivery of such items to Kuwait, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources from the Social

Affairs Ministry.

Sources said the Cooperatives Sector and the union are coordinating their efforts to ensure the ample supply of products in the warehouses of cooperative societies. Sources confirmed that the current strategic stock of 12 basic commodities in the cooperatives, in addition to the food items in the ration centers affiliated with the Ministry of Commerce, are sufficient for about six months.

Sources also revealed that the union has launched an integrated automated monitoring system linking it to the cooperatives' warehouses; through which the available quantities of all types of goods, food and consumer items are monitored round the clock.



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INTERNATIONAL



Members of the Florida Air National Guard load supplies into the cars of residents displaced by Hurricane Milton on Oct 13 at the Hillsborough Community College campus in Brandon, Fla. (AP)

Florida neighbors band together to recover after hurricanes

When ankle-deep floodwaters from Hurricane Helene bubbled up through the floors of their home, Kat Robinson-Malone and her husband sent a late-night text message to their neighbors two doors down: "Hey, we're coming."

The couple waded through the flooded street to the elevated front porch of Chris and Kara Sundar, whose home was built on higher ground, and handed over their 8-year-old daughter and a gas-powered generator.

The Sundars' lime-green house in southern Tampa also became a refuge for Brooke and Adam Carstensen, whose house next door to Robinson-Malone also flooded.

The three families met years earlier when their children became playmates, and the adults' friendships deepened during the coronavirus pandemic in 2020.

So when Helene and Hurricane Milton struck Florida within two weeks of each other, the neighbors closed ranks as one big extended family, cooking meals together, taking turns watching children and cleaning out their damaged homes.

And as Milton threatened a direct strike on Tampa last week, the Malones, the Sundars and the Carstensen decided to evacuate together.

They drove more than 450 miles (725 kilometers) in a caravan to metro Atlanta - seven adults, six children, four dogs and teenage Max Carstensen's three pet rats.

"Everyone has, like, the chain saw or a tarp," Robinson-Malone said Sunday. "But really the most important thing for us was the community we built. And that made all the difference for the hurricane rescue and the recovery. And now, hopefully, the restoration." (AP)

Pennsylvania voters to decide key statewide races in fall election

HARRISBURG, Pa., Oct 14, (AP): One job going before voters across Pennsylvania this fall keeps a watch over government agencies. A second handles the state's money. And the third oversees hundreds of prosecutors.

Republican incumbents Treasurer Stacy Garrity and Auditor General Tim DeFoor are running to keep their seats, while the race to be the state's top prosecutor is open. The statewide offices pay about \$198,000 a year.

The race for attorney general pits Republican York County District Attorney Dave Sunday against former auditor general and state Rep. Eugene DePasquale, the Democratic Party nominee. State Rep. Malcolm Kenyatta, D-Philadelphia, is taking on DeFoor while Democrat Erin McClelland is hoping to unseat Garrity.

A look at Pennsylvania's major party candidates for attorney general, auditor general and treasurer:

Sunday, a Navy veteran, has emphasized his 15 years as a prosecutor in York County, a Republican majority area with about 460,000 residents south of Harrisburg, near Maryland.

DePasquale is a lawyer, former York City economic development director and three-term state representative. As auditor general he drew attention to a large backlog of untested rape kits, unanswered calls to Pennsylvania's ChildLine child abuse hotline and nursing home conditions.

DePasquale's time running the auditor general's office "has nothing to do with criminal law," Sunday said during a debate earlier this month.

DePasquale, who lives in Pittsburgh, said he would prioritize protect-



Pennsylvania State Rep Malcolm Kenyatta speaks during the Democratic National Convention on Aug 20, in Chicago. (AP)

ing voting and emphasized his support for abortion rights.

Sunday said he would "enforce and defend the abortion laws in Pennsylvania," arguing there is "no scenario that exists where I would ever prosecute a woman for having an abortion." Many of Sunday's Republican supporters favor an abortion ban, DePasquale said, and GOP state lawmakers tried to push through a constitutional amendment saying it does not guarantee any rights relating to abortion or public funding of abortions.

DePasquale said he has "serious concerns" about capital punishment, while Sunday said that in the "most

sad, tragic, terrible cases" he supports the death penalty.

Kathleen Kane became the first woman and first Democrat elected to serve as attorney general in 2012. Pennsylvania attorneys general had all been Republicans since the job became an elected post in 1980. Kane's term ended with her resignation after being charged with perjury and other offenses in 2016.

Gov. Josh Shapiro, a Democrat, succeeded her and won reelection in 2020, relinquishing the job after being elected governor nearly two years ago. Shapiro picked his top deputy at the attorney general's office, Michelle Henry, as his successor, but she said when she was confirmed that she would not run for reelection.

DeFoor, a former Dauphin County controller who won by about 3 percentage points in 2020, has focused on increasing financial literacy and planning a forensic auditing unit to respond to signs of criminality.

His recent decision to audit the state's motor-voter registration system drew pushback from Shapiro's transportation secretary and Kenyatta, who said his opponent's move will give "cover for dangerous conspiracies and election denials."

"I've done this same kind of work for over 30 years," DeFoor said. "My entire career has been spent on how taxpayer dollars are being used, if they're being used properly and if the programs that government has, are they working?"

Kenyatta has criticized DeFoor's decision to stop school audits that DeFoor said were of little value to districts.

Harris lays out new plan to empower Black men

Trump calls for adding 10K Border Patrol agents

PRESCOTT VALLEY, Ariz., Oct 14, (AP): Former US president Donald Trump has proposed hiring 10,000 additional Border Patrol agents and giving them a \$10,000 retention and signing bonus, after he derailed a bipartisan bill earlier this year that included funding for more border personnel.

Trump made his pledge during a rally in Prescott Valley, Arizona, roughly 260 miles north of the state's border with Mexico. He accepted an endorsement from the agents' union, the National Border Patrol Council, which is a longtime Trump backer that endorsed him during his prior two campaigns.

Trump has made illegal immigration the focus of his campaign and blamed Vice President Kamala Harris, his Democratic opponent, for a record spike in unauthorized crossings at the U.S.-Mexico border. He frequently denounces people entering the U.S. illegally as invaders and criminals, and he has vowed to stage the largest deportation operation in American history if he is elected president again.

He did defy the union earlier this year when he convinced Republicans to kill a bipartisan immigration bill that contained additional border resources. According to the White House, the bill would have funded 1,500 personnel at U.S. Customs and Border Protection, which includes the Border Patrol.

Trump at the time said he did not want to give Democrats a political victory on his key issue. At the rally, Trump contended the legislation was "a horrible bill."

Trump and his allies routinely call Harris the "border czar," even though she's never had that title. President Joe Biden did ask Harris early in his administration to study the "root causes" of migration from Central America.

Matt Corridoni, a spokesperson for the Harris campaign, noted Trump's move against the border bill and his vows that Mexico would pay for his signature border wall, which ultimately was funded by the U.S. government.

Trump has vowed to complete a border wall if he's returned to the White House. He routinely trumpets his comparatively low numbers of border crossings with the much higher ones during Biden's first three years in office, though currently crossings are back down to levels at or below those seen during most of Trump's term.

Meanwhile, Harris is announcing a plan to give Black men more economic opportunities and other chances to thrive as she works to energize a key voting bloc that has Democrats concerned about a lack of enthusiasm.

Harris' plan includes providing forgivable business loans for Black entrepreneurs, creating more apprentice-

ships and studying sickle cell and other diseases that disproportionately affect African American men.

Harris already has said she supports legalizing marijuana and her plan calls for working to ensure that Black men have opportunities to participate as a "national cannabis industry takes shape." She also is calling for better regulating cryptocurrency to protect Black men and others who invest in digital assets.

The vice president's so-called "opportunity agenda for Black men" is meant to invigorate African American males at a moment when there are fears some may sit out the election rather than vote for Harris or her opponent, Republican former President Donald Trump.

The vice president unveiled the plan Monday, ahead of an evening campaign rally in Erie, Pennsylvania, where she was to appear with Democratic Sen. John Fetterman. Her push comes after former President Barack Obama suggested last week that some Black men "aren't feeling the idea of having a woman as president."

The Harris campaign also has been working to increase support among other male voting blocs, including Hispanics, by founding the group "Hombres con Harris," Spanish for "Men with Harris."



Democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris speaks during a campaign event at East Carolina University on Oct 13, 2024, in Greenville, NC. (AP)

Iceland headed for snap election

Lithuanian opposition party wins 1st round of elections

VILNIUS, Oct 14, (Agencies): Lithuanian Social Democratic Party won the first round of the parliamentary elections, securing 19.36 percent of votes and 18 out of 70 seats, preliminary data from the Central Electoral Commission showed on Monday morning.

The ruling conservative Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats won 17.96 percent of the vote and 17 seats in the parliament.

The Dawn of the Nemunas (Nemuno Austra), a newly registered party of Remigijus Zemaitytis, came in third with 14.99 percent of the vote, securing 14 seats.

The Democratic Union For Lithuania, also a first-time participant in parliamentary elections, received 9.24 percent of the vote, which guaranteed them eight seats.

The Freedom Party, currently part of the ruling coalition, failed to clear the five percent electoral threshold required to win seats in the parliament.

The final seat distribution will be determined in two weeks after most of the single-member constituencies will hold runoff between two leading candidates on Oct. 27.

The first round of Lithuania's parliamentary elections began on Sunday, with voters set to elect 141 members to the Seimas, the country's unicameral



Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė arrives to speak at a press conference after a first round of Lithuania's parliamentary election, in Vilnius, Lithuania on Oct 14. (AP)

parliament, for a four-year term.

Lithuania's parliamentary elections saw a voter turnout of 52.06 percent, up from 47.80 percent in 2020, according to preliminary data from the electoral commission on Sunday. Enditem

Meanwhile, Iceland appears headed for a snap election after Prime Minister Bjarni Benediktsson pulled the plug on the Nordic nation's fragile government

coalition.

The prime minister is expected to ask President Halla Tómasdóttir on Monday to formally dissolve Iceland's parliament, the Althingi, for an election on Nov. 30, national broadcaster RUV reported.

Benediktsson's center-right Independence Party has governed since April with the centrist Progressive Par-

ty and the Left Green Movement. He said the coalition partners disagreed over issues including immigration, energy policy and the economy.

Iceland is a wind-lashed island near the Arctic Circle with a population of about 385,000. The country suffered through years of economic upheaval after its debt-swollen banks collapsed during the 2008 financial crisis, but has become a major draw for tourists eager to see its glaciers and waterfalls, the Northern Lights and its frequently active volcanoes.

Repeated eruptions on the Reykjanes Peninsula in the country's southwest have displaced several thousand people and strained public finances.

In another development, Slovakian President Peter Pellegrini appointed Kamil Sasko as the new health minister.

Sasko, the former state secretary at the country's Ministry of the Economy, will take over from Zuzana Dolinkova. Dolinkova announced her resignation last week, saying she felt unsupported in pursuing her goal of improving the healthcare sector.

Following the new appointment, Pellegrini said that the health ministry is the department where ministers have changed most frequently since Slovakia became independent on Jan. 1, 1993.



French far-right leader Marine Le Pen walks past the media as she arrives at the court house in Paris on Sept 30. (AP)

Marine Le Pen faces court on charges of embezzling funds

PARIS, Oct 14, (AP): French far-right leader Marine Le Pen is to answer questions from judges at a Paris court Monday as she and her National Rally party stand trial over the suspected embezzlement of European Parliament funds. She has denied any wrongdoing.

The nine-week trial is a critical juncture for Le Pen, expected to be a strong contender in France's next presidential election in 2027. A guilty verdict could significantly affect her political career and aspirations.

The National Rally and 25 of its top officials went on trial last month for having used money intended for EU parliamentary aides instead to pay staff who worked for the party between 2004 and 2016, in violation of the 27-nation bloc's regulations. The National Rally was called the National Front at the time.

Le Pen is scheduled to answer questions from the court for three successive days, starting on Monday, over the use of EU money to pay for her bodyguard, her chief of staff and two other party aides. When the trial opened last month, she vowed to present "solid ar-

guments" showing that she and other party officials "did not violate any political and regulatory rules of the European Parliament."

If found guilty, Le Pen and her co-defendants could face up to 10 years in prison and fines of up to 1 million euros (\$1.1 million) each. Additional penalties, such as the loss of civil rights or ineligibility to run for office, could also be imposed, a scenario that could hamper, or even destroy, Le Pen's goal to mount another presidential bid after the end of President Emmanuel Macron's term. Le Pen was runner-up to Macron in the 2017 and 2022 presidential elections.

Two other National Rally officials, including the party's historic leader, Le Pen's father Jean-Marie, have faced similar accusations but have been exempted from prosecution on health grounds. The trial is scheduled to last until Nov. 27.

Le Pen was runner-up to Macron in the 2017 and 2022 presidential elections. She served as party president from 2011 to 2021 and now heads the group of RN lawmakers at the French National Assembly.

Georgia plane crash kills pilot: One person died as a result of a small plane crash Sunday night in a Savannah, Georgia, residential neighborhood, local police said.

The Savannah Police Department said in a brief statement that officers were dispatched to the crash site on East 66th Street, roughly 3 miles (4.8 kilometers) south of the city's historic landmark district.

Savannah's firefighter union posted on Facebook that the crash happened shortly before 10 p.m. The Savannah Professional Firefighters Association posted a photograph of a mangled plane on the

ground in front of a house. (AP)

Man held near Trump rally: A Nevada man with a shotgun, loaded handgun, ammunition and several fake passports in his vehicle was arrested at a security checkpoint outside Donald Trump's rally Saturday night in the Southern California desert, author-



Bianco

ties said. He was released the same day on \$5,000 bail.

The suspect, a 49-year-old resident of Las Vegas, was driving an unregistered black SUV with a "homemade" license plate that was stopped by deputies assigned to the rally in Coachella, east of Los Angeles, Riverside County Sheriff Chad Bianco said at a news conference Sunday afternoon.

The driver claimed to be a journalist but it was unclear if he had the proper credentials. Deputies noticed the interior of the vehicle was "in disarray" and a search uncovered the weapons and ammo, along with multiple passports and driver licenses with different names. Bianco said. (AP)

Police fatally shoot woman: Oklahoma Police fatally shot a woman who was firing a gun and threatening officers with the weapon following a vehicle crash, authorities said.

The woman was a suspect in an earlier shooting, said police Capt. Valerie Littlejohn. Seven officers who arrived at the scene of the crash tried to make contact with her but opened fire when she threatened them, Littlejohn said.

"We don't know if she was shooting at anyone or just shooting them (bullets) off in the air or into the ground," Littlejohn said. (AP)

America

INTERNATIONAL

N.Korea preparing to destroy northern parts of inter-Korean roads, Seoul says

SEOUL, South Korea, Oct 14, (AP) — South Korea said Monday it has detected signs that North Korea is preparing to destroy the northern parts of inter-Korean roads no longer in use, as the rivals are embroiled in soaring tensions over North Korea's claim that South Korea flew drones over its territory.

Destroying the roads would be in line with leader Kim Jong Un's push to cut off ties with South Korea, formally cement it as his country's principal enemy and abandon the North's decades-long objective to seek a peaceful Korean unification.

South Korea's military said Monday that it was observing various activities in North Korea that appeared to be preparations for demolishing the roads, such as installing screens. "They have installed screens on the road and are working behind those screens, preparing to blow up the roads," Lee Sung Joon, spokesperson of South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, told a briefing. He said the demolitions could be carried out as early as Monday.

Lee said that the South Korean military believes that the North could also attempt to launch a space rocket, which is viewed by the U.N. as a banned test of long-range missile technology. Lee said North Korea may conduct unsus-

pected "small provocations" to ramp up pressure on Seoul.

It's not clear how much parts of the roads North Korea would destroy.

The development comes as North Korea has recently accused South Korea of launching drones to drop propaganda leaflets over Pyongyang three times this month and threatened to respond with force if it happened again. South Korea has refused to confirm whether it sent drones but warned it would sternly punish North Korea if the safety of its citizens is threatened.

In a statement Sunday, the North's Defense Ministry said that the military had ordered artillery and other army units near the border with South Korea to "get fully ready to open fire." The spokesperson said that the entire South Korean territory "might turn into piles of ashes" following the North's powerful attack.

North Korea often releases warlike rhetoric when animosities with its rivals increase. Experts say it's highly unlikely for North Korea to launch full-scale, preemptive attacks as its military is outmatched by the combined US and South Korean forces.

Koo Byongsam, a spokesperson of South Korea's Unification Ministry, said Monday that North Korea's accusation on South Korean drone flights was likely

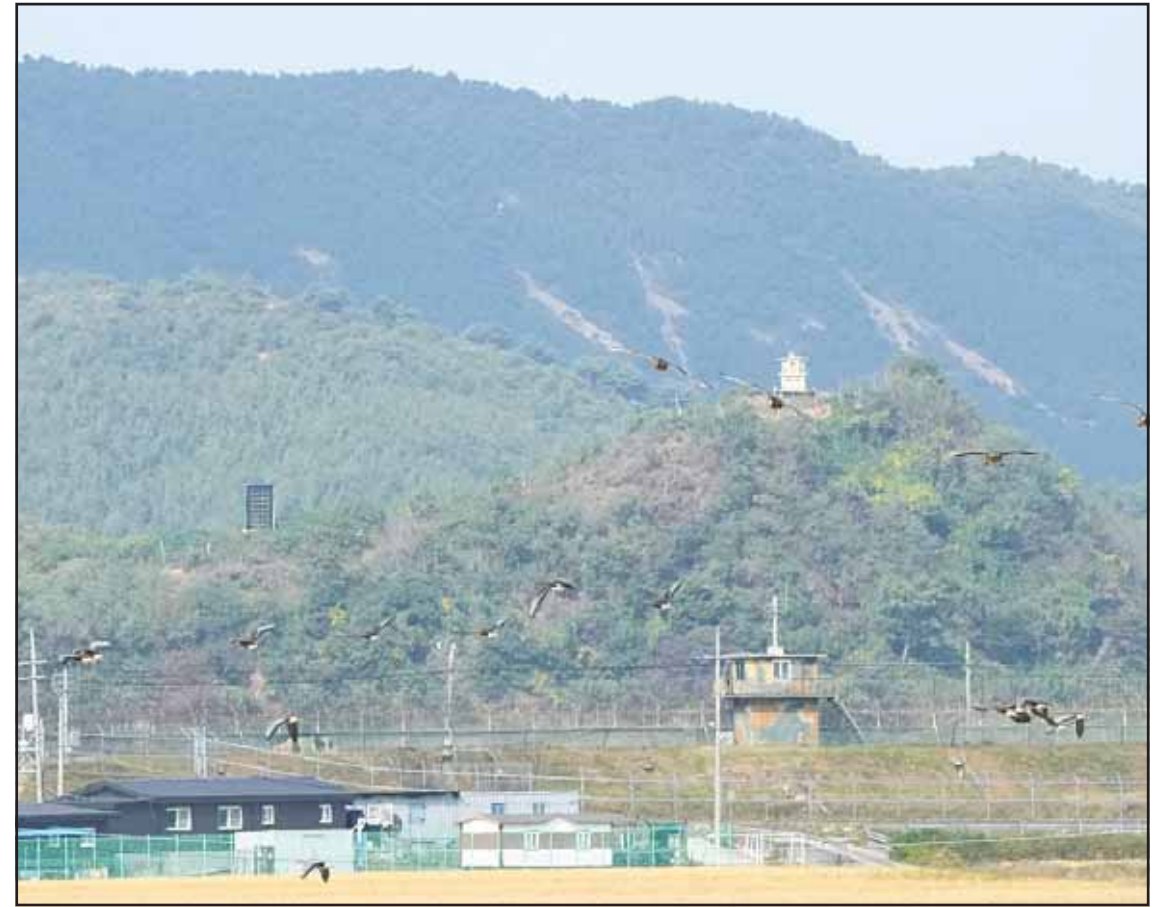
aimed at creating tensions to reinforce its internal unity while stoking instability in South Korea. Koo said North Korea cannot win what it wants from South Korea with threats and provocations.

Some observers say anti-Pyongyang activists might have sent drones this month, but North Korea argues the South Korean government cannot still escape responsibility because it must have been aware of such moves.

In 2022, South Korea sent surveillance drones across the border into North Korea after it accused North Korea of flying drones into South Korea for the first time in five years.

Last week, North Korea said it will permanently block its border with South Korea and build front-line defense structures to cope with "confrontational hysteria" by South Korean and U.S. forces. It cited various military exercises in South Korea and the temporary deployments of powerful US military assets in South Korea.

South Korean officials said North Korea had already been adding anti-tank barriers, planting mines and reinforcing roads on its side of the border since earlier this year in a likely attempt to boost its front-line security posture and prevent its soldiers and citizens from defecting to South Korea.



A North Korean loudspeaker, top left, a military guard post, (top right), and a South Korean military guard post, bottom, are seen from Paju, South Korea, near the border with North Korea on Oct 10. (AP)

Taipei remains defiant

China deploys 125 aircraft in large scale army drill in warning to Taiwan

TAIPEI, Taiwan, Oct 14, (AP) — China employed a record 125 aircraft, as well as its Liaoning aircraft carrier and ships, in large-scale military exercises surrounding Taiwan and its outlying islands Monday, simulating the sealing off of key ports in a move that underscores the tense situation in the Taiwan Strait, officials said.

China made clear it was to punish Taiwan's president for rejecting Beijing's claim of sovereignty over the self-governed island.

The drills came four days after Taiwan celebrated the founding of its government on its National Day, when Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te said in a speech that China has no right to represent Taiwan and declared his commitment to "resist annexation or encroachment."

"This is a resolute punishment for Lai Ching-te's continuous fabrication of 'Taiwan independence' nonsense," China's Taiwan Affairs Office said in a statement.

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense said 90 of the aircraft, including warplanes, helicopters and drones, were spotted within Taiwan's air defense identification zone. The single-day record counted aircraft from 5:02 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Shipping traffic was operating as normal, the ministry said.

Taiwan remained defiant. "Our military will definitely deal with the threat from China appropriately," Joseph



In this screen grab from video released by the Taiwan Coast Guard, Taiwan Coast Guard members track China's Coast Guard boat as it passed near the coast of Matsu islands, Taiwan on Oct 14. (AP)

Wu, secretary-general of Taiwan's security council, said at a forum in Taipei, Taiwan's capital. "Threatening other countries with force violates the basic spirit of the United Nations Charter to resolve disputes through peaceful means."

Taiwan's Presidential Office also called on China to "cease military prov-

ocations that undermine regional peace and stability and stop threatening Taiwan's democracy and freedom."

A map aired on China's state broadcaster CCTV showed six large blocks encircling Taiwan indicating where the military drills were being held, along with circles drawn around Taiwan's outlying islands.

Taiwan's defense ministry said the six areas focused on key strategic locations around and on the island.

China deployed its Liaoning aircraft carrier for the drills, and CCTV showed a J-15 fighter jet taking off from the deck of the carrier.

China's People's Liberation Army's Eastern Theater Command spokesper-

son Senior Captain Li Xi said Monday evening that the drill was successfully completed.

Li said the navy, army air force and missile corps were all mobilized for the drills, which were an integrated operation. "This is a major warning to those who back Taiwan independence and a signifier of our determination to safeguard our national sovereignty," Li said in a statement on the service's public media channel.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said at a daily briefing that China did not consider relations with Taiwan a diplomatic issue, in keeping with its refusal to recognize Taiwan as a sovereign state.

"I can tell you that Taiwan independence is as incompatible with peace in the Taiwan Strait as fire with water. Provocation by the Taiwan independence forces will surely be met with countermeasures," Mao said.

Taiwan's Defense Ministry said it deployed warships to designated spots in the ocean to carry out surveillance and stand at ready. It also deployed mobile missile and radar groups on land to track the vessels at sea. It said as of Monday morning, they had tracked 25 Chinese warplanes and seven warships and four Chinese government ships, though it did not specify what types of ships they were.

On the streets of Taipei, residents were undeterred. "I don't worry, I

don't panic either, it doesn't have any impact to me," Chang Chia-ru said.

Another Taipei resident, Jeff Huang, said: "Taiwan is very stable now, and I am used to China's military exercises. I have been threatened by this kind of threats since I was a child, and I am used to it."

The U.S., Taiwan's biggest unofficial ally, called China's response to Lai's speech unwarranted. "We call on (Beijing's government) to act with restraint and to avoid any further actions that may undermine peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and in the broader region," State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said in a statement.

China held similar large-scale exercises around Taiwan and simulated a blockade in 2022 after a visit to the island by Nancy Pelosi, who was then speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. China routinely states that Taiwan independence is a "dead end" and that annexation by Beijing is a historical inevitability. China's military has increased its encircling of Taiwan's skies and waters in the past few years, holding joint drills with its warships and fighter jets on a near-daily basis near the island.



In this photo released by the Press Information Department, China's Premier Li Qiang, (third left), walks Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, (third right), upon his arrival at an airbase in Rawalpindi, Pakistan on Oct 14, 2024. (AP)

Islamabad hosts major security meeting

Chinese PM arrives in Pakistan on four-day visit

ISLAMABAD, Oct 14, (Agencies) — Chinese Premier Li Qiang, along with a delegation, arrived in Islamabad on Monday on a four-day bilateral visit.

The Chinese Premier was received by Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shehbaz Sharif at the Nur Khan air base in Islamabad, the federal capital. Premier Li is accompanied by Ministers and senior officials including from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Commerce, the National Development and Reform Commission and the China International Development Cooperation Agency.

According to the Pakistan Foreign Office, PM Sharif and Premier Li Qiang will lead their respective delegations to comprehensively discuss all aspects of Pakistan-China relations including economic and trade ties and cooperation under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The two sides will also discuss regional and global developments. They will also attend the signing ceremony of Memorandum of Understanding regarding China-Pakistan cooperation, which includes CPEC-2 as well as other major projects.

The ceremony also includes the virtual inauguration of Gwadar International Airport. During the visit, the Chinese Premier will call on President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari and hold meetings

with parliamentary leaders and senior military leadership of Pakistan.

He will also attend the Meeting of the Council of the Heads of Government of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization being held in Islamabad.

"It will be an occasion for the two sides to reaffirm mutual support on issues of core interest; advance high-quality development of CPEC; and reinforce regular exchanges on important regional and global developments," said the Foreign Office. This is the first visit of any Chinese Premier to Pakistan after 11 years.

Pakistan is hosting a major security meeting this week, with senior leaders from longtime ally China and archrival India among those attending.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization was established in 2001 by China and Russia to discuss security concerns in Central Asia and the wider region.

But it's Pakistan's own security that is under the microscope.

An attack on a foreign ambassadors' convoy, violent protests by supporters of an imprisoned former prime minister, and a bombing outside Pakistan's biggest airport are signs the country is struggling to contain multiplying threats from insurgents.

The meeting, which begins Tuesday in Islamabad, comes at a crucial time

for the government. Here's why:

Pakistan says it has foiled attacks through intelligence-based operations and preventative measures. It frequently vows "to root out terrorism."

But the frequency and scale of the recent violence give the impression that the government isn't in control and raises questions about its ability to protect key sites and foreigners, let alone Pakistanis.

In the last few weeks, separatists from Pakistan's southwest Balochistan province have killed Chinese nationals in Karachi, Pakistan's biggest city, as well as more than 20 miners in an attack on housing at a coal mine, and seven workers in another attack. The outlawed Baloch Liberation Army, or BLA, is better at mobilizing fighters in different areas and its operational capabilities have increased.

The group wants independence for the province. It's not interested in overthrowing the state to establish a caliphate, which is what the Pakistani Taliban want. But the two groups have a common enemy — the government.

Analysts have said the BLA is getting support from the Pakistani Taliban. But, even without an alliance, attacks in the southwest are becoming more audacious and brutal, indicating that the BLA's tactics are evolving and taking the security apparatus by surprise.

Nearly 7,000 people evacuated

Sri Lanka closes schools; floods hammer capital

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, Oct 14, (Agencies) — Sri Lanka closed schools in the capital Colombo and suburbs on Monday as heavy rains triggered floods in many parts of the island nation.

Heavy downpours over the weekend have wreaked havoc in many parts of the country, flooding homes, fields and roads. Three people drowned, while some 134,000 people have been affected by flooding, according to the country's Disaster Management Centre.

The center said rains and floods have damaged 240 houses and nearly 7,000 people have been evacuated. Authorities have cut electricity in some areas as a precaution.

Navy and army troops have been deployed to rescue victims and provide food and other essentials.

Local television channels showed flooded towns in the suburbs of Colombo. In some areas, waters reached the roofs of houses and shops.

Sri Lanka has been grappling with severe weather conditions since May, mostly caused by heavy monsoon rains. In June, 16 people died due to floods and mudslides.



A man wades through water outside his flooded house in Colombo, Sri Lanka on Oct 13. (AP)

Three persons have died due to adverse weather conditions in Sri Lanka by Monday morning, according to the latest update by the country's Disaster Management Center (DMC).

The DMC said Sri Lanka started experiencing heavy rain on Oct. 7, and

as of Monday morning, 134,484 people belonging to 34,492 families have been displaced by rain-triggered disasters in 12 districts across the country.

Sri Lanka's irrigation department has warned of floods further near seven places of five main rivers.

According to the country's meteorology department, heavy showers above 100 mm are likely at some places in Western, Sabaragamuwa, North-western and Northern provinces and in Galle and Matara districts.

Over 100,000 people have been displaced in 12 districts in Sri Lanka due to rain-related disasters from Oct. 7 until Sunday morning, the country's Disaster Management Center (DMC) said.

The DMC said 118,032 people have been displaced due to flash floods, lightning, tree falls, earth slips and strong winds.

According to the DMC, 234 houses have been partially damaged.

The country's meteorology department said showers or thunder-showers will occur at times in Western, Sabaragamuwa, North-western, Central and Northern Provinces and in Galle and Matara districts.

Artificial intelligence going to revolutionize journalism positively: S.Africa media leader

CAPE TOWN, Oct 14, (Xinhua) — Transformative artificial intelligence (AI) will change journalism positively, said Iqbal Surve, chairman of Independent Media, a leading South African multi-platform content company.

In a recent interview with Xinhua, Surve articulated his belief that the integration of AI into journalism will lead to significant advancements.

AI can process, package and present content faster, which will free journalists from mundane tasks and allow them to focus on uncovering "the story behind the story," he said.

In that context, journalists will not be able to perform the same tasks in the past, said Surve, noting that the biggest challenge AI poses to the media industry is the need to embrace new methods of working and journalism's evolving roles.

The future of journalism, the veteran media leader argued, will focus



Iqbal Surve takes an interview with Xinhua in Cape Town, South Africa on Sept. 27. (Xinhua)

on "detailed investigative journalism, the story behind the story" — an area that AI cannot easily tread.

Surve likened the relationship between AI and media content to that of an architect and a building. While

AI can construct a basic structure, details within — such as investigations and the humanity of stories — require human input. AI alone cannot capture the full depth and nuance of storytelling, he said.

		Change	Closing pts			Change	Closing pts
↑ DUBAI	- DFMGI	+14.34	4,455.02	SAUDI	- TASI	-109.54	11,959.67
↑ JAPAN	- Nikkei 225	+224.91	39,605.80	↓ PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	-219.19	85,209.25
↑ PHILIPPINES	- PSEI	+16.09	7,326.41				
↑ EGYPT	- EGX 30	+318.94	30,273.06				

Business

Bank's WOW initiative empowers female employees with stress management tools

Gulf Bank hosts 'Women of Wisdom' session focused on mindfulness and resilience

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: As part of its continued commitment to women's empowerment, Gulf Bank hosted its latest session of the 'Women of Wisdom' (WOW) series, attracting a significant turnout of female employees from various departments. The monthly discussion sessions provide an opportunity for women to network, share experiences, and discuss strategies for overcoming professional challenges.

Commenting on the initiative, Gulf Bank's General Manager of Human Resources, Salma Al-Hajjaj, stated, "This month's session centered around mindfulness and resilience, two critical areas for professional growth. By enhancing these skills, we aim to support our female employees in navigating workplace challenges with greater confidence and clarity."

Al-Hajjaj highlighted the practical nature of the session, which equipped participants with tools to manage stress, sharpen focus, and build self-confidence. She

Salma Al-Hajjaj

"The session focuses on building awareness, resilience, and self-confidence among women in the workplace."

added, "Our goal is to empower women with the resources needed to excel in their careers, helping them to adapt to change and thrive in a dynamic corporate environment."

The session featured mindfulness exercises aimed at reducing stress and improving concentration, along with discussions on the importance of resilience in both personal and professional contexts. Participants also explored the concept of adaptability, celebrating their strengths and learning how to leverage them for continued growth.

Al-Hajjaj highlighted Gulf



A group photo of the participants in the session with Salma Al-Hajjaj in the center.

Bank's dedication to empowering women within the organization and beyond. "Empowering women is a key priority at Gulf Bank. This starts with recruitment, continues through advanced training and development, and extends to sup-

porting their growth into leadership roles."

As a pioneer in gender equality, Gulf Bank was one of the first signatories of the United Nations' Women's Empowerment Principles in Kuwait and the first lo-

cal bank to eliminate all forms of gender-based discrimination. This commitment is closely aligned with the Bank's 2025 strategy and Kuwait's Vision 2035.

Launched in 2017, the 'Women of Wisdom' (WOW) initiative

has been instrumental in supporting women's career development. Through its monthly gatherings, WOW provides a space for women to connect, share insights, and explore topics ranging from work-life balance to leadership growth.

Boursa general index dips slightly by 0.01%

Main market index rises 0.38%

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: Boursa Kuwait closed Monday with its general index down by 1.05 points, or 0.01 percent, settling at 7,041.02 points. A total of 365.8 million shares were traded in 18,621 cash transactions, amounting to KD 60.5 million (USD 184.5 million).

The main market index rose by 24.11 points, or 0.38 percent, to reach 6,346.30 points, with 282.3 million

shares traded through 12,120 cash transactions worth KD 35.3 million (USD 107.6 million).

However, the premier market index dropped by 7.78 points, or 0.10 percent, to close at 7,565.12 points, with 83.5 million shares traded through 6,501 transactions valued at KD 25.16 million (USD 76.7 million).

Meanwhile, the Main 50 index gained 21.80 points, or 0.35 percent, closing at 6,317.74 points, with 226 million shares traded through 8,935 cash transactions worth KD 29.5 million (USD 89.9 million).

OPEC+ spare capacity might cushion market

Middle East tensions could push oil to \$200 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: A recent press report warns that escalating conflicts and tensions in the Middle East could lead to a dramatic surge in oil prices, potentially pushing the price of a barrel to \$200, especially if Israeli military strikes target vital Iranian oil facilities, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The report, published by Deutsche Welle, highlights that since recent Iranian strikes on Israel, oil prices have already risen sharply.

Brent crude saw a 17 percent increase within a week, reaching \$81.16 per barrel, though prices moderated after Hezbollah announced its willingness to cease fire in its conflict with Israel.

The report emphasizes that should Israel strike key Iranian oil assets, it

could remove up to 2 million barrels of oil per day from the global market.

This has led to speculation that oil prices could soar back to three-digit levels, as seen shortly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in early 2022.

Bjarne Schieldrop, chief commodities analyst at SEB, warned that a disruption of Iran's oil facilities could easily push prices above \$200 per barrel.

Iran, one of the world's largest oil producers, remains under strict international sanctions due to its nuclear program, but has continued to export oil at record levels.

In May, Iranian oil exports hit a five-year high of 1.7 million barrels per day, with about 90 percent of this oil heading to China, much of it through

clandestine means using a "ghost fleet" of tankers designed to evade sanctions.

The report indicates that an Israeli attack on Iran's Kharg Island, home to its primary oil export terminal, would be particularly devastating. This facility manages nearly 90 percent of Iran's oil exports and is vital for both official and illegal oil trading.

Other potential targets include the Bandar Abbas refinery, which handles significant crude exports and military operations, and the Abadan refinery, essential for Iran's domestic consumption.

While some have drawn comparisons between the current situation and the 1970s oil crisis, Carole Nakhle, CEO of Crystol Energy, believes such comparisons are exaggerated.

IPG expects Q3 2024 net profit of KD 1.892 mln

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: The Independent Petroleum Group Company has announced that its financial management has finalized the preliminary results for its third-quarter performance, ending September 30, 2024, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The company expects to report a net profit of approximately 1.892 million dinars, translating to about 10.47 fils

per share.

This marks an increase from the 1.665 million dinars net profit recorded during the same period last year, which amounted to 9.21 fils per share.

For the nine-month period ending September 30, 2024, the company's net profit is projected to reach 6.176 million dinars, or roughly 34.16 fils per share.

CBK issues bonds and related Tawarruq

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the most recent issues of CBK Bonds and related

Tawarruq at a total value of KWD (240) million for (3) months with Rate of Return (4.125%).

Company joins panel discussion during Google Cloud's Cloud Day conference

Al Marzouq: Investing in GenAI positioned Zain as key government partner in driving digital transformation

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: Zain Kuwait's Chief Enterprise Business Officer, Hamad Al Marzouq, participated in a panel discussion at the recent Cloud Day 2024 conference, organized by Google Cloud in Kuwait. The event came under the patronage

and attendance of H.E. Minister of State for Telecommunications Affairs Omar Al Omar, along with top executives from the public and private sectors.

Al Marzouq joined the session entitled 'Strategies for Leaders on

Adopting Generative AI', which featured experts and executives from Google Cloud and local private sector organizations across the biggest industries like telecom, banking, and energy.

During the session, Al Marzouq

emphasized Zain's early investment in Generative AI solutions, positioning the company as a key partner for the government in driving digital transformation, serving the goals of the 'New Kuwait 2035' vision, and fostering sustainable economic growth, alongside major global partners and tech leaders like Google Cloud.

He also outlined Zain's plans to leverage Generative AI to enhance customer service, deliver exceptional user experiences, and offer personalized customer journeys in a highly competitive market. The discussion explored AI's potential in areas like chatbots/agents, personalized recommendations, and proactive customer support.

Al Marzouq also emphasized GenAI's vast potential to optimize network performance and efficiency, enhance infrastructure planning, and drive operational improvements within the telecom industry.

The session covered strategies for measuring the return on investment (ROI) of Generative AI initiatives and ensuring their successful implementation. Participants discussed the importance of collaboration with industry peers, technology partners, and educational institutions to foster innovation and accelerate the adoption of Generative AI across various sectors.

Cloud Day 2024 also included an interactive session led by Haya Al Mana, Zain Kuwait's Innovation & Entrepreneurship Expert. She showcased Zain's leading efforts to support tech startups through the company's award-winning Zain Great Idea accelerator program. Al Mana highlighted the immense potential of GenAI in empowering startup founders and aspiring entrepreneurs, driving success, and enhancing customer experiences.

As a leading digital service provider, Zain believes in the importance of harnessing AI's potential to lead the digital transformation journey and foster digital innovation. The company continues to reinforce its efforts to further push AI-enabled innovative services and 5.5G network automation, as it strongly believes in the pivotal role AI tools and applications play in transforming networks, ultimately improving performance, efficiency, optimization, operations, and maintenance.



Five Kuwaiti figures make Forbes' Middle East list.

Bader Al-Kharafi and four others honored

Forbes Mideast names 5 Kuwaiti leaders in 2024 sustainability list

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: Forbes Middle East has unveiled the second edition of its Middle East Sustainability Leaders list for 2024, featuring the following five prominent figures from Kuwait who are making significant contributions to sustainability across various sectors, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Bader Al-Kharafi -- Vice Chairman and CEO of Zain Group, recognized in the technology and services sector for his efforts in promoting sustainable telecommunications.

Fahad Al-Othman -- Founder of Human Soft Holding and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the American University of the Middle East, noted for his commitment to sustainability in education and technology.

Issam Al-Saqr -- Vice Chairman and CEO of the National Bank of Kuwait Group, acknowledged in the banking and financial services sector for integrating sustainability into financial practices.

Sheikha Adana Nasser Al-Sabah

-- CEO of Kuwait Projects Company Holding (KIPCO), recognized in the investment and holding companies sector for her contributions to sustainable investment strategies.

Tariq Sultan -- Vice Chairman of Agility Group, honored in the transportation and logistics sector for his initiatives aimed at enhancing sustainability in logistics and supply chain management.

The list comprises 107 leaders from 105 companies across 12 sectors, all committed to advancing the region's sustainability agenda.

The UAE heads the list with 54 companies, followed by Saudi Arabia with 20, Egypt with 10, and Qatar with 8. Kuwait and Bahrain each have 5, while Oman has 3.

This recognition highlights the important role that Kuwaiti leaders play in fostering sustainable practices within their industries and contributing to the broader regional efforts towards sustainability.

Canada, Kuwait pension funds invest £130 million into London City Airport

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: The British magazine Business Matters has revealed that several Canadian and Kuwaiti pension funds have invested £130 million in London City Airport, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The magazine, known as the UK's largest business publication, reported that the airport owners injected this capital to stabilize its finances amid a prolonged slowdown in travel, following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The passenger numbers have yet to

return to pre-pandemic levels, and this investment comes at a critical time as the airport continues its recovery efforts.

The new capital was provided by a consortium of Canadian pension funds, including AIMCo, OMERS, and the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, as well as Kuwait's Wren House Fund.

The funds will be used to reduce debt, pay interest, and bolster cash reserves, giving the airport flexibility as it prepares for upcoming talks to refinance over £700 million in loans, which are due in March 2026.



Al Marzouq highlighted Zain's efforts to adopting GenAI.



Hamad Al Marzouq speaking at the event.



Haya Al Mana discussed Zain's role in empowering startups to adopt AI.

NBK signs cooperation agreement with AASU

5-year deal aims to exchange expertise and sponsor students' activities



The cooperation agreement being signed by the two parties.



NBK and AASU officials shake hands after the signing of the agreement.

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) signed a cooperation agreement with Abdullah AlSalem University (AASU) to exchange expertise between the two sides in various fields, in addition to sponsoring the university's different activities and events all year round.

Al-Othman: We are proud to sponsor an organization that shares our vision for developing high-caliber national human capital

- The agreement underscores NBK's dedication to developing new generations of leaders, innovators and professionals in various fields
- We aim to provide students with the opportunities and resources to excel and feel confident as they navigate the labor market
- NBK firmly believes in the importance of education as a cornerstone in shaping the future of society

This reflects NBK's dedication to strengthening partnerships with stakeholders to develop ambitious national talent, and its constant endeavors to nurture and upskill the youth.

The 5-year cooperation agreement was signed at AASU headquarters by Mr. Isam Al-Sager, Vice Chairman and Group CEO of National Bank of Kuwait, and Dr. Moudi Al-Humoud, the Founding Chairman of Abdullah Al Salem University. The signing ceremony was attended from NBK's side by Mr. Mohamed Al-Othman, CEO - Consumer and Digital Banking Group, Mr. Emad Al-Ablani, GM - Group Human Resources, Mr. Hisham Al-Nusif, Deputy



Officials of NBK and AASU pose for a group photo.

Head of Consumer Banking Group. From AASU's side, attendees included Dr. Adel Alhussainan, Secretary-General of the Founding Board, Prof. Dr. Fawaz Al-Anzi, Founding Board Member, Acting Vice President for Planning and Institutional Excellence, Informatics and Digitization, and Mrs. Nadia Al-Rashed, Head of Public Relations and Communication.

Cooperation Areas

According to the agreement, the areas of cooperation between NBK and Abdullah AlSalem University include the exchange of knowledge and expertise in the fields of entrepreneurship, knowledge economy re-

quirements, SME business environments, data compliance and cybersecurity. It also involves cooperation in establishing and operating specialized research centers to foster economic transformations, digitization and transformation in the banking sector.

The agreement also provides for mutual cooperation in the fields of smart systems and data analytics for the financial and banking sectors, in addition to NBK's sponsorship of the activities of students' celebrations, honoring ceremonies, graduation projects, AASU's admission and placement test system, as well as admission campaigns and enlightening and guidance

meetings for admitted students.

Opportunities and Resources

Commenting on this, Mr. Mohamed Al-Othman, CEO - Consumer and Digital Banking Group at NBK, said, "We are delighted to gather today to announce this agreement between NBK and the reputable Abdullah AlSalem University. This marks the beginning of a cooperation journey between us to provide AASU students with opportunities and resources that qualify them to excel in their fields of study and help them feel confident and competent as they navigate the labor market in the future."

"The signing of this agreement underscores NBK's firm belief in the importance of education as a cornerstone in shaping the future of society. This cooperation with AASU demonstrates our unwavering commitment to qualifying new generations of leaders, innovators and professionals in various fields by encouraging and motivating students and providing them with an innovation-friendly educational environment," he noted.

Al-Othman concluded saying, "NBK is proud to provide sponsorship for an institution that shares our vision for excellence, progress and the developing national human capital, to pave the way for a brighter and more prosperous future for Kuwait and its people. We hope to see the positive impact of this cooperation soon on the university's students and outputs."

NBK greatly focuses on strengthening communication with educational institutions reflecting its special attention to the educational sector and its endeavors to nurture and develop young talent, especially university students, being the prime driver of community development.

NBK's educational initiatives underline its profound vision for investing in the human capital, and belief in the powerful impact of such agreements in serving the community and people. This also aligns with its leading role over long decades in nurturing and qualifying the youth to effectively navigate the labor market.

Asian shares 'gain ground'

BANGKOK, Oct 14, (AP): Asian shares gained ground on Monday, with stocks in China rising more than 2% after the finance minister said over the weekend that more stimulus is needed for the slowing economy.

U.S. futures were little changed and oil prices retreated.

China's finance minister, Lan Faoan, said Saturday that the government was considering additional ways to boost the economy, but he didn't give details of a major new stimulus plan. Stock investors and analysts have been hoping for a plan of up to 2 trillion yuan, or about \$280 billion.

But any expressions of support by officials tend to push share prices higher, and the "national team" of big state-run companies and financial institutions tend to weigh in with stock purchases to help stabilize markets, analysts say.

"The devil, as they say, is always in the details - or in this case, the glaring lack of them. When it comes to Chinese policy briefings, it's usually all sizzle and no steak," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a commentary. "By mid-week, we'll see if the market bid has legs, and by month's end, we'll know for sure if Beijing is delivering the goods or if it's just more smoke and mirrors."

The Shanghai Composite index rose 2.1% to 3,284.32 and the smaller market in Shenzhen gained 3%. Hong

Kong's Hang Seng index lost 0.9% to 21,061.23.

China reported that consumer inflation weakened in September and that wholesale prices fell further, reflecting continued weakness in domestic demand that has spurred the government into a flurry of measures meant to revive falling housing sales and other spending.

Large-scale Chinese military exercises surrounding Taiwan and its outlying islands on Monday appeared to have scant impact on markets.

Taiwan's Taiex was up 0.3%.

Tokyo's markets were closed for a public holiday. In South Korea, the KOSPI added 1% to 2,623.29, while Australia's S&P/ASX 200 picked up 0.5% to 8,252.80.

The advance in Asia followed a strong close on Friday on Wall Street as U.S. stocks rose to records, lifted by strong profits at big banks. The S&P 500 climbed 0.6% to 5,815.03, topping its all-time high set earlier in the week and closing out its fifth straight winning week. The Dow Jones Industrial Average jumped 1% to set its own record, at 42,863.86. The Nasdaq composite lagged the market with a gain of 0.3% after a slide by Tesla kept it in check. It closed at 18,342.94.

Wells Fargo rose 5.6% after reporting stronger profit for the latest quarter than analysts expected.

Worries over economy

China's exports slowed sharply

HONG KONG, Oct 14, (AP): China's exports slowed sharply in September as global demand weakened, adding to worries over how to recharge growth in the world's second-largest economy.

Exports rose 2.4% in dollar terms from a year earlier last month, down from 8.7% year-on-year growth in August, the Chinese customs office reported Monday. Imports rose just 0.3% in September.

Economists had estimated that exports would rise about 6% and that imports would climb about 0.9%.

China recorded a trade surplus of \$81.7 billion in September, down from \$91 billion in August. China's leaders have been struggling to rev up the economy since the COVID-19 pandemic ended.

The U.S. and Europe recently raised tariffs on China's exports of electric vehicles and other products, darkening the outlook for China's trade as an engine of growth. The weak growth in imports reflects slack demand, partly due to a

prolonged slump in the property industry, a major driver of sales of all sorts of products.

Other data released Monday showed weakening in inflation and falling wholesale prices for manufacturers.

Policymakers in Beijing have announced a slew of measures to boost the economy, including frontloading 200 billion yuan (\$28.2 billion) from next year's budget for spending and construction projects. Over the weekend, Finance Minister Lan Faoan reiterated that the government is considering still more moves to drive faster growth.

But Lan and other officials have not yet delivered stimulus on the scale economists say is needed to pull the economy out of its funk.

So far this year, up to the end of September, China's exports have risen 4.3% year-on-year, helped by increased shipments of autos, which rose more than 20%, according to a report by ING Economics.

But overall exports are slowing.

STOCKHOLM, Oct 14, (AP): The Nobel memorial prize in economics was awarded Monday to Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson and James A. Robinson for research into reasons why some countries succeed and others fail.

The Nobel memorial prize in economics was awarded Monday to Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson and James A. Robinson for research into differences in prosperity between nations.

The three economists "have demonstrated the importance of societal institutions for a country's prosperity," the Nobel committee of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said at the announcement in Stockholm.

"Societies with a poor rule of law and institutions that exploit the population do not generate growth or change for the better. The laureates' research helps us understand why," it added.

Acemoglu and Johnson work at the Massachusetts Institute of Tech-

Study conducted by three economists

Research into why countries succeed or fail awarded Nobel economics prize



Academy of Sciences permanent secretary Hans Ellegren, center, Jakob Svensson, left, and Jan Teorell, of the Nobel assembly announce the Nobel memorial prize in economics winners, Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson and James A. Robinson, seen on screen, during a press meeting at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in Stockholm, Sweden, Monday Oct. 14, 2024. (AP)

nology and Robinson conducts his research at the University of Chicago.

"Reducing the vast differences in income between countries is one of our time's greatest challenges. The

laureates have demonstrated the importance of societal institutions for achieving this," Jakob Svensson, Chair of the Committee for the Prize in Economic Sciences, said.

He said their research has provided "a much deeper understanding of the root causes of why countries fail or succeed."

Reached by the academy in Athens, Greece, where he is due to speak at a conference, Acemoglu said he was surprised and shocked by the award. "You never expect something like this," he said.

The economics prize is formally known as the Bank of Sweden Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel. The central bank established it in 1968 as a memorial to Nobel, the 19th-century Swedish businessman and chemist who invented dynamite and established the five Nobel Prizes.

Though Nobel purists stress that the economics prize is technically not a Nobel Prize, it is always presented together with the others on Dec. 10, the anniversary of Nobel's death in 1896.

Nobel honors were announced last week in medicine, physics, chemistry, literature and peace.

Tech breakthroughs to thank

China rakes in record high shale oil production

BEIJING, Oct 14, (Xinhua): The China Petrochemical Corporation (Sinopec Group), the country's largest oil refiner, has announced that its Shengli Oilfield, driven by technology breakthroughs, has set a new record for single-well daily shale oil production in China.

A total of 94 horizontal shale oil wells have been built in the Jiyang shale oil national demonstration zone owned by the Shengli Oilfield in east China's Shandong Province since it was established two years ago, among which 36 wells have achieved peak daily oil production exceeding 100 tonnes, with a maxi-

mum of 262.8 tonnes for a single well, the Science and Technology Daily reported on Saturday.

The achievements were made with the driving force of technology innovations, according to Yang Yong, general manager of the Sinopec Shengli Oilfield.

Shale oil mainly refers to liquid hydrocarbons that are trapped in formations of shale rock that can be extracted for refining. It is often found in organic-rich shale and thin interlayers of carbonate rocks, sandstones, and siltstones.

China has abundant shale oil resources, but they are mainly conti-

nental shale oil, making exploration and production difficult.

Compared with the shale oil reserves in North America, those in Jiyang are buried deeper and have lower maturity, posing a series of challenges to exploration and development, said Yang.

The technology innovation team of the Shengli Oilfield overcame difficulties in exploration such as high temperature, high pressure, and simultaneous seepage in shale oil reservoirs.

They have developed a fast drilling technology centered on synthetic-based drilling fluid sys-

tems, enabling efficient drilling of horizontal wells with depths exceeding 3,300 meters and horizontal sections longer than 2,000 meters. The drilling cycle has been reduced from 133 days to 29.5 days, said Yang.

It is estimated that the shale oil resources in Jiyang amount to 10.5 billion tonnes. The Jiyang demonstration zone, the third of its kind in China following the ones in Xinjiang and Daqing, has reported a daily oil production of 1,600 tonnes and a cumulative oil production surpassing 800,000 tonnes.



Burgan representatives Sanad Alabdulhadi, Mohammed Abdal and Mohammed Ali receiving a plaque in recognition of the Bank's sponsorship.



Winners of the First International Padel Tournament in a group photo with the representatives of the Bank and organizing committee.

As part of its commitment to social responsibility, and its efforts to support Kuwaiti talent

Burgan Bank concludes its sponsorship of the first International Padel Tournament in partnership with Kuwait Scouts Association

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: Burgan Bank concluded its sponsorship of the inaugural International Padel Tournament (Men's and Women's categories), organized by the Kuwait Scouts Association in collaboration with the Arab Scout Organization. The tournament, held from October 6 to 8, 2024 at the Ocean Padel Academy courts, saw high-level participation from Gulf and Arab countries.

Burgan Bank's sponsorship of this tournament reflects its commitment to social responsibility, and its efforts to support the sports sector and nurture Kuwaiti talent. It also highlights the Bank's dedication to fostering a sports culture within Kuwaiti society and contributing to positive change in the country.

Commenting on the sponsorship, Ms. Hessa Hussain Al-Najadah, Senior Manager – Corporate and CSR Communications at Burgan Bank, said: "We were delighted to partner with the Kuwait Scouts Association and sponsor the inaugural International Padel Tournament. This distinguished sporting event, which aimed to instill a sports culture in Kuwait and support young athletes, adds to the range of sports ac-

tivities and events that Burgan Bank supports as part of its comprehensive social responsibility and sustainability program. We were pleased to witness the participation of numerous professional and amateur players in both the men's and women's categories, all of whom displayed outstanding performance and exceptional sportsmanship. We congratulate the top winners, who earned their victories with distinction."

The first-place winners among the men were Ahmed Khamis and Danny Namour, while second place went to Ammar Al-Tamimi and Hamoud Al-Janeel. Among the women, first place was awarded to Joud Tifoni and Maryam Al-Sarraj, with Dalal Al-Masqati and Noor Hassan securing second place.

On his part, Mr. Hussein Maqseed Chairman of the Supreme Organizing Committee and Deputy Chairman of the Kuwait Scouts Association, stated: "We are extremely proud of the tremendous success of the inaugural International Padel Tournament, which reflects our commitment to elevating the sports sector. The tournament showcased fair competition among



Ms. Hessa Hussain Al-Najadah, Senior Manager – Corporate and CSR Communications at Burgan Bank.

athletes from various Gulf and Arab countries, in line with the values and principles of the Scout Movement. We deeply appreciate Burgan Bank's sponsorship of this event and its ongoing support for sports and youth, which

played a key role in the tournament's success and the achievement of its objectives."

Throughout the year, Burgan Bank provides a diverse program of sports activities and initiatives as part of its comprehensive social responsibility strategy. Notably, Burgan previously organized its first Padel Tournament, an exceptional and inclusive event that provided a unique social experience for participants, attendees, and their families. The Bank has also sponsored and participated in various sports activities, including the Kuwait Equestrian Federation Tour, the Kuwait Women's Football League, the Kuwait Amir Cup, and the Crown Prince Cup Final, and has supported Kuwaiti athletes competing in the Paris 2024 Olympics.

About Burgan Bank
Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is a Kuwait-based conventional bank with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institution sectors. From its earliest days, the Bank has significantly sought to diversify its offering to cater to its growing retail and private banking customer base. Burgan Bank has majority-owned

subsidiaries, collectively known as the "Burgan Bank Group", in the MENAT region. This Group is supported by one of the largest branch networks across the region and includes: Gulf Bank Algeria – AGB (Algeria), Tunis International Bank – TIB (Tunisia), and Burgan Bank Turkey. Furthermore, Burgan Bank has a presence in the UAE through its corporate office, Burgan Financial Services Limited.

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years, through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Moreover, Burgan Bank's brand has been built on a foundation of real values – trust, commitment, excellence, and progression – which serve as a reminder of the high standards to which the Bank always aspires. In fact, the Bank's core philosophy of 'Driven by You' is the foundation on which its products and services are continuously developed. Burgan Bank has achieved the

LEED v4.1 O+M: EB Gold Certification for its Head Office in Kuwait City. The Bank has also obtained the ISO/IEC 27001: 2022 Information Security Management Systems certificate (ISMS), ISO /IEC 27701:2019 Privacy Information Management System (PIMS), ISO/IEC 20000-1: 2018 Information Technology Service Management System (ITSMS) and was re-certified with the prestigious ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System (QMS), making it one of the few banks in the GCC and Kuwait to receive such certification for five consecutive times. At the same time, the Bank has the distinction of being the only Bank in Kuwait to have won the JP Morgan Chase Quality Recognition Award for twenty consecutive years. Moreover, in a testament to its dedication to the development of its human capital, Burgan Bank is the first bank in Kuwait to be certified as a Great Place to Work®, earning the distinct honor in 2023.

Burgan Bank is a majority-owned subsidiary of KIPCO (Kuwait Projects Company), one of the largest holding companies in the MENA region.

Bank commits to digital innovation and customer service

KIB opens its 18th branch in Mubarak Al-Kabeer

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the opening of its 18th branch in the Mubarak Al-Kabeer area. Reflecting KIB's ongoing investment in digital infrastructure, the new branch boasts a modern, innovative design and advanced technological features. This step reaffirms KIB's commitment to expanding its network and offering exceptional banking services across Kuwait.

The opening ceremony was held under the esteemed patronage of His Excellency the Governor of Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Sheikh Sabah Bader Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. The event was attended by KIB's Vice Chairman and CEO, Raed Jawad Bukhamseen, and the General Manager of the Retail Banking Department, Othman Tafweqe, along with other KIB executives.

Commenting on the opening, Tafweqe said: "We are happy to announce the opening of our new branch, which represents another milestone in our expansion plans and reflects our commitment to be within easy reach of our customers around the country. As part of KIB's network expansion strategy, we aim to continue widening our network and enhancing the distribution of KIB branches, thereby improving customer accessibility in both resi-

dential and commercial zones. Our new branch location in Mubarak Al-Kabeer ensures that more customers can conduct their transactions swiftly and conveniently, reinforcing our deep ties to the community."

Emphasizing that the new Mubarak Al-Kabeer branch is equipped with modern banking technology, Tafweqe said: "Our new location is designed to provide an innovative and interactive experience that caters to the diverse needs of all customers. With state-of-the-art technology and contemporary financial tools, as well as a modern design, we aim to ensure that customers enjoy a sense of comfort and luxury throughout every banking interaction. This setup allows for easy access to a wide array of services, products, and offers specifically tailored to meet their various and unique needs."

It is worth noting that KIB remains committed to executing its strategic plans to stay at the forefront of digital innovation while ensuring convenient access for customers across multiple locations in Kuwait. The Bank continues to focus on enhancing the customer experience by offering exclusive features that cater to modern lifestyles and meet the needs and expectations of a diverse customer base, in line with KIB's slogan, 'Bank for Life'.



From left to right: Musab Al-Shalan, Deputy General Manager - Retail Banking Department at KIB; Saleh Sulaiman Al Trad, Board Member at KIB; Dr. Abdullah Abdul Samad Marafi, Board Member at KIB; Raed Jawad Bukhamseen, Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer at KIB; HE Governor of Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Sheikh Sabah Bader Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah; Othman Tafweqe, General Manager of the Retail Banking Department at KIB.

Offers faster deliveries, better access to western parts of Saudi Arabia

New Shipa Delivery Jeddah gateway will cut e-commerce delivery times

RIYADH, Oct 14: Shipa Delivery, a leader in on-demand, first-mile and last-mile deliveries across the GCC, announced that it will add a Jeddah e-commerce gateway to its two existing Saudi gateways in Riyadh and Dammam, reducing delivery times for both inbound and outbound shipments.

The Jeddah gateway will expand international merchants' access to the fast-growing Saudi market, enhancing customer experience with quicker deliveries. It will offer increased capacity during peak periods and reduce emissions for deliveries to Saudi Arabia's Red Sea corridor and western portions of the Kingdom.

Shipa Delivery announced the opening of the Jeddah gateway Sunday at the Global Logistics Forum in Riyadh, alongside its parent company, Agility, a supply chain services, infrastructure and innovation company with more than two decades of investment and operational experience in Saudi Arabia.

Shipa Delivery's footprint in the Kingdom includes more than 18 hubs and 500+ delivery vehicles. The company's proprietary technology platform gives shippers full tracking and visibility, and offers them a one-stop shop to manage clearance, fulfillment,



Borhene Benmena

deliveries, reverse logistics and other functions.

The new Jeddah gateway will open in January and cut 12 to 24 hours from delivery times in the western part of the Kingdom.

"The Jeddah gateway will make our e-commerce clients more competitive by shortening delivery times. It allows us to expand our capacity in



Shipa Delivery

the Kingdom by up to 15%, relieving constraints that arise during peak periods, and it allows us to introduce more routes to more delivery destinations within Saudi Arabia," said Shipa Delivery CEO Borhene Ben Mena.

The Saudi e-commerce market, largest in the Middle East, is one of the fastest-growing in the world. It is growing at an annual rate of 13.5% vs. the sector's global growth rate of 11.2%, according to Economy Middle

East.

About Shipa Delivery
Shipa Delivery provides businesses and consumers with instant access to couriers and vehicles for reliable, cost-effective on-demand, same-day and next-day deliveries in the GCC. Shipa Delivery is backed by Agility, a leading supply chain services, infrastructure and innovation company. For more information about Shipa Delivery, visit www.shipadelivery.com/

With KFH Visa..
The train awaits you

KFH's Visa Campaign

Winners selected for luxurious train trip

KFH announces 6 winners in the 2nd draw of KFH Visa Campaign

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has announced the six winners of its second draw for the "With KFH Visa... Your Train is Waiting" campaign. The campaign, which ran from August to September, offered holders of KFH Visa debit, credit, and prepaid cards the chance to win a luxurious 7-star trip aboard the Belmont Train. Winners had the opportunity to choose between an Asia Trip encompassing Singapore and Malaysia, or a Europe trip exploring France and Italy.

The winners of the second campaign draw are: Osama Ahmed Aziz, Mariam Za'alosaimi, Fatima Moustafa Alshatti, Hamad Sulaiman Alkouh, Aisha Anwar Almutairi, and Abdullah Sultan Alajmi.

Two consecutive draws were held throughout the campaign period, allowing 12 winners to enjoy several privileges as part of a package that includes: one companion for each winner, round-trip business-class tickets, a suite stay on the Belmont Train, accommodation in a 5-star hotel during the trip, and KD 2,000 pocket money deposited into the winning card's balance.

Each customer had one chance to enter the draw for each one (1) Kuwaiti Dinar spent of the total local purchasing transactions (including the purchasing made through online websites in Kuwaiti Dinar).

The customer will have 10 chances to enter the draw for each one (1) Kuwaiti Dinar of the to-

tal purchasing transactions spent overseas (including purchasing made online in foreign currencies).

Withdrawal transactions, whether conducted within or outside Kuwait, as well as cards issued after the campaign's launch, will not be eligible for the draw.

The campaign underscores KFH's commitment to providing customers with the best benefits and demonstrates the Bank's ongoing dedication to rewarding card usage while prioritizing customer security and convenience. It also coincides with the summer holiday and travel season, leading to a high demand for round-the-clock credit card use.

The campaign involves using KFH Visa cards within Kuwait to encourage online transactions, which stimulates sales while enhancing customer satisfaction through security and convenience in their banking experience.

It is worth noting that KFH has implemented comprehensive measures to optimize the card usage experience for customers by developing automated banking card systems and software, enhancing service devices, and improving card quality.

These initiatives prioritize the needs of both cardholders and merchants, with the ultimate goal of delivering an exceptional banking experience to customers, positively impacting customers' satisfaction, usage rates, as well as expanding market share and strengthening KFH leadership in the banking cards market.

Trump film 'The Apprentice' fizzles

'Terrifier 3' slashes 'Joker' to take No. 1 at the box office

NEW YORK, Oct 14, (AP): The choices on the movie marquee this weekend included Joaquin Phoenix as the Joker, a film about Donald Trump, a "Saturday Night Live" origin story and even Pharrell Williams as a Lego. In the end, all were trounced by an ax-wielding clown.

"Terrifier 3," a gory, low-budget slasher from the small distributor Cineverse, topped the weekend box office with \$18.3 million, according to estimates Sunday. The film, a sequel to 2022's "Terrifier 2" (\$15 million worldwide in ticket sales), brings back the murderous Art the Clown (David Howard Thornton) and lets him loose, under the guise of Santa, at a Christmas party.

That "Terrifier 3" could notably overperform expectations and leapfrog both major studios and awards hopefuls was only possible due to the disaster of "Joker: Folie à Deux." After Todd Phillips' "Joker" sequel, starring Phoenix and Lady Gaga, got off to a much-diminished start last weekend (and a "D" CinemaScore from audiences), the Warner Bros. release fell a staggering 81% in its second weekend, bringing in just \$7.1 million.

For a superhero film, such a drop has little precedent. Disappointments like "The Marvels," "The Flash" and "Shazam Fury of the Gods" all managed better second weekends. Such a mass rejection by audiences and crit-

ics is particularly unusual for a follow-up to a massive hit like 2019's "Joker." That film, also from Phillips and Phoenix, grossed more than \$1 billion worldwide against a \$60 million budget.

The sequel was pricier, costing about \$200 million to make. That means "Joker: Folie à Deux" is headed for certain box-office disaster. Globally, it's collected \$165.3 million in ticket sales.

"This is an outlier of a weekend if ever there was one," said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for Comscore. "If you had asked anyone a month ago or even a week ago: Would 'Terrifier 3' be the number one movie amongst all these major-studio films and awards contenders? To have a movie like this come along just shows you that the audience is the ultimate arbiter of what wins at the box office."

The "Joker" slide allowed "The Wild Robot," the acclaimed Universal Pictures and DreamWorks animated movie, to take second place in its third weekend with \$13.4 million. Strong reviews for Chris Sanders' adaptation of Peter Brown's book have led the movie, with Lupita Nyong'o voicing the robot protagonist, to \$83.7 million domestically and \$148 million worldwide.

The young Donald Trump film "The Apprentice," distributed by Briarcliff Entertainment in 1,740 theaters,

opened in a distant 10th place, managing a paltry \$1.6 million in ticket sales. While expectations weren't much higher, audiences still showed little enthusiasm for an election-year origin story of the Republican nominee.

If headlines translated to ticket sales, Ali Abbasi's film might have done better. "The Apprentice," starring Sebastian Stan as Trump under the mentorship of Roy Cohn (Jeremy Strong), has been making news since its debut at the Cannes Film Festival, up to its last-minute release just weeks before the election. The Trump campaign has called the movie "election interference by Hollywood elites."

Abbasi's film, set in the 1970s and 1980s, tested moviegoer's appetite for a political film in an election year. Major studios and specialty labels bailed on acquiring it in part because of the question of whether a movie about Trump would turn off both liberal and conservative moviegoers, alike.

"The Apprentice" will depend on continued awards conversation for Strong and Stan to make a significant mark in theaters before voters turn out at the polls.

Jason Reitman's "Saturday Night" failed to ignite its nationwide expansion. The film, with an ensemble cast led by Gabriel LaBelle's Lorne Michaels, collected \$3.4 million from 2,288 locations.



This image released by Cineverse Entertainment shows David Howard Thornton in a scene from 'Terrifier 3.' (AP)

Throne fetches \$1.49m

'Game of Thrones' auction generates over \$21 million

LOS ANGELES, Oct 14, (AP): "Game of Thrones" fans came out in droves to bid on hundreds of costumes, props and other items from the series in an auction that raked in over \$21 million.

From Thursday through Saturday, the Heritage Auctions event in Dallas featured over 900 lots including suits of armor, swords and weapons, jewelry and several other items of significance from the HBO series.

The top-dollar item was the very thing the characters in the series vied for throughout its eight-season run: the Iron Throne. After a six-minute bidding war, the throne sold for \$1.49 million.

The replica was made of plastic and molded from the original screen-used version, then finished off with metallic paint and jewel embellishments. In the series, the throne was forged with dragon breath that melted the swords of a thousand vanquished challengers and became a symbol of the struggle for power throughout the show's run.

Heritage Auctions said in a statement Sunday that the event brought in \$21.1 million from more than 4,500 bidders. The auction marked Heritage's second-best entertainment event, just shy of the record set by a Debbie Reynolds sale it held in 2011.

Heritage Executive Vice President Joe Maddalena said in a statement he knew the auction would resonate.

"These are extraordinary treasures made by Emmy-winning costume designers and prop makers, who worked tirelessly to adapt George R.R. Mar-

tin's wonderful novels," Maddalena said. "People wanted a piece of that 'Game of Thrones' magic."

Beyond the coveted Iron Throne, over 30 other lots commanded six-figure price tags.

Jon Snow's signature sword, Longclaw, wielded onscreen by Kit Harington, sold for \$400,000 and his night's watch ensemble, featuring a heavy cape, went for \$337,500. Both items kicked off prolonged bidding wars.

Starting bids ranged from \$500 to \$20,000, but several items went for thousands of dollars more. Such was the case for several cloaks and dresses worn by Emilia Clarke as Daenerys Targaryen and Lena Headey as Cersei Lannister. A gray suede ensemble worn by Daenerys sold for \$112,500, exactly \$100,000 over its starting bid, and the red velvet dress Cersei wears in her final appearance on the show went for \$137,500, which was \$122,500 over its starting bid.

Suits of armor also proved popular, especially when they included sought-after weapons. Jaime Lannister's black-leather armor ensemble fetched \$275,000 and his Kingsguard armor - including his iconic Oathkeeper longsword - went for \$212,500. Queensguard armor worn by the character Gregor "The Mountain" Clegane sold for \$212,500.

In an interview when the auction was announced in September, Jay Roewe, HBO's senior vice president of global incentives and production planning, said the sale speaks to the series' staying power five years after its finale.

Film



This image released by Apple TV+ shows Cate Blanchett in a scene from 'Disclaimer.' (AP)

Cuarón and Blanchett make a television series

'Disclaimer' is already a triumph

VENICE, Italy, Oct 14, (AP): "Disclaimer" pulls the rug out from the audience before they've had the chance to get settled.

There's no building of empathy for its central character, Cate Blanchett's Catherine Ravenscroft. There's no luxuriating in her banal every day, at work or in her plush London home with her snobbish husband (Sacha Baron Cohen) and directionless, resentful adult son (Kodi Smit-McPhee). All we know at the beginning of the seven-part series, which is currently streaming on Apple TV+ Friday, is that she's an acclaimed documentary filmmaker who is being feted by Christiane Amanpour.

But almost immediately her life starts to spiral when she receives an anonymous, self-published book about a young mother on vacation in Italy with her toddler son that's shockingly familiar. The woman in the book meets a young man who later drowns while trying to save her son. When the police question her, she denies knowing him and returns to London. It's a memory that Catherine has long kept buried and secret but has now emerged in spectacularly embarrassing, reputation-destroying fashion along with a batch of intimate, provocative photos that the young man, Jonathan (Louis Partridge) took the night before.

"Disclaimer" throws you into the fire; And like everyone else in the show, from strangers reading the book to Catherine's husband, you start making assumptions about and judging her. Not even Blanchett was immune reading the script. She wondered: Is this woman awful? "I was shocked at the layers of judgment that I transposed on the character," Blanchett said. "The challenge and agony of playing a character like this is that the crisis happens as soon as you meet her. We know nothing about her, only what people are saying about her."

Told in seven chapters, the psychological thriller comes from Oscar-winning director Alfonso Cuarón who read Renée Knight's book before he'd even made "Roma." The filmmaker

had never dabbled in longform before, but soon realized while writing the script that it was the only way to tell it in a satisfying way. Instead of getting hung up on the ins-and-outs of making a television show, he decided he would just do it his way: Like a film, or, rather, seven films. After all, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, David Lynch and Krzysztof Kielowski had done it too.

Cuarón had written Catherine with only Blanchett in mind, an actor he knew had the incredible range and sophistication required by the role. He teased that he was also jealous of his friends Alejandro Iñárritu and Guillermo del Toro, who had already had the privilege of directing (and raving about) her. What he didn't expect, and was pleasantly surprised about, was her complete and total commitment as a producer, even as the shoot stretched on to nearly a year.

Collaboration

"I enjoy collaboration," Blanchett said. "I'm interested in the whole thing. And I think you have to know when you are going to be useful and when you need to just sit back and be quiet."

Sometimes, Cuarón said, he'd be on board with her suggestions. Other times he chose a different path and usually regretted it. But they consulted on everything from the smallest details (like prop placement) to the biggest, including the script and casting Kevin Kline as Stephen Brigstocke, the father of the young man Catherine met so many years ago. He's recently lost his wife too, has retired from his job and has nothing but time to stew about how his happy life became so tragic. Revenge is on his mind.

The series plays with form and storytelling, with flashbacks, different perspectives, timelines and narrators doling out information. Amanpour at the outset, in what is meant to be complimentary to Catherine, frames the whole thing aptly: "Beware of narrative and form.

Their power can bring us closer to the truth, but they can also be a weapon with a great power to manipulate."

In that spirit, Cuarón's longtime cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki even suggested bringing in another director of photography, Bruno Delbonnel, to add a different visual element as well. Don't worry if that sounds like you need a film degree to recognize or appreciate the distinction between a Lubezki or a Delbonnel shot.

"It's not about noticing," Cuarón said. "It's about the experience and following different narratives. We try to approach each one of these narratives with a different language."

"Disclaimer" debuted like a film too, at the Venice Film Festival last month. Though the festival often hosts auteur-driven series alongside the feature films, they're not often discussed in the same breath as the competition slate of Oscar hopefuls. "Disclaimer" hit differently, though. In a lineup that had all forms of ambitious cinematic fare from modern masters, some were even calling the show "the best film of the festival." Audiences were shown episodes one through four one day, and the final three on the next.

While Cuarón welcomes viewers to manage their own viewing schedule, whether it's as they drop on Apple TV+ (two episodes on Oct. 11, two on Oct. 18, and one every Friday following) waiting to watch in two batches, divided up as they were in Venice, isn't a bad idea either. The main thing, Blanchett and Cuarón agree, is that attention is key. Also, it's something you might find yourself wanting to watch again after the finale airs on Nov. 8.

"Something we talked about was the hope that people went back and watched it again and have an entirely different perspective on things that we take for granted," Blanchett said.

Cuarón went a step further: "A second view should give you a completely different reading than the first view."

Variety

SPRINGFIELD, Mass.: Honored for his devotion to a basketball team that doesn't have a Hall of Fame history, Billy Crystal couldn't help but note the irony.

"How strange to be getting a ring before any of the Clippers," he said.

The actor is being added to the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame's James F. Goldstein SuperFan Gallery and took part in a ceremony Sunday along with fellow entertainer and filmmaker Spike Lee and Philadelphia businessman Alan Horwitz. Longtime Lakers fan Jack Nicholson is also being added but the three-time Academy Award winner was not able to attend.

Crystal wore a sports jacket and slacks, while Lee and Horwitz dressed as if they were sitting courtside. Lee, with an orange vest over a New York sweatshirt and topped by a black Knicks bucket hat, sparred with the opposition as if he was in his seat at Madison Square Garden.

"I saw some Boston Celtic green. Uh-uh," he said, before showing the fans that he had brought coach Red Holzman's 1973 NBA championship ring, the last one won by

the Knicks.

"It's been a long time, but I think this year it's going to be orange-and-blue skies," Lee said.

Horwitz, known as the 76ers' Sixth Man, wore a 76ers sweatshirt, a blue Sixers hat and blue-and-white colored sneakers. He got choked up while thinking about how proud his mother would have been had she known about his honor.

Their time as basketball fans goes back more than five decades. Horwitz watched the Philadelphia Warriors when Wilt Chamberlain was a rookie in 1959. Crystal was in high school a couple of years earlier when he was drawn to another high schooler, Larry Brown, who would later be enshrined after winning championships as a coach in college and the NBA.

Lee was in the arena when the Knicks won their first championship in 1970 and Crystal was at MSG plenty of times himself, having started out as a Knicks fan. (AP)

ZHENGZHOU: A royal tomb dating back approximately 5,000 years has been discovered at a ruins site in central China's Henan Province, making it one of the largest from its time, with over 350 artifacts unearthed to date.

Located in the Wangzhuang ruins in the city of Yongcheng, the tomb covers a total area of over 17 square meters, a super large size back then. Archaeologists believe the tomb's owner was a king of a prehistoric state.

The Wangzhuang ruins belong to the middle and later period of the Dawenkou Culture (4000 B.C.-2600 B.C.), a culture of the late Neolithic Age. (Xinhua)



Crystal



This combination of images released by Heritage Auctions shows costumes worn by characters from 'Game of Thrones,' from left, armor worn by Gregor 'The Mountain' Clegane, Jon Snow's Night's Watch ensemble, and Jaime Lannister's full Kingsguard armor. (AP)

Actor shares his immigrant journey in ‘Everyone’s Invited’

Valderrama’s ‘American Story’ honors family and country



Actor Wilmer Valderrama poses for a portrait on Saturday, Sept. 21, 2024, in Los Angeles. (AP)

LOS ANGELES, Oct 14, (AP): Wilmer Valderrama vowed to “never let his family down” the night that he landed his breakthrough role as foreign exchange student Fez on “That ‘70s Show.” “I have been given the chance to lift us all, and I won’t blow this incredible opportunity. Every performance I give will be the absolute best anyone has ever seen,” he writes in his memoir “An American Story: Everyone’s Invited.” “Everyone’s Invited,” released last month, chronicles his family’s journey as Venezuelan immigrants in the United States and a young boy’s dream to help his family while making his acting dreams a reality.

At 44, Valderrama says he’s stayed true to his teenage vow and has always felt a sense of urgency to provide his family with a “happier life.” “I grew up in Venezuela, so, I was front row to understand how it all could have been. So, I’m just incredibly grateful. I don’t know if I can ever

put my guard down,” said the actor and producer. Valderrama says he did not set out to release a memoir about his upbringing and career. The story unfolded as he reflected on his work with the United Service Organizations (USO), which brings entertainment to service members away from home.

“I started realizing, ‘Oh my God, every aspect of my life, kind of married, that thought’ (of service). And, you know, my team immediately was like, ‘Dude, this is a memoir,’” he said.

Released during Hispanic Heritage Month and in an election year, Valderrama says the timing was “serendipitous.” He wanted to use the memoir as a way to remind the larger Latino community in the United States to own their stories and contributions.

“I think that our story as a community is so powerful, and we have to continue to remember that we belong,” he said.

Throughout the book, Valderrama discusses his close relationships with his ‘70s show cast mates with much care and stays away from discussing scandals. He does not discuss scandals involving his co-star Danny Masterson, who was found guilty of two counts of rape in 2023 and is serving a 30-year prison sentence. Valderrama also steers clear of stories that made him the subject of tabloid fascination. This includes his high-profile relationships with actors Demi Lovato and Lindsay Lohan.

When asked why he chose to opt out of mentioning his past relationships, Valderrama responded that his focus when writing this book was on the theme of service.

“The book is about my family - my mother, and my father’s story. I traveled with the USO for so many years; all of those stories, those brothers and sisters of uniform, kind of taught me so much about who protects the freedoms and all of that.

And that was that’s what the book is about.”

The only romantic relationship mentioned in the book is the one with his current fiancée Amanda Pacheco.

Valderrama and Pacheco both share a daughter and the actor hopes that one day, his young daughter will no longer have to worry about the lack of Latino representation in Hollywood.

“I certainly hope she can appreciate the fight that most of us had to do to actually open the gate for a lot of these things to be possible,” he said.

His vow to his family is one that he has also made to his cultural community: to showcase their achievements for audiences who might not interact with Latinos on a daily basis.

“I hope there are a lot of conversations that can get started with the book so that we can remind ourselves how close to each other’s interests we really are and how much we have been pushed away from one another,” Valderrama said.

China Now Fest

China’s AI music rocks New York

NEW YORK, Oct 14, (Xinhua): The 7th China Now Festival opened on Saturday with a groundbreaking focus on AI-driven music at Carnegie Hall, New York City.

“Music serves as an excellent lubricant in US-China relations. It is a form of cultural exchange, a connection from heart to heart,” said the festival’s Artistic Director Cai Jindong at the US-China Music Forum, held before the opening concert.

Composers discussed the growing role of AI in music at the forum, providing the audience with fresh insights into this emerging frontier.

“With China’s rapid development over the past 30 years, we now have the opportunity to explore new frontiers in music creation through AI technology,” said Cai.

Co-hosted by the US-China Music Institute of Bard College Conservatory of Music and the Central Conservatory of Music of China (CCOM), the festival runs through Oct. 19, featuring three concerts and a music forum.

This year’s theme, “Composing the Future,” highlights the intersection of music and AI technology, marking a significant step forward in the collaboration between traditional music composition and cutting-edge technology.

At Saturday’s concert, the festival introduced two orchestral works created by the AI and Music Information Technology Department of the CCOM: “Overture: Welcome” and “A Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains.”

These pieces leverage AI programming to achieve effects impossible through conventional methods, offering a glimpse into the future of music creation.

Li Xiaobing, director of the AI Composition System at the CCOM, said: “This performance only showcased a small portion of AI-composed music due to the limited equipment in the concert hall. We hope to bring even more immersive sensory experiences to New York next time, potentially even featuring a robot conductor leading the orchestra.”

The week-long event brings together five generations of composers and musicians from both China and the United States, spanning from the 1960s to the 2000s. Notable participants include Qin Wenchen from the CCOM and American composer Anthony Paul De Ritis.

The Orchestra Now from Bard College, in collaboration with the CCOM, also performed several contemporary works inspired by Chinese aesthetics. Gong Tianpeng’s “Beijing · Opera” and Du Yun’s “The Hundred-Headed Beast” stood out as modern interpretations of traditional Chinese culture. Gong’s Tenth Symphony, adapted specifically for the festival, integrated elements of Peking (Beijing) opera.

In “Beijing · Opera,” instruments such as strings, percussion, and organ were skillfully combined to evoke the traditional charm of Peking opera while incorporating modern symphonic techniques. The violin and cello conveyed the emotional depth of the opera’s characters, while the diverse percussion added rhythm and dramatic effect. The organ’s inclusion enhanced the work’s spatial and solemn qualities, creating a profound experience for the audience.



Michelle Joy of Cannons performs during the second weekend of the Austin City Limits Music Festival on Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024, at Zilker Metropolitan Park in Austin, Texas. Austin City Limits Music Festival is an annual music festival that takes place in Zilker Park in Austin, Texas, on two consecutive three-day weekends and is inspired by the KLRU/PBS music series Austin City Limits. The festival is produced by Austin-based company C3 Presents, which also produces Chicago’s Lollapalooza. (AP)

Photography



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

Photographer captures perfect light from above in human tower competition

Associated Press photographer and two-time Pulitzer Prize winner Emilio Morenatti, of Jerez de la Frontera, Spain, has visited more than 50 countries in an acclaimed 30-year career. Here’s what he had to say about covering the “Castells” in his home country.

This is the largest “Castells” -- human towers competition -- and one of the most important traditions in Catalonia, which takes place in an old bullring in Tarragona. There, the “collas” -- teams -- gather to compete

over a weekend to build the best human tower. Some of these towers reach over 16 meters (52½ feet) in height and require more than 1,000 people in perfect formation to achieve.

Although it might seem that the photograph was taken with a drone, that’s not the case. It’s actually an almost overhead shot captured from a narrow catwalk suspended about 30 meters (98 feet) high, using a 17mm wide-angle lens mounted on a Sony Alpha 1 camera. To work at that height, you need to

wear a safety harness and, above all, not be afraid of heights. I’ve suffered from vertigo ever since I lost my leg in a Taliban attack in Afghanistan, so the challenge of moving across a shaky catwalk with every step and motion was even greater.

I believe this photo works because a ray of light illuminates the top of the human tower, highlighting and defining it from the rest of the image, which remains slightly darker. But this didn’t happen by chance. I had been observing, since early morning, how a timid

ray of sunlight was entering the arena from the side, so it was just a matter of calculating and waiting for the height of one of the towers to intercept it. And that’s exactly what happened. As the top of the human tower rose higher, it got closer to the ray of light that was already crossing the plaza, gaining exposure along the way. So, when the last person to crown the tower - in this case, a 6-year-old girl - raised her right hand in a gesture of victory, I knew that was the exact moment I had been waiting for. (AP)

Rock band now knows what love is

After years of wait, Foreigner enters Rock Hall

NEW YORK, Oct 14, (AP): This month, the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame rectifies a wrong that many rock fans will celebrate with their lighters up in the air -- the band Foreigner will finally be welcomed in.

The English-American rockers -- with hits like “Cold as Ice,” “Hot Blooded” and “Waiting for a Girl Like You” -- topped the charts in the 1970s and ‘80s but never made it into the hall -- much less a ballot -- until last year, despite being eligible for more than 20 years.

“It’s just been a long wait and I know that we’ve done enough in our career to warrant induction,” says Al Greenwood, keyboardist and a founding member. “I’m not bitter about it. I mean, we’re finally getting in and that’s great.”

Foreigner, led by singer Lou Gramm and guitarist Mick Jones, recorded nine Top 10 hits on the Billboard Hot 100 and six Top 10 albums on the Billboard 200, including “4,” which spent 10 weeks in the top spot in 1981.

Foreigner were nominated for three Grammys and their songs have been heard on everything “Miami Vice” and “The Simpsons” to “Arrested Development” and “Stranger Things.” Tone-Loc sampled “Hot Blooded” to create “Funky Cold Medina.”

“We weren’t the best looking band in the world. We weren’t the most dress-conscious band in the world. But Mick and Lou came up with some very, very strong songs and that’s what’s kept it going,” bassist Rick Willis says. “Sixteen top 30 hits isn’t too shabby.”

The belated embrace by rock’s establishment has a bittersweet taste, since original bassist Ed Gagliardi and multi-instrumentalist Ian McDonald have died and Jones has been sidelined by Parkinson’s disease. The band will be inducted Oct. 19 in Cleveland.

The opening of the door for Foreigner coincided with a change in hall leader-

ship in 2023 that led to key legacy acts getting invited, like Cher and Peter Frampton. Foreigner were among the top vote getters when the fans voted, nabbing almost 528,000 votes or 12.54%.

They’ll join Mary J. Blige, A Tribe Called Quest, Kool & the Gang, Ozzy Osbourne, Dave Matthews Band, the late Jimmy Buffett, MC5, Dionne Warwick, Alexis Korner, the late John Mayall and Big Mama Thornton in the class of ‘24.

“I think a lot of the talent that is in this class has been waiting on the out-

side as well as Foreigner,” says Greenwood. “I’m just so thankful that I’m in this class with such incredible talent.”

Musical

The band got a public push from Jones’ son-in-law Mark Ronson, who recruited musical friends such as Paul McCartney, Dave Grohl, Slash, Jack Black and the Red Hot Chili Peppers’ Chad Smith.

Foreigner in their heyday offered varied songs -- the ballad “I Want to

Know What Love Is” is very different from “Urgent” -- but many have endured to become the backbone of classic rock playlists. A new line-up -- dubbed Foreigner 2.0 -- attract tens of thousands a night on tour.

Jones started the American-British band in 1976 in New York City, selecting each of its members, the first being Greenwood, who he’d never met. The keyboardist was invited to jam with Jones in a storage area of the band’s manager’s office.

But Greenwood soon grew disillusioned by the lack of progress over two weeks and decided to tell Jones he was going back to his own band.

“I’m about to go up to Mick and Mick comes in and says, ‘I’ve got this song.’ And he starts playing ‘Feels Like the First Time’ on guitar. And I go, ‘Wow, I think we got something here,’” he says laughing. “Thankfully, I did not leave.”

The fledgling band’s four-song demo -- which included a raw version of “Feels Like the First Time” -- was turned down by all the major record labels until music legend John Kalodner convinced Atlantic Records to reconsider.

Four hit albums in five years -- “Foreigner,” “Double Vision,” “Head Games” and “4” -- cemented the band’s place in classic rock history but not in the Rock Hall. Members watched bands that used to open for Foreigner go in while they waited.

“I don’t think any of us quite believed it because we thought, well, it was never going to happen,” says Willis, who spent 12 years in Foreigner and then went into Bad Company.

Willis joined in 1979 after having worked with Frampton and Roxy Music. He was in New York and called Gramm because he heard Foreigner was looking for a new bassist. He was invited to their open auditions the next day.

After Willis showed his chops on songs like “Double Vision” and “Hot Blooded,” drummer Dennis Elliott announced he wanted Willis in the band. There were some 70 bassists still waiting to audition.

Willis urgently left to fly home to London to help care for his two young children, who were suffering from whooping cough and chickenpox, and woke up to a phone call that he was in the band. He got on the next flight to New York and straight into the studio for “Head Games.”



Thom Gimbel, (from left), Michael Bluestein, Mick Jones, Kelly Hansen, Jeff Pilson and Bruce Watson of Foreigner pose for a portrait during the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah on Jan. 20, 2017. (AP)

The Conversation

Is it COVID-19? Flu?

New at-home rapid tests revolutionize diagnoses

By Julie Sullivan, Emory University and Wilbur Lam, Georgia Institute of Technology

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

A scratchy, sore throat, a relentless fever, a pounding head and a nasty cough - these symptoms all scream upper respiratory illness. But which one?

Many of the viruses that cause upper respiratory infections such as influenza A or B and the virus that causes COVID-19 all employ similar tactics. They target the same areas in your body - primarily the upper and lower airways - and this shared battleground triggers a similar response from your immune system. Overlapping symptoms - fever, cough, fatigue, aches and pains - make it difficult to determine what may be the underlying cause.

Now, at-home rapid tests can simultaneously determine whether someone has COVID-19 or the flu. Thanks in part to the National Institutes of Health's Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics, or RADx, program, the Food and Drug Administration has provided emergency use authorization for seven at-home rapid tests that can distinguish between COVID-19, influenza A and influenza B.

Our team in Atlanta - composed of biomedical engineers, clinicians and researchers at Emory University, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and Georgia Institute of Technology - is part of the RADx Test Verification Core. We closely collaborate with other institutions and agencies to determine whether and how well COVID-19 and influenza diagnostics work, effectively testing the tests. Our center has worked with almost every COVID and flu diagnostic on the market, and our data helped inform the instructions you might see in many of the home test kits on the market.

While no test is perfect, to now be able to test for certain viruses at home when symptoms begin can help patients and their doctors come up with appropriate care plans sooner.

Respiratory

Traditionally, identifying the virus causing upper respiratory illness symptoms required going to a clinic or hospital for a trained medical professional to collect a nasopharyngeal sample. This involves inserting a long, fiber-tipped swab that looks like a skinny Q-tip into one of your nostrils and all the way to the back of your nose and throat to collect virus-containing secretions. The sample is then typically sent to a lab for analysis, which could take hours to days for results.

Thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, the possibility of using over-the-counter tests to diagnose respiratory illnesses at home became a reality. These tests used a much gentler and less invasive nasal swab and could also be done by anyone, anytime and in their own home. However, these tests were designed to diagnose only COVID-19 and could not distinguish between other types of illnesses. Since then, researchers have

developed over-the-counter multiplex tests that can screen for more than one respiratory infection at once. In 2023, Pfizer's Lucira test became the first at-home diagnostic test for both COVID-19 and influenza to gain emergency use authorization.

There are two primary forms of at-home COVID-19 and COVID-19/flu combination tests: molecular tests such as PCR that detect genetic material from the virus, and antigen tests - commonly referred to as rapid tests - that detect proteins called antigens from the virus.

The majority of over-the-counter COVID-19 and COVID-19/flu tests on the market are antigen tests. They detect the presence of antigens in your nasal secretions that act as a biological signature for a specific virus. If viral antigens are present, that means you're likely infected.

To detect these antigens, rapid tests have paper-like strips coated with specially engineered antibodies that function like a molecular Velcro, sticking only to a specific antigen. Scientists design and manufacture specialized strips to recognize specific viral antigens, like those belonging to influenza A, influenza B or the virus that causes COVID-19.

Antibodies

The antibodies for these viral targets are placed on the strip, and when someone's nasal sample has viral proteins that are applied to the test strip, a line will appear for that virus in particular.

Like all technologies, rapid antigen tests have limitations.

Compared with lab-based PCR tests that can detect the presence of small amounts of pathogen by amplifying them, antigen tests are typically less sensitive than PCR and could miss an infection in some cases.

All at-home COVID-19 and COVID-19/flu antigen tests are authorized for repeat use. This means if someone is experiencing symptoms - or has been exposed to someone with COVID-19 but is not experiencing symptoms - and has a negative result for their first test, they should retest 48 hours later.

Another limitation to rapid antigen tests is that currently they are designed to test only for COVID-19, influenza A and influenza B. Currently available over-the-counter tests aren't able to detect illnesses from pathogens that look like these viruses and cause similar symptoms, such as adenovirus or strep. (AP)



A nurse hooks up an IV to a flu patient at Upson Regional Medical Center in Thomaston, Ga., Feb. 9, 2018. (AP)

Kuwait Oncology Association and partners collaborate under CSR framework

stc launches 'Your Awareness Protects You' campaign to raise breast cancer awareness

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 14: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, launched its latest breast cancer awareness campaign called, "Your Awareness Protects You" in line with Breast Cancer Awareness Month to promote early detection and prevention. The initiative is part of stc's ongoing commitment to foster health and well-being across the community in line with its extensive corporate social responsibility framework.

The campaign consists of both internal and external events and collaborations aimed at promoting early detection and prevention throughout the month of October. Launching Breast Cancer Awareness campaign comes as an annual initiative initiated by stc to spread awareness on the disease and the different early detection methods available.

This year, stc has partnered with the Kuwait Oncology Association, which was established in 2005 and falls under the umbrella of the Kuwait Medical Association. The association seeks to spread awareness and enhance the quality of healthcare and awareness for



cancer patients and healthcare providers in Kuwait. The association's goal is in line with stc's annual campaign to raise awareness about breast cancer and increase health awareness to enhance the health of our society through

effective community partnerships between private entities and institutions and governmental bodies. Through our collaboration with the Kuwait Oncology Association, stc will publish educational and informative content by spe-

cialized doctors on its digital channels to raise awareness and provide health advice related to breast cancer.

The campaign activities will include various challenges that will be held at The Athlete's Foot in The Avenues, one of the brands represented by Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Co. This initiative aligns with the two companies' shared principles of CSR, with health and fitness as key pillars of their sustainable strategies.

Aside from its external activities, stc has organized a special event for female employees on breast cancer awareness in collaboration with Alia International Hospital. The event included specialists from Alia International Hospital that provided female employees with valuable insights related to early detection and performing regular check-ups. Female employees also got a chance to participate in private health screenings conducted by the hospital, as well as receive coupons for free mammograms.

Danah AlJasem, General Manager of Corporate Communications at stc, said, "Breast Cancer Awareness Month is considered to be one of the primary awareness campaigns organized under our CSR program.

Elon Musk celebrates historic moment

SpaceX's Starship booster caught by mechanical arms in historic test flight

NEW YORK, Oct 14, (AP) - SpaceX pulled off the boldest test flight yet of its enormous Starship rocket on Sunday, catching the returning booster back at the launch pad with mechanical arms.

A jubilant Elon Musk called it "science fiction without the fiction part." Towering almost 400 feet (121 meters), the empty Starship blasted off at sunrise from the southern tip of Texas near the Mexican border. It arced over the Gulf of Mexico like the four Starships before it that ended up being destroyed, either soon after liftoff or while ditching into the sea. The previous one in June had been the most successful until Sunday's demo, completing its flight without exploding.

This time, Musk, SpaceX's CEO and founder, upped the challenge for the rocket that he plans to use to send people back to the moon and on to Mars.

Command

At the flight director's command, the first-stage booster flew back to the launch pad where it had blasted off seven minutes earlier. The launch tower's monstrous metal arms, dubbed chopsticks, caught the descending 232-foot (71-meter) stainless steel booster and gripped it tightly, dangling it well above the ground.

"The tower has caught the rocket!!" Musk announced via X. "Big step towards making life multiplanetary was made today."

Company employees screamed in joy, jumping and pumping their fists into the air. NASA joined in the celebration, with Administrator Bill Nelson sending congratulations.

Continued testing of Starship will prepare the nation for landing astronauts at the moon's south pole, Nelson noted. NASA's new Artemis program is the follow-up to Apollo, which put 12 men on the moon more than a half-century ago.

"Folks, this is a day for the engineering history books," SpaceX engineering manager Kate Tice said from SpaceX headquarters in Hawthorne, California.



SpaceX's mega rocket booster returns to the launch pad to be captured during a test flight Sunday, Oct. 13, in Boca Chica, Texas. (AP)

"Even in this day and age, what we just saw is magic," added company spokesman Dan Huot from near the launch and landing site. "I am shaking right now."

It was up to the flight director to decide, in real time with a manual control, whether to attempt the landing. SpaceX said both the booster and launch tower had to be in good, stable condition. Otherwise, it was going to end up in the gulf like the previous ones. Everything was judged to be ready for the catch.

The retro-looking spacecraft launched by the booster continued around the world, soaring more than 130 miles (212 kilometers) high. An hour after liftoff, it made a controlled landing in the Indian Ocean, adding to

the day's achievement. Cameras on a nearby buoy showed flames shooting up from the water as the spacecraft impacted precisely at the targeted spot and sank, as planned.

"What a day," Huot said. "Let's get ready for the next one."

The June flight came up short at the end after pieces came off. SpaceX upgraded the software and reworked the heat shield, improving the thermal tiles.

SpaceX has been recovering the first-stage boosters of its smaller Falcon 9 rockets for nine years, after delivering satellites and crews to orbit from Florida or California. But they land on floating ocean platforms or on concrete slabs several miles from their launch pads - not on them.



Angelina, who is fleeing the Israeli airstrikes with her family from Dahiyeh, receives a polio vaccine in an empty building complex, in Beirut, Lebanon, Wednesday, Oct. 9. (AP)

2 doses must

2nd round of polio shot starts in Gaza

GAZA, Oct 14, (Xinhua) - Gaza-based health authorities have said that the second round of the polio vaccination campaign in the central Gaza Strip is scheduled to start on Monday for three or four days.

During the second round of the campaign, an estimated 591,700 children aged under ten in Gaza will be vaccinated with a second dose, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on social media platform X on Friday.

A minimum of two doses of novel oral polio vaccine type 2 are needed to interrupt poliovirus transmission, it added.

The Gaza health authorities, the WHO, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and the UN Children's Fund jointly carried out the campaign.

According to the WHO, around 560,000 children under ten years old were vaccinated against polio during the first round of an emergency vaccination campaign conducted in three phases from Sept. 1 to Sept. 12 in the Gaza Strip.

Mpox: Zimbabwe on Sunday announced two confirmed cases of mpox in people who have traveled to South Africa and Tanzania.

Zimbabwe's Health and Child Care Minister Douglas Mombeshora said in a statement that both cases were stable, no longer infectious and were being managed at home.

"Both cases are in isolation at home and are receiving appropriate care," he said.

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Yin clinches LPGA Buick Shanghai title

McCarty wins in Utah for first PGA Tour title

IVINS, Utah, Oct 14, (AP): Matt McCarty started the year on the Korn Ferry Tour and now is headed to the Masters, winning his first PGA Tour title Sunday at the Black Desert Championship with a 4-under 67 and one swing that all but sealed it.

McCarty won three times on the Korn Ferry Tour to earn an instant promotion in August. In his third start on the PGA Tour, he made winning look just as easy. Staked to a two-shot lead going into the final round, he never trailed at Black Desert Resort and won by three shots.

Stephan Jaeger closed within one shot with birdies on the 14th and 15th. McCarty effectively ended any threat with a 3-wood on the 310-yard 14th that was close to perfect, bounding onto the green and settling 3 1/2 feet from the cup for an eagle.

The victory means the 26-year-old left-hander from Arizona is assured of being in three of the majors next year. He gets into the Masters and PGA Championship with his PGA Tour title, and McCarty already earned a spot in the U.S. Open by leading the Korn Ferry Tour points list.

McCarty becomes the first player since Jason Gore

to win three times on the developmental tour to earn an instant promotion and then win on the PGA Tour in the same season. He finished at 23-under 261 and earned \$1.35 million.

Dan Bradbury of England closed with a 5-under 66 to win the Open de France by one stroke.

The 25-year-old Bradbury stepped it up with four birdies on the back nine to finish at 16-under 268 for his second European tour career win. He held off Denmark's Jeff Winther (64). The victory sends Bradbury to the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship and the DP World Tour Championship in Dubai.

Winther could only par the last two holes and finished tied for second with Thorbjørn Olesen (68), England's Sam Bristow (68) and Germany's Yannik Paul (66) at Le Golf National on the outskirts of Paris. Swedish golfer Jesper Svensson, who held a one-stroke overnight lead from Olesen and Bristow, shot 76 and tied for 27th. Justin Rose had a 69 and tied for 13th. Lev Grinberg, the 16-year-old Ukrainian playing for just the fifth time on the European tour, tied for 37th.

Ruoning Yin shot an 8-under 64 to win the LPGA

Buick Shanghai tournament, the fourth career LPGA victory for the Chinese golfer.

Yin trailed third-round leader Mao Saigo of Japan by one stroke, but rallied with birdies on five of the final six holes. Yin finished on 25-under 263 at the Qizhong Garden Golf Club.

Saigo closed with a 71 and tied for second with Sei Young Kim of South Korea, who carded a 68. Saigo was looking for her first LPGA Tour victory. They were both six strokes off the lead, finishing at 19-under 269. Yealimi Noh of the United States carded a 67 on Sunday to finish in fourth place, seven strokes behind the winner.

Jerry Kelly closed with a 5-under 67 and won the SAS Championship when Padraig Harrington narrowly missed an 8-foot par putt that would have forced a playoff, giving Kelly his first PGA Tour Champions title in two years.

Kelly was bogey-free until a three-putt from 40 feet on the final hole. Padraig Harrington, who started the final round with a three-shot lead, birdied the par-5 17th to tie for the lead. But he went long on the 18th, chipped 8 feet by and missed the par putt for a 71.



Ruoning Yin of China holds up her trophy for photos after winning the LPGA Shanghai golf tournament at China's Shanghai Qizhong Garden Golf Club. (AP)

Captain one of two changes to the team

Stokes back in England team for 2nd test against Pakistan

MULTAN, Pakistan, Oct 14, (AP): England cricket captain Ben Stokes was selected Monday for the second test against Pakistan in Multan after recovering from a torn hamstring that kept him out for two months.

Stokes is one of two changes to the team that won a remarkable first test of the series, which was also played in Multan.

Matt Potts was recalled, too, with fellow fast bowlers Gus Atkinson and Chris Woakes left out. The match starts Tuesday.

Stokes sustained his hamstring injury in August, forcing him out of the entire series when England beat Sri Lanka 2-1. He had played in all three tests in the series against the West Indies, which was won 3-0 by his team in July.

"I like to keep myself in a positive mindset and it allows me telling myself, 'When you get back onto the field, make sure that you're fitter than you were when you got injured,'" Stokes said in a news conference.

"You won't see me miss any test match unless I'm injured."

Ollie Pope took the captaincy in Stokes' absence, winning three of his four matches in interim control, including the first test in Multan when Pakistan became the first team to lose a test after scoring more than 500 runs when batting first.

England replied by scoring 823-7 declared in its first innings - the fourth-highest total in the history of test cricket - to lay the platform for a famous victory.

For Stokes, it summed up the so-called "Bazball" approach England has adopted since Brendon McCul-

lum arrived as coach in 2022.

"We always try and play to make sure there's a result," all-rounder Stokes said. "Sometimes there are moments in the games where we might have to do something a little bit out of the ordinary to keep the game alive so that both teams have a chance of winning."

"That's how, with me being captain and Baz being coach, that's how we both view that cricket should be the winner."

Potts last played for England's test team in the second test against Sri Lanka at Lord's, though he did feature in the recent ODI series against Australia.

Stokes said he could bowl if necessary, so he and Potts will freshen up the seam attack, with Atkinson and Woakes rested after playing all six tests over the summer and the first two tests against Pakistan coming back-to-back.

The first test was hard on pace bowlers because the pitch offered little to seamers. According to Stokes, the second test is set to be played on the same strip.

"I'll be surprised if we turn up tomorrow and we're playing a different one," said Stokes, who added that it would be "the first time ever" he has played consecutive tests on the same wicket.

"We could sit here and say, 'It's definitely going to do this, it is definitely going to do that,' but who knows? You'd like to think that it's going to offer the spinners a little bit more than it did last week."

England: Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Ollie Pope, Joe Root, Harry Brook, Ben Stokes (captain), Jamie Smith, Brydon Carse, Matt Potts, Jack Leach, Shoaib Bashir.

'I wear red as a respect'

Five years on, Djokovic continues China story at Shanghai Masters

SHANGHAI, Oct 14, (Xinhua): Dressed in red from jersey to shoes, 37-year-old Novak Djokovic paid tribute to all the fans at Qizhong Forest Sports City Arena and wrote different Chinese characters on the camera lens after winning a match, continuing his routine of showing love for China at the ATP Shanghai Masters.

Djokovic told the press that the whole world knows the red color represents China. "I do it intentionally. I wear red as a respect to Chinese culture and tradition. Hopefully, red brings luck. I've been playing well in red, so I keep the tradition going," he said.

Though losing to world No.1 Jan-nik Sinner in the final of the Shanghai Masters on Sunday, Djokovic proved he still has competitiveness in high-level events.

"My main motivation comes from a lot of passion for the sport and also the desire to keep competing. There are kinds of matches and challenges that I still strive for being in a position to play against the best players in the world on the biggest stage of the finals of the biggest tournaments," he said.

Having clinched four Shanghai Masters titles, Djokovic has made his name a legend among Chinese fans. "It's been five years, coming back to one of the happiest places I've had in my career, a country where I had plenty of success on the tennis courts, many titles won, great memories," Djokovic said.

The great support from the fans in China has left a strong impres-

sion on the Serbian star. "They are probably the most unique, the most passionate fans and so dedicated, daily waiting for you and really feeding you with a lot of love and energy," he noted.

Djokovic has also paid close attention to the development of tennis in China. As the Paris Olympic champion for men's singles, Djokovic revealed he is a "big fan" of Zheng Qinwen, who claimed gold in the women's singles, making history for China.

"She's so young. She made China proud this year at the Olympic Games. She brought the gold medal, I think first ever in tennis for China, so it's a big deal. She's a great person, and a really good player that keeps on improving. We have a nice relationship off the court, and when we have a chance, we chat," said Djokovic, adding that he is available to Zheng anytime she wants his advice.

Djokovic also described Zhang Zhizhen as "the most successful male Chinese player." "He's climbing the rankings, and he's helping also other players to believe that they can get to the high rankings," Djokovic said.

The tennis legend is optimistic about the future of Chinese tennis. "I think the Chinese mentality is such that, when they are dedicated to something, they're really dedicated to something, you can see that working hard is not an issue here. I'm really happy and excited to see how Chinese tennis will grow in the future," Djokovic noted.

Liberty evens WNBA Finals



New York Liberty's Leonie Fiebich, left, dribbles against Minnesota Lynx's Napheesa Collier, right, during the first half in Game 2 of a WNBA basketball final playoff series in New York. (AP)

Stewart stars in win over Lynx

NEW YORK, Oct 14, (AP): Breanna Stewart wasn't going to let history repeat itself.

With the Minnesota Lynx making another fourth quarter run, the two-time league MVP refused to let the New York Liberty lose again.

Stewart scored 21 points and had a WNBA Finals record seven steals to help the Liberty beat the Lynx 80-66 on Sunday in Game 2 of the WNBA Finals.

Just like Game 1, New York built a double-digit lead in the first half, only to see it evaporate. This time they didn't completely collapse, holding on to even the series 1-1 as it shifts to Minnesota for Game 3 on Wednesday night.

"The moment the game ended Thursday night I was looking forward to Sunday to change things, change the narrative a little bit," Stewart said. "Be the same I was and be obviously better."

Minnesota was down nine early in the fourth before getting within 68-66 on Courtney Williams' layup with 3:40 left in the game. Those were the last points Minnesota would score.

"Our offense was bad at a time when we really needed it. Our pace was slow," Minnesota coach

Cheryl Reeve said. "Taking too long to get into things, and you know, I don't think we were terribly hard to play against from that standpoint. And that was obviously a difficult time to be doing that."

New York clamped down defensively and converted offensively. Betnijah Laney-Hamilton started the game-closing 12-0 run with a 3-pointer in the corner. Stewart's putback with 57 seconds left gave New York a double-digit advantage. She missed a free throw with 0.8 seconds left in regulation of Game 1 that would have lifted New York to victory in that contest.

Laney-Hamilton finished with 20 points, hitting key shots for the team throughout the game as well as being a defensive stopper. She missed more than a month after injuring her right knee before the Olympic break. She's still been working her way back.

"I think what she brings is this grit, this toughness," Liberty coach Sandy Brondello said. "All of us know she's giving us whatever she's got. And the way that she continued to be aggressive, they were going under on her and she knocked that thing down with confidence."

Stewart also had eight rebounds and five assists to go with the steals mark.

"I wanted to make it difficult for all the players I

was going against," Stewart said.

Once again the game drew a sellout crowd of 18,046 that included Jennifer Hudson, Katie Couric, Fat Joe and UConn coach Geno Auriemma. It was the largest crowd ever for the Liberty at Barclays.

With the win, New York avoided going down 0-2 and having to pull off a historic comeback. All 20 teams that had been down 0-2 in the best-of-five Finals had lost the series.

Napheesa Collier had 16 points and Williams added 15 for the Lynx.

New York led 23-21 before scoring the final eight points of the first quarter to go up 31-21 at the break. Sabrina Ionescu had 10 of her 15 points in the opening 10 minutes and Stewart added seven.

The Liberty extended the lead to 46-31 before Minnesota closed to 10 at the half.

The Lynx got within 57-53 near the end of the third quarter before Stewart hit two free throws, had a massive block on the other end and then capped it off making a jumper from the quarter to give New York a 61-53 advantage heading to the fourth.

The Liberty led 64-55 early in the fourth before the Lynx scored 11 of the next 15 to briefly get within striking distance.

'I'm coming home': Gago

Brazil to 'attack vertically' against Peru

BRASILIA, Oct 14, (Xinhua): Striker Igor Jesus said Brazil would seek a direct route to goal against Peru in their World Cup qualifier on Tuesday.

The strategy was used effectively last Thursday, when Brazil attacked with greater urgency - especially in central areas - en route to a 2-1 away victory over Chile.

"We had a completely different approach in our last game, with two players infiltrating the center of the defense," said Igor, who scored on his international debut against Chile.

"Raphinha and I opened up a lot of spaces to free up Rodrygo. We have to maintain the same kind of intensity and attack vertically against Peru to try to get a positive result." Igor described his goal-scoring debut as a "dream

come true" and said his next major objective was to represent Brazil at the 2026 World Cup.

"I've been feeling good here," the 23-year-old Botafogo striker said. "My style fits in with how Dorival Junior [Brazil manager] wants to play, by attacking spaces at every opportunity."

"Dorival has given me a lot of confidence. He tells me not to do anything different from what I do at Botafogo. I'm aggressive when man-marking and I can hold the ball up front so the team can breathe." Brazil are current fourth in the 10-team South American zone qualifying standings while Peru are ninth.



Former Real Madrid and Argenti-

na international midfielder **Fernando Gago** arrived in Buenos Aires on Sunday ahead of his official unveiling as manager of **Boca Juniors**.

Gago, who had two spells with Boca as a player, became available after parting ways with Mexican club Guadalajara on Thursday.

"Good night, thank you for being here," the 38-year-old told reporters upon his arrival at Ezeiza international airport.

"I will be brief and sincere, since tomorrow we will be able to talk calmly at a press conference. I want to thank Boca fans for all the support they have given over the past few days. I am coming home." According to widespread media reports, Gago has agreed to a contract that runs until December

2025, with an option of a 12-month extension.

Boca have been searching for a manager since parting ways with **Diego Martinez** on September 29 amid a wretched run of results.

The Buenos Aires giants are currently 10th in Argentina's Primera Division standings with just six wins from 17 games, 12 points behind leaders **Velez Sarsfield**.

Gago, who represented **Boca Juniors**, **Real Madrid**, **Valencia**, **Roma**, **Velez Sarsfield** and **Argentina's** national team during a 16-year playing career, turned to management in 2021.

He had spells in charge of Aldosivi and Racing Club before joining Guadalajara in December 2023.

Australia takes 4 India wickets in last over to reach knockout stage

SHARJAH, United Arab Emirates, Oct 14, (AP): India captain Harmanpreet Kaur's unbeaten half-century went in vain as defending champion Australia took four wickets in the last over of the cricket match and won by nine runs at the Women's T20 World Cup on Sunday.

Australia advanced from Group A to the semi-finals with the win. India's fate now depends on the outcome of the New Zealand versus Pakistan game on Monday.

Kaur took her team close to a successful chase with 54 not out off 47 balls. India started the fi-

nal over at 138-5, needing 14 runs to win. Two run-outs and two wickets for Australia bowler Annabel Sutherland saw India finish its innings at 142-9.

Australia rode on vital middle-order runs from skipper Tahlia McGrath (32 runs in 26 balls) and Ellyse Perry (32 in 23) after opener Grace Harris hit a 41-ball 40 in a total of 151-8.

Australia finished top of its group, winning all four games.

India is currently second after two wins and two losses. Both India and New Zealand have

four points each, two more than Pakistan.

A win for the Kiwis on Monday will put them through, while Pakistan winning will see the remaining qualification spot in the group determined by net run-rate.

Australia won the toss against India and opted to bat first. Medium pacer Renuka Singh picked up 2-24 as India made it a tough start.

Singh accounted for Beth Mooney (2) and then trapped Georgia Wareham lbw for a golden duck.

Harris resisted and put on 62 off nine overs faced for the third wicket with McGrath.

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Greece extends perfect start

England gets back to winning ways in NL

HELSINKI, Oct 14, (AP): After three wins from four games as England interim coach, Lee Carsley appeared to distance himself from taking on the job full time.

A 3-1 victory against Finland in the Nations League on Sunday saw England get back to winning ways after the shock 2-1 home loss to Greece. But Carsley sounded uncertain about his credentials to succeed Gareth Southgate in one of the biggest management roles in world soccer.

"This job deserves a world class coach that's won trophies and been there and done it and I'm still on the path to that," Carsley said after goals from Jack Grealish, Trent Alexander-Arnold and Declan Rice secured the win in Helsinki.

Carsley led England's under-21 team to victory in the European Championship last year and was seen as one of the leading contenders to replace Southgate, who stepped down in July.

But after naming an experimental team that lost to Greece on Thursday, questions about his suitability were raised. If not for some errant finishing from No. 64-ranked Finland, Sunday could have been another uncomfortable night for an England team ranked 60 places higher.

Carsley said he hadn't enjoyed the days following the loss to Greece. "I'm just not used to losing with an England team. I don't take losing very well," he said.

Grealish helped lift his mood when opening the scoring from close range in the 18th minute at the Helsinki Olympic Stadium after being set up by a clever flick from Angel Gomes.

Alexander-Arnold doubled England's lead in the 74th with a trademark free kick and Rice converted at the near post 10 minutes later from substitute Ollie Watkins' cross.

Arttu Hoskonen scored a consolation for Finland in the 87th.

Carsley said his remit was to take charge of the six Nations League games before the end of the year, with two remaining against Greece and Ireland next month.

Greece still leads Group B2 after extending its perfect start in the Nations League with a 2-0 win against Ireland.

Anastasios Bakasetas and Petros Mantalos scored the goals that kept Greece three points ahead of England.

Not even Erling Haaland could prevent Norway from a humbling 5-1 loss against Austria.

The Manchester City striker became his country's all time leading scorer this week with 34 goals. But he was kept quiet by Austria in Group B3.

Marko Arnautovic opened the scoring at Austria's Raiffeisen Arena before Alexander Sorloth evened the game before halftime.

In the second half Austria took control with Arnautovic scoring again. Philipp Lienhart, Stefan Posch and Michael Gregoritsch also scored.

Norway still leads the group but is level on seven points with Austria in second and third-place Slovenia, which beat Kazakhstan 1-0.



England's Trent Alexander-Arnold, centre, controls the ball during the UEFA Nations League soccer match between Finland and England, at the Olympic Stadium in Helsinki, Finland. (AP)

Emirates Team NZ goes 4-0 up on INEOS Britannia in America's Cup

Kiwis need 3 more wins to retain title

BARCELONA, Spain, Oct 14, (AP): Emirates Team New Zealand took another step toward retaining the America's Cup after building a 4-0 lead over INEOS Britannia on Monday.

The cup will go to the first yacht that reaches seven wins. The Kiwis have three to go while the British boat has a huge deficit to make up.

New Zealand's Taihoro made it four from four off the Barcelona beachfront after beating Britannia by 23 seconds. The two boats exchanged leads in the first leg, but the Kiwis made steady gains and were more than 350 meters in front when they crossed the finish line.

"It's nice just to keep marching forward," New Zealand skipper Peter

Burling said. "(It) feels like we are improving a lot as a group as we go through these races and we are excited to keep pushing forward."

New Zealand is trying to win the Auld Mug, the oldest trophy in international sport, for a third straight time and fifth overall. The British have never won it in its 173-year history and are in their first final in six decades.

The challenger will have Tuesday to plot a fightback before sailing resumes on Wednesday with races 5 and 6.

"It is a good opportunity to take a day on shore and try to figure out how we can find some gains," Britannia skipper Ben Ainslie said. "They are clearly going really well. We have our moments, but still there are moments where we are losing a click and I think that is the difference. Obviously they have had a strong start, but we can still

come back from this."

Britannia impressed in the Challenger Series when it made huge gains in speed and beat four rivals from Italy, United States, Switzerland and France. It counts on the design and engineering prowess of its partnership with the Mercedes Formula 1 team.

But the Kiwis, with their in-house design team, have a clear edge.

Burling's crew have executed flawlessly while also sailing aggressively. After nailing Britannia with a pre-start penalty when the two 75-foot foiling boats almost crashed on Sunday, the Taihoro and Britannia made several close crosses in Race 4.

Ainslie's boat started well enough by pinning the Taihoro to the port boundary, but once New Zealand got away and found more wind on the other side of the race track it was able to cruise away.

As the defender, New Zealand had a guaranteed spot in the finals and was able to set the rules and pick the venue in this winner-takes-all competition.

New Zealand may be leveraging another one of its advantages. While Britannia had to make a boat that could sail from late summer until now, the Kiwis were able to concentrate all their efforts on getting a boat ready just for one week in the cooler weather of mid-October.

The team led by Grant Dalton, however, knows first hand that in the America's Cup no lead is ever big enough. New Zealand was leading the 2013 final 8-1 before Oracle Team USA rallied for a 9-8 victory in San Francisco.

The team rebounded from that with their wins in 2017 and 2021 and are now on course to become the first syndicate to triumph three times on the trot.



Soccer player Kevin De Bruyne is shown on a large screen, as panel members, from left to right, NISO executive president Kristoffer Vatshaug, EPL director of international football relations, EU affairs Mathieu Moreuil, FIFPRO Europe president David Terrier, LaLiga president Javier Tebas and AIC resident Umberto Calcagno listen during a media conference on protecting player health and safeguarding the sustainability of national leagues at the Residence Palace in Brussels. (AP)

Latest legal challenge against FIFA

Unions and leagues in Europe go to Brussels

BRUSSELS, Oct 14, (AP): In a busy soccer season when players have talked of going on strike, their union teamed up with domestic leagues to go to the European Union on Monday with a long-promised challenge to FIFA about how it adds new and bigger men's competitions.

The European division of player union FIFPRO and the 33-nation European Leagues group filed a formal complaint on competition grounds alleging FIFA fails to consult properly on commercially-motivated decisions.

It is the latest dispute playing out in the legal arena, where FIFA has been pressured in the past year by rulings related to the European Super League, player agent regulations and - just this month - the global transfer market.

On the field, FIFA will launch a 32-team Club World Cup - including 12 from Europe - in the United States next June and July, and the 2026 World Cup, also in North America, will have 48 teams instead of 32 and last for one extra week.

"The international match calendar is now beyond saturation and has become unsustainable for national leagues and a risk for the health of players," the union and leagues have said.

The complaint Monday to the European Commission targets FIFA, which manages the calendar of protected dates for national-team games. Clubs must release players who are

selected.

It does not cite European soccer body UEFA, which this season has committed hundreds of players to extra competitive games by expanding three of its men's international competitions: the Champions League and Europa League for clubs, and the Nations League, which has a new playoffs system.

Europe's domestic leagues have had their fixture scheduling options squeezed by four extra midweeks from September through January now occupied by UEFA club competitions.

The leagues' grievance with FIFA is in not being fully consulted during talks to agree the latest calendar renewal through 2030 for national-team games, which mostly force them to shut down lucrative weekend fixture slots.

FIFA has said its offers this year of talks were not taken up.

The complaint in Brussels, to the executive arm of the 27-nation EU bloc, has been joined by Spain's La Liga and claims FIFA abuses its dominant position in soccer.

FIFA's role, the complaint states, as governing body and regulator conflicts with its commercial objectives as a competition organizer.



Ineos Britannia and Emirates Team New Zealand race during the Louis Vuitton 37th America's Cup Day 3 race 4 in Barcelona, Spain. (AP)



Vancouver Whitecaps' Sebastian Berhalter, left, and Los Angeles FC's Eddie Segura (4) vie for the ball during second half of MLS soccer action in Vancouver, British Columbia. (AP)

Bogusz, Sánchez lead LAFC to victory over Whitecaps

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, Oct 14, (AP): Mateusz Bogusz scored 35 seconds into the match, Ilie Sánchez found the net during second-half stoppage time, and Los Angeles FC pulled out a 2-1 victory over the Vancouver Whitecaps on Sunday night.

Bogusz used assists from David Martínez and Olivier Giroud to score his career-high 15th goal of the season for LAFC (18-8-7). Martínez notched his fourth assist in his 16th career appearance and Giroud picked up his third in his ninth career appearance.

Sebastian Berhalter pulled Vancouver (13-12-8) even in the 62nd minute when he scored off a free kick. It was his second goal of the season and the fourth of his career. The kick came after a hand ball foul on LAFC midfielder Sergi Palencia.

Sánchez scored in the third minute of stoppage time. It was his first goal this season and the 10th of his career. Kei Kamara earned his fifth assist of

the campaign.

Hugo Lloris, who was coming off back-to-back clean sheets, finished with three saves in goal for LAFC.

Yohei Takaoka saved two shots for the Whitecaps.

LAFC pulls within three points of the Los Angeles Galaxy in the race for the top seed in the Western Conference and can finish no worse than second. LAFC posted a 3-0 home win over the Whitecaps in May and leads the all-time series 10-6-4.

Vancouver, currently the No. 8 seed in the West, falls to 0-4-2 in its last six matches.

LAFC will host the San Jose Earthquakes in a Decision Day match on Saturday. The Whitecaps travel to play Real Salt Lake on Saturday to close out the regular season.

Mauricio Pochettino won his debut as U.S. coach, getting a 49th-minute goal from Yunus Musah off an assist from AC Milan teammate Christian Pulisic and a stoppage-time strike from Ricardo Pepi for a 2-0 win over

Panama on Saturday night.

The match in front of a near-capacity crowd of 20,239 at Q2 Stadium was the first of two friendlies for the U.S. in a four-day span that includes a game against Mexico on Tuesday in Guadalajara. The Americans ended a four-game winless stretch and their first four-game home winless streak since a seven-game slide in 2010-11.

A 52-year-old Argentine who managed Tottenham, Chelsea and Paris Saint-Germain, Pochettino was hired last month to replace Gregg Berhalter, who was fired in July after first-round elimination at the Copa America. Pochettino was given a contract through the 2026 World Cup that the U.S. will co-host and tasked with sparking a team that has not reached the World Cup quarterfinals since 2002.

Christian Pulisic, Ricardo Pepi and Weston McKennie will miss the United States' friendly at Mexico on

Tuesday in order to return to their clubs in Europe.

Marlon Fossy and Zack Steffen, who didn't dress for Saturday's 2-0 win over Panama, also are returning to their teams, the U.S. Soccer Federation said Sunday.

The USSF said Pulisic is skipping the game and going back to AC Milan for load management. The federation said the others have minor injuries and will get evaluation and treatment at their teams.

No players are being added, leaving 21 players available for the match in Guadalajara.

Pulisic assisted on Yunus Musah's goal early in the second half against Panama and Pepi scored in stoppage time. The game marked Mauricio Pochettino's debut as U.S. coach.

"As we have said, we are always going to make decisions that are in the best interest of our players and respect the relationship we have with their clubs," Pochettino said in a statement.



Greece's Tasos Bakasetas celebrates with Christos Tzolis, center, and Giorgos Masouras, left, after scoring the opening goal during a Nations League soccer match between Greece and Ireland at the Georgios Karaiskakis Stadium in Piraeus port, near Athens. (AP)
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Sports

Kuwait World Cup dreams hinge on crucial Palestine encounter

Pizzi expected to make changes to lineup

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

DOHA, Oct 14: Kuwait is rallying today in pursuit of its first victory in the third round of the 2026 World Cup Asian qualifiers when it faces the Palestine team at 7:00 pm at Jassim bin Hamad Stadium in Doha, Qatar, as part of the fourth round of Group Two matches.

Currently, Kuwait sits in fifth place with two points, trailing Palestine, who is at the bottom of the standings with just one point. South Korea and Iraq share the group lead with seven points each, followed by Jordan with four, and Oman with three.

Despite a promising start to the qualifiers, including a 1-1 draw against Jordan (runner-up of the last Asian Cup) and a goalless draw against Iraq (champion of the Gulf Cup), Kuwait struggled in its last match, suffering a 4-0 defeat to Oman while Kuwait's players appeared disorganized and lacked cohesion.

Kuwait's Argentine coach, Juan Antonio Pizzi, now faces the challenge of addressing the weaknesses in his team's performance if it is to remain in contention for one of the top four spots. Pizzi will need to put the previous poor results behind him and seek a fresh start in the qualifiers.

The top two teams in each group qualify directly for the World Cup, while the third and fourth place teams will enter a final play-off round. The fifth and sixth place teams, however, will be eliminated from the competition.

Pizzi's approach worked well against Jordan and Iraq, but faltered against Oman, who secured its first victory after two defeats. The defensive tactics employed allowed Oman to dominate the match, leaving Kuwait vulnerable. Today's match is crucial, as a win is essential to keep qualification hopes alive. A loss would severely damage Kuwait's chances, potentially dropping it to last place in the group.

Pizzi is expected to make changes to the lineup, giving other players the chance to prove their capabilities. The team will need to play with determination, high energy, and discipline to secure the three points.

Meanwhile, Palestine is equally determined to secure a win, having recorded two defeats and one draw in its first-round match against group leader South Korea. However, it will be without key player Samer Al-Jundi, who sustained a cruciate ligament injury and is ruled out following a medical examination at Aspetar Hospital in Doha.

Pizzi, has emphasized the importance of victory ahead of the upcoming match against the Palestine.

In a press conference held in Doha yesterday, Pizzi stated that the Blues are determined to secure a win, although he acknowledged that the mission will not be easy and will require significant technical preparation.

Pizzi also addressed some challenges his team is facing, particularly injuries to certain players, and highlighted his efforts to find suitable alternatives to fill those gaps.

He stressed the need for the team to deliver its best performance against Palestine, stating that avoiding any points lost is crucial for its chances of advancing from the second group.

Player Reda Hani echoed these sentiments, noting that the technical staff had met with the players during recent training sessions to emphasize the importance of avoiding the mistakes made in the match against Oman. He expressed hope that the Blues would deliver their best performance against Palestine and secure a victory.

Hani also urged fans to continue their support for the team, praising their vital role in achieving positive results.

On the other hand, Palestine's Tunisian coach, Makram Daboub, shared his optimism and motivation for his players ahead of the anticipated clash with Kuwait.

"We have an important match ahead of us, and we will strive to win it to keep our qualification hopes alive," he said. "Every match is an opportunity to strengthen our position in the qualifiers, so we must be fully prepared. We are accustomed to achieving positive results in Qatar and aim to maintain that momentum. The atmosphere here is encouraging, and we know our fans support us."

The match will be officiated by a Qatari refereeing team, led by international referee Abdulrahman Al-Jassim, with Taleb Salem and Saud Ahmed as assistants, Mohammed Al-Shammari as the fourth official, and Abdullah Al-Athba and Zahi Al-Shammari handling VAR duties.



Kuwaiti player and coach Pizzi address the media during a press conference.

Ramadan raises Kuwait's flag high at World Championship

ZAGREB, Oct 14: Fares Ramadan, representing the Marine Sports Club, secured second place in the "Rocky Stock" category during the fifth round of the Motosurf World Championship, held in the Zadar region of Croatia.

The Chairman of the Club's Board of Directors, Mohammed Al-Zanki, told KUNA that the championship, which began on October 10, saw the participation of 109 competitors from 21 countries across various categories. He noted that Ramadan delivered an outstanding performance, earning him a place on the podium and allowing him to compete at a high level.

Al-Zanki further explained that Ramadan will undergo intensive preparation for the sixth and final round of the World Championship, set to take place in Macau, China, on November 24. He expressed the club's ambition to continue competing and reaching the podium.

He emphasized that this achieve-



Fares Ramadan

ment reflects the hard work and dedication put into both the race and the preparation leading up to it, including psychological and physical training for the championship.



Players hold their final training session for the World Cup qualifier against Palestine.

Australia faces toughest of challenges against Japan

Pressure builds as Bahrain takes on Saudi Arabia

MANAMA, Oct 14, (Agencies): Bahrain will host Saudi Arabia at 9:00 pm in the fourth round of the decisive stage of the Asian qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup.

Bahrain faces pressure both on the field and from the stands, as Saudi fans are eager for their team to get back to winning ways. Therefore, Croatian coach Talajic must prepare his players to handle the intense atmosphere at the start of the match.

Saudi Arabia enters this match under significant pressure after suffering a defeat to Japan in the last round, compounded by inconsistent results under the leadership of their Italian coach, Mancini.

Bahrain currently sits in fourth place in the group standings with 4 points, tied on goal difference with Saudi Arabia, which occupies third place. Australia is in second place, while Indonesia, with 3 points, is in fifth. Japan leads the group with 9 points, and China sits at the bottom with no points.

Australia faces the most daunting road trip in Asia on Tuesday when it faces a dominant Japan at Saitama Stadium, knowing a win would put the Socceroos back on track for a sixth

successful World Cup appearance after a mixed start in the third round of qualification.

The Group C meeting is also a chance for new coach Tony Popovic, appointed in September to replace Graham Arnold, to make a statement win in his second game in charge and cross swords with a former team-mate.

Popovic played for Japanese club Sanfrecce Hiroshima from 1997 to

2001 alongside Hajime Moriyasu - now coach of Japan. "I know their head coach very well; he was my captain during my time in Japan. A remarkable person who has dedicated years to developing the national team," said Popovic.

Japan is on course for an eighth successive World Cup appearance with three wins against China, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, scoring 14 goals and

conceding none.

"This is undoubtedly a significant challenge, but it also presents a fantastic opportunity to etch our name in history by winning in Japan," Popovic said after defeating China 3-1 in his first game in charge on Thursday, a result that took Australia to four points in the group, five behind Japan.

The top two teams from each of the three groups of six qualify automatically for the 2026 World Cup with the third and fourth place finishers advancing to the next stage.

The top two in Group B meet as South Korea hosts Iraq with both teams on seven points. The game has been switched to the city of Yongin, due to the poor condition of the playing surface at Seoul World Cup Stadium.

South Korea will be without English Premier League stars Tottenham Hotspur captain Son Heung-min and Hwang Hee-chan of Wolverhampton Wanderers due to injury.

In Group A, Uzbekistan and Iran are top with seven points each. Iran will host fourth-place Qatar in Dubai, due to the security situation at home while Uzbekistan takes on the United Arab Emirates in third.



Players vie for the ball.



In this file photo, Paris-Saint-Germain player Lassana Diarra dribbles the ball during a French League One soccer match against Saint-Etienne at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris. (AP)