



Soccer Pages 14-16



Opinion

Kudos to this decision

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

THE Cabinet made a commendable decision by approving evening shifts, which should have been implemented in all ministries long ago. This practice is standard in many countries that are eager to finish projects on time, including some Gulf nations.

The new shifts should apply not only to employees but also to ministers, undersecretaries, and other executive officials who need to serve as role models for their subordinates.

This is because there have been many problems with ministerial positions, especially when some lawmakers have caused ministers to resign just a month or two after their appointment. In some cases, min-

isters have been appointed by decree in the evening and dismissed the very next morning.

On the other hand, there are governments in countries that respect the law and their citizens, where ministers work until midnight, especially some sensitive ministries that require continuous oversight. The six hours set for official working hours are often insufficient to accomplish the necessary tasks.

Unfortunately, it has been a common practice in Kuwait for connected employees to sign in and then go home to sleep, often due to the backing of certain lawmakers. This pattern has been in place for about 50 years, driven by electoral opportunism that has undermined institutions.

Continued on Page 5

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AMIR RECEIVES CROWN PRINCE, PREMIER, DEPUTY P.M. Crown Prince welcomes Bahraini Foreign Minister



His Highness the Crown Prince receives the Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Sunday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

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

His Highness the Amir received First Deputy Prime Minister, Interior Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Sunday His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

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

On Sunday, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received the Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, Abdullatif Al-Zayani and his delegation at Seif Palace.

The meeting coincides with the convening of the 11th session of the Kuwait-Bahrain Joint High Committee in Kuwait.

Present at the meeting were Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya, Kuwait's Ambassador to Bahrain Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Crown Prince's office director Retired lieutenant

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait reopens work visas for gov't contracts under one year

Applications for temporary skilled workers begin

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: In a significant move to address labor market demands, the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) has announced the reactivation of work entry visas for temporary government contracts, effective Monday, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This decision comes in response to directives from Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior.

The Manpower Authority communicated this update through its official account on the X platform, highlighting that the reactivation of these visas applies to temporary government contracts lasting less than one calendar year.

The initiative aims to enhance flexibility within the labor market

and streamline the completion of short-term projects that do not exceed one year in duration.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef's directives reflect a commitment to adapt to the evolving needs of the workforce and support the timely execution of government initiatives.

Starting Monday, the Public Authority for Manpower will begin accepting applications related to this new visa framework, facilitating the entry of skilled workers needed for temporary assignments.

Work system requires seven-month commitment

Evening shift in gov't sector starts Jan 2025

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20, (KUNA): The Civil Service Commission (CSC) announced on Sunday that it will implement the evening work system in government agencies starting January 5, 2025. This move follows the Cabinet's directive and the approval of the Civil Service Council.

According to a press release, the evening work hours will be set from Sunday to Thursday, with employees working four and a half hours each day.

Each government agency will determine the specific timings based on its operational needs, but evening shifts

will not begin before 3:30 PM. Flexibility is allowed for agencies to adjust the schedule, including during the holy month of Ramadan. However, the flexible working system will not apply to employees working under the evening shift.

Employees must request to work the evening shift, and approval will depend on the agency's discretion, with a limit of 30% of staff allowed to switch to this system. Exceptions to this cap can be made with the Bureau's agreement, but morning shift operations must continue smoothly.

The system requires employees

to work at least seven consecutive months in the evening shift before any potential return to morning shifts. Employees under this system are not eligible for reduced hours, partial unpaid leave, or grace periods exceeding 15 minutes at the start of their shift, except for a similar grace period at the end of the shift for female employees.

Each agency is responsible for overseeing evening work and selecting employees without creating new supervisory roles. Employees will retain all job rights and obligations, adhering to the Civil Service Council's guidelines for official work.



KUWAIT CITY: Distribution of drinking water in the Gaza Strip with the support of Namaa Charity.

2 Furore as graduates decry misplaced job designations

8 Gold hits record high amid geopolitical tensions



9 NBK continues to prove its resilience against shifting operating conditions: Al-Sager

11 Rock & Roll Hall of Fame turns up starpower to induct Cher, Foreigner, Mary J. Blige, Ozzy and more

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness The Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences on Saturday to Bahrain's King Hamad bin Issa Al-Khalifah.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir expressed his sincere condolences over the demise of Sheikh Hamoud bin Abdullah bin Hamad bin Issa Al-Khalifa, and prayed for Allah Almighty to bestow mercy on his soul, and bring solace to the Royal Family of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Additionally, His Highness the Crown Prince of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, also sent a condolence cable to King Hamad, expressing his sincere sympathies and praying for the deceased's soul to find peace in paradise.

Furthermore, His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah conveyed his condolences to King Hamad, extending his deepest sympathy on the loss of Sheikh Hamoud bin Abdullah bin Hamad bin Issa Al-Khalifa. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: Dr. Mohammed Al-Wasmi, the Minister of Justice, Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, and Chairman of the Permanent National Committee for Combating Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, commended the Central Bank of Kuwait for issuing a circular to local banks aimed at removing barriers to opening bank accounts for low-income individuals, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a statement released by the Ministry of Justice, Dr. Al-Wasmi and the committee members expressed their appreciation for this initiative, which extends support to those in simple service and craft jobs, including domestic workers.

KPI reiterates commitment to sustainable energy goals

MUSCAT, Oct 20, (KUNA): Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI) CEO Engineer Shafi Al-Ajmi underlined Sunday the company's commitment to a better more sustainable future through pioneering energy transformation.

Al-Ajmi made these remarks at the fifth Duqm forum, which launched in the Omani capital of Muscat today, organized by its chamber of industry and commerce and attended by a number of field experts.

The Kuwaiti official spoke at a discussion panel on the strategies of investment in blue economy about the company's endeavors, its strategic goals and the challenges it is facing.

KPI's activities center in Europe with more than 4,700 retail fuel stations and is responsible for supplying global air navigation with fuel in more than 70 international airports, commented Al-Ajmi.

On the challenges of energy transformation, Eng. Al-Ajmi spoke of KPI responsibility to keep pace with the changing tiding saying that the company is investing in multi-power stations and services.

He also affirmed intent on decreasing carbon emissions, using renewably sourced electricity and promoting use of sustainable airplane fuel.

On forum sidelines, Al-Ajmi stated to KUNA that KPI is following Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's strategies in relation to refining and promoting petroleum products outside of Kuwait.

He also touched on the significance of Duqm refinery project, and its positive impacts on both nations.

Al-Ajmi thanked event organizers for this valuable opportunity to discuss the future of energy and keeping pace with accelerating changes towards broadened horizons and sustainable energy.



KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI) CEO Engineer Shafi Al-Ajmi at the fifth Duqm forum.

46 KU researchers among world best

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

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: The Kuwait University has made a significant achievement in scientific research by having 46 distinguished faculty members recognized in the list of the "Top 2 percent of Scientists in the World," published by Stanford University for the year 2024.

This prestigious list highlights the most academically cited researchers across various disciplines and includes a total of 66 scientists from Kuwait.

Remarkably, the Kuwait University accounts for 70 percent of this representation among the participating research and educational institutions in the country.

Continued on Page 5

Attack plans on Iran leaked

87 dead or missing after strikes on northern Gaza

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip, Oct 20, (Agencies): Israeli strikes on multiple homes in the northern Gaza Strip overnight and into Sunday left at least 87 people dead or missing, the territory's Health Ministry said.

It said another 40 people were wounded in the strikes on the town of Beit Lahiyah, which was among the first targets of Israel's ground invasion nearly a year ago. The Israeli military said it carried out a precise strike on a Hamas target.

Israel has been carrying out a large-scale operation in northern Gaza for the

last two weeks, saying Hamas has regrouped there. Palestinian officials say hundreds of people have been killed and that the health sector in the north is on the verge of collapse.

In other news, Chairman of Al-Weam Charity Society, Mohammad Abu Marei, stated on Sunday that the Kuwaiti Namaa Charity Foundation is actively providing essential humanitarian support to the people of Gaza by supplying potable water to displaced families in the most affected areas.

Continued on Page 5

Ambassador Al-Fassam affirms commitment

Kuwait supports international anti-crime efforts

VIENNA, Oct 20, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait is keen on supporting international efforts against organized crime, said a Kuwaiti diplomat on Sunday.

In a statement to KUNA, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN in Vienna, Ambassador Talal Al-Fassam said that Kuwait's participation in the 12th conference for the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Or-

ganized Crime (UNTOC), which concluded last Friday, reflected the country's solemn support towards global efforts in this regard.

He indicated that organized crime transcending borders and region was a threat to all societies and individuals, stressing the importance of cooperation in this field amongst world countries and international organizations such as Interpol and others.

He revealed that Kuwait continued to enhance and develop its own capabilities in fighting organized crime including ones committed in cyberspace.

Coinciding with the conference, GCC countries representatives also held meetings with UN entities tasked with combating crime and the selling of illicit drugs, exploring means to fight crime and boost security, he said.

Prayer Timings

Fajr 04:33 Asr 14:47
 Sunrise .. 05:52 Maghrib .. 17:13
 Zohr 11:33 Isha 18:30

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Rather hot with light to moderate freshening at times over coastal areas northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-45 km/h.
By Night: Rather hot to mild

Weather

with light to moderate freshening at times over coastal areas northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-45 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	31	23
Kuwait Airport	37	24

Abdaly	38	23
Bubyan	32	20
Jahra	39	25
Failaka Island	33	21
Salmiyah	32	28
Ahmadi	33	20
Jal Aliyah	39	24
Nuwaisib	37	-



PM Diwan photo
 His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah exchanges pleasantries with the visiting Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, Abdullatif Al-Zayani.

Kuwait's PM receives Bahraini FM

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, in the presence of the Foreign Minister, Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya, received Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, Abdullatif Al-Zayani and his delegation on Sunday at Seif Palace.

The Bahraini Foreign Minister's visit to Kuwait was to attend the 11th session of the Kuwaiti-Bahraini high joint committee.

During the meeting, both sides re-

viewed the strong and bilateral relations between Kuwait and Bahrain, discussing ways to enhance close cooperation across various fields to promote further progress and prosperity for both countries and their peoples.

The meeting was also attended by Head of the Prime Minister's Diwan Abdulaziz Dakhil Al-Dakhil, Kuwait's Ambassador to Bahrain Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and the Assistant Foreign Minister for GCC Affairs, Ambassador Najib Al-Bader.

Other Voices

What we see is beautiful and wonderful, but ... !

By Ahmad alsarraf

For almost forty years, everyone, without exception, has been complaining about the situation in the Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh area. No government authority wants to enter this suburb and that includes health, security, municipality and even the religious authority. Within hours, the decision was made, and the security forces entered the area and broke the taboo.

This was preceded by the government taking a series of important decisions, the files of which we have long awaited to be moved, most notably the manipulation of national identity, and the presence of all this huge number of nationality forgers and several other culprits sheltering in this 'ghetto' like suburb.

It was also nice to deal firmly with tens of thousands of government employees, who frequented coffee shops, and who never cared about being at their workplaces, so the third fingerprint was applied to them, so they started to show up before others.

It was also important to cancel the government coverage for the treatment of retirees,

which the health ministers competed to inflate with various additions, so it became a burden and a source of corruption and spoilage for the citizen, the doctor, the clinics and the hospitals.

There is really not enough space to list the achievements made by the government in the past few months, and its attempts to create a reliable business environment, such as its keenness to conclude 18 road repair tenders, covering all the country's streets, in an unprecedented phenomenon globally, and moving forward with the huge expansion of the Mubarak Port project and Al-Zour Port, despite all the environmental warnings and reservations expressed by several parties, or the inability to create new job opportunities for Kuwaitis, and the fear of not increasing the percentage of non-oil revenues from such huge projects in their cost and management, or in their ability to attract large foreign investments.

What some people do not want to realize is that all these projects and dozens of others cannot be sustainable as long as the educational system remains as backward as it is today, and all this attention is given to theoretical and religious subjects, while there is clear neglect not only of scientific subjects, but even of subjects that improve artistic taste, develop taste, and create people of a different kind!

One of my employees, a Filipino national,

had a medical emergency, so I took him to Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital for treatment. It turned out that he had a stomach hernia and needed an urgent, delicate surgery, with uncertain results!

The driver stayed in the hospital for a week, and after suffering and pain, he left in the best condition.

I paid his medical bill, and found that the cost included the nuclear scan, blood tests and discharge, CT scan, and 4-star accommodation with three special meals, all for 203 dinars, which would have cost him ten times that anywhere else, inside or outside Kuwait!

I used to visit him daily, and on my way I would check on the conditions of the wing he was in, the work system, and the rest of the hospital facilities.

I was really pleased with what I saw, and I visited the hospital director, Dr. Moudhi Al-Mutairi. She was not in her office. I informed her assistant of my impressions and observations, and then I spoke to her on the phone, and she was very responsive.

It also became clear to me that the Afiya project is not needed if the government increases its interest in its hospitals, continues to improve the service, raise the level of treatment, and attracts qualified doctors and administrators.

□ □ □

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Furore as graduates decry misplaced job designations

Jobs not in line with specializations: candidates



KUNA photo
 Acting Director General of DGCA Duajj Al-Otaibi expressing his views at the gathering.

Air Traffic Controllers Day marked

DGCA launches multiple projects to upgrade air navigation sector

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20, (KUNA): The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in Kuwait has joined the global aviation community in celebrating International Air Traffic Controllers Day, which is observed annually on October 20.

Speaking at a ceremony organized by the DGCA to mark this occasion, Acting Director General of DGCA Duajj Al-Otaibi expressed the keenness of DGCA to actively participate in this international event as a recognition of the important role air traffic controllers play in the aviation industry in ensuring the safety and efficiency of aircraft movement both on the ground and in the air, as well as managing airspace and coordinating flight paths to ensure smooth and secure air traffic.

He explained that DGCA has launched several strategic projects aimed at modernizing the infrastructure of Kuwait's air navigation sector. These initiatives include developments in navigation systems and meteorological equipment at Kuwait International Airport, designed to keep pace with rapid developments in the global civil aviation industry.

He said, "DGCA is committed to nur-

ture a new generation of highly trained Kuwaiti air traffic controllers through educational and training programs, in order to develop the aviation sector with skilled local professionals and ensure the country's future aviation needs are met."

Al-Otaibi praised the professionalism and expertise of Kuwait's national air traffic control team, which operates 24/7 using state-of-the-art systems to ensure the safe management of flights within Kuwait's airspace.

He acknowledged the huge responsibilities that air traffic controllers shoulder in maintaining flight safety and efficiency.

As part of the event, DGCA honored several retired air traffic controllers in recognition of their dedicated service over the years.

The International Air Traffic Controllers Day is celebrated globally each year on October 20 to mark the anniversary of the founding of the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers Associations (IFATCA) in 1961. This day recognizes the pivotal role that air traffic control plays in ensuring aviation safety and efficient airspace management worldwide.

Ministry in hunt for expertise to provide retirees with co-op jobs

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: The Ministry of Social Affairs is seeking to harness the skills of retirees by providing them with a number of job opportunities in cooperative societies in the near future.

According to informed sources in the Ministry of Social Affairs, the ministry, based on the directives of the Minister of Social Affairs, Women, and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, is studying the allocation of jobs for retirees as part of the new law for cooperative societies.

They explained that these positions will

be exclusively for retirees to benefit from their experience, with proposed roles including oversight of gardens associated with cooperative societies and the maintenance of playgrounds. There are other potential job opportunities for retirees, such as supervising wedding halls, central markets, and various other roles currently under consideration by the ministry.

In another context, the sources announced a commitment to expedite the Kuwaitization of jobs in cooperative societies, anticipating the issuance of several decisions in the near future to further accelerate this process.

Meanwhile, an amendment to Article 43 of the bylaws of cooperative societies, based on the decision of the Minister of Social Affairs Amthal Al-Huwailah, has transferred the authority to hear appeals concerning the elections of the Board of Directors from the Ministry of Social Affairs to a specialized committee, which will have full decision-making power to accept or reject the appeals.



Al-Huwailah

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: The educational sector is witnessing widespread discontent among the College of Basic Education graduates, who specialized in technical and physical education, due to their nomination as administrative supervisors in schools; instead of teachers, as the administrative job does not match their academic qualifications.

Sources told the newspaper that the ministry reached an agreement with the Civil Service Commission (CSC) during their meeting a few days before the nomination of a batch of Basic Education graduates -- 650 candidates -- as teachers according to their specializations. Despite the agreement; the CSC nominated these candidates as administrative supervisors in schools, instead of teachers, sources added.

Sources said there is a recurring misunderstanding regarding the employment of graduates of colleges of education; as most of these graduates, particularly those specialized in technical and physical education, expect that they will be nominated to academic posts.

Sources indicated that graduates from Egypt and Jordan with these specializations are appointed as administrative supervisors, while the graduates of the College of Education are appointed as teachers.

Sources confirmed "the problem is not limited to this category of graduates, as it extends to many other specializations that face the same challenge in finding job opportunities matching their academic qualifications.

Moreover, a number of graduates of the College of Basic Education expressed their dissatisfaction with the current nomination; asserting that the CSC's nominations do not match their specializations or academic qualifications. They said this is a form of injustice for them.

More than one graduate lamented "we have studied and specialized in certain fields for years. Instead of appreciating our qualifications and putting us in the right place, we find ourselves as candidates for jobs that have nothing to do with our specializations."

They hope that the nomination and employment policies will be reviewed to better reflect their academic qualifications and provide them with job opportunities that are commensurate with their years of study and the efforts they exerted in the specializations they have chosen.

They added the concerned authorities in the ministry and CSC must coordinate their efforts in finding plausible solutions to assign graduates to workplaces that are appropriate for their university qualifications and to better serve the labor market.

Pledge to overcome KPA challenges, hike income

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mishaan affirmed the commitment to overcoming all challenges facing the Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA) to generate the highest possible revenues.

She highlighted the ongoing efforts to develop the authority's work by providing the necessary material and human resources, removing all obstacles, and promoting a strong work ethic to achieve the goals related to the state's development projects.

The minister said this after a meeting yesterday she had with the Director of the Kuwait Ports Authority Sheikh Khaled Salem Al-Sabah, and members of the authority's Board of Directors.

During the meeting, she highlighted the importance of ports in strengthening the economy and expressed appreciation for the efforts of all workers in this vital facility.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Khaled Salem Al-Sabah said the authority is actively studying its plans, projects, and implementation mechanisms in line with Non-Kuwait 2035 vision, with the aim of enhancing the state's non-oil revenues.

They discussed the need to follow up the decisions issued by the authority's Board of Directors and the Contracts Committee, as well as the formation of executive committees emanating from the Board of Directors.

In addition, two memoranda from the general department regarding some operational projects at the authority were also discussed.



Al-Seyassah photo
 First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense and Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah during his meeting with Afrah Al-Mutawtawh.

'Investment in future generations'

Promotion of reading, boost in skills of Kuwaiti youths sought

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense and Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah affirmed his full support for the 'Distinguished Supervisor' file in the eighth 'Arab Reading Challenge' competition, as the representative of the State of Kuwait, in his recent meeting with General Supervisor of the 'Distinguished Supervisor' file in the Capital Educational District and the winner of the Best File Award at the State of Kuwait level Afrah Al-Mutawtawh.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef stressed the importance of this competition in promoting reading among Kuwaiti youths, noting it is a distinguished platform for discovering talents, developing skills, and creating and

instilling noble values and good citizenship in the hearts and minds of the youths.

He expressed his pride in Al-Mutawtawh who will represent Kuwait, while stressing the need to fully support her bid to win first place at the Arab world level.

He added that supporting the Arab Reading Challenge competition is an investment in the future generations, as this competition reflects Kuwait's commitment to develop education and culture. He urged everyone to participate in this national initiative that aims to enhance Kuwait's position as a major supporter of culture and Science in the region.

He hopes that Kuwait will have distinctive achievements in this competition, and that the country will continue its efforts to promote reading as an essential part of its cultural identity.

Kuwaiti workforce in MEW sees rise; expatriate count declines

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: According to informed sources in the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, 1,150 Kuwaitis were appointed in the ministry's various sectors from January to September this year. The total number of employees in the ministry was 34,395 in January, including 33,533 Kuwaitis and 862 non-Kuwaitis. By September, this number had risen to 35,520 employees, comprising 34,683 Kuwaitis and 837 non-Kuwaitis.

The sources highlighted a decrease of 25 non-Kuwaiti employees during this period, attributing it to their retirement or replacement.

They explained that all appointments in the ministry are made through the Civil Service Commission, in accordance with the existing regulations and laws, in addition to the ministry's specific needs for various specializations that it identified at the start of each fiscal year.

Also, the percentage of Kuwaiti workers in the ministry increased by one percent during this time period. It had increased from 95.5 percent in January to 97.6 percent in September.

The sources affirmed the ministry's commitment to implementing the replacement policy in line with the directives of all government agencies and in coordination with the Civil Service Commission.

Decision to shut 7 NGOs takes effect

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: The Kuwait Al-Yawm newspaper has published the decision issued by the Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs, Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, to dissolve seven public benefit societies in Kuwait, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The dissolution was taken "based on public interest requirements", said the daily quoting the minister.

The societies affected by this decision include the Friends of the Palm Tree Society, the Shell Society in Kuwait, the Kuwaiti Traditional Crafts Society, the Charitable Society for Preserving Grace, the Al-Nuwar Society for Humanitarian Works, the Kuwaiti Basketball Coaches Association and the Kuwaiti Retirees Society.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajeel has issued a new decision prohibiting cash transactions in various car sales activities, effective from October 14.

This decision adds four additional activities to the existing restrictions on cash dealings such as buying and selling motor vehicles, wholesale and retail trade of new and used motor vehicles, car brokerage services, including auctions and retail sale of scrap cars.

This ban aims to enhance transparency and regulation in the car sales market, affecting both companies and individuals involved in selling all types of vehicles. The prohibition on cash transactions for these activities started on October 1.

'Need to disarm Hezb before any further aid to Lebanon'

"WE PICK up where we left off last August with the call to stop aid to Lebanon: 'We must not let Kuwait's millions serve as the oxygen keeping terrorism in Lebanon alive, only for it to strike us again'," columnist **Bader Khaled Al-Bahar** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"The political leaders in Lebanon are confident that after every crime they commit against their own country, we will step in to cover their losses. This is a reminder to His Highness the Prime Minister, who spoke with his Lebanese counterpart just ten days ago to offer assistance.

"The Israeli bombing targets the southern suburbs, the stronghold of Hezbollah, which is under Iran's influence. If we send aid to those displaced from the south, it will inevitably end up benefiting Iran's party and its agents, who have been terrorizing us since the 1980s, continuing up until the Abdali cell incident.

"This reinforces our right to demand that aid be stopped, and let Iran provide it, as their late leader once said: 'Hezbollah's budget, salaries, expenses, food, drink, weapons, and missiles come from the Islamic Republic of Iran'.

"We have previously questioned how long Kuwait will continue to act as the guardian of a fractured nation made up of eighteen ethnic and sectarian groups, some of whom hold external loyalties, including to Israel.

"These factions have been embroiled in brutal civil war massacres and horrific assassinations, such as those of Dany Chamoun and his family, Tony Frangieh and his family, Rafik Hariri, and over thirty other killings, including of presidents, with some perpetrators still alive.

"What doomed gamble are we making as Kuwaitis to save this chaos, where politicians continue to steal, yet come to us begging for help, even though their 'Egyptian' billions are more than enough to rebuild Lebanon?

"What kind of democracy are we relying on when Lebanon's parliament speaker is now begging Arab nations for a compromise and reconstruction, yet simultaneously supports Hezbollah's dominance, calling it the 'big brother'?

"He claims, 'Hezbollah's position on the ground is very good, and it can help in stopping the fire'. How will Nabih Berri stop anything when Hezbollah fires two missiles at Tel Aviv, and Israel responds by wiping out entire villages, seizing every excuse to crush Lebanon?"

"Moreover, Berri does not acknowledge any international resolutions, including Resolution 1559, meaning he's deliberately stalling the return of the Lebanese state.

"We say to Nabih Berri and Najib Mikati what we said to Walid Jumblatt last March: 'Leave us alone', because you will never reach an agreement, and you are asking for aid while fighting simultaneously!"

"The Taif Agreement, Doha, Paris 1, 2, and 3, and even the Security Council resolutions have done nothing for Lebanon. Tehran continues to manipulate your affairs through war and chaos, while the Lebanese people took to the streets in massive demonstrations five years ago -- whose anniversary was last Thursday -- demanding the departure of the presidency, the government, and the parliament.

"We have previously expressed regret that Kuwait's aid to Lebanon has surpassed the one billion dollar mark, only for former director of the Kuwaiti Fund to naively declare, 'Kuwait's aid is not tied to imposing specific policies'. This is a political mistake we must not repeat, as great powers never offer aid without advancing their own interests.

"Consequently, we have insisted that no further aid be given to Lebanon until Hezbollah is disarmed and Kuwaitis' interests are safeguarded, particularly for those whose properties were stormed and stolen by the displaced.

"In-kind relief for those affected, who are not aligned with Iran, can be provided on humanitarian grounds, but without the involvement of the Lebanese state,

which includes a terrorist group and a former agent minister.

"This same minister, who we criticized harshly last April in the article 'May God destroy you and your family', interfered with our decision to dissolve the National Assembly and now has the audacity to demand Lebanon's reconstruction while we are being pressured!

"We should not sacrifice our dignity or take on a guardianship role over a war-torn country. In our view, the only solution is to divide Lebanon into three separate states -- Sunni, Christian, and Shiite -- and for its government to officially surrender.

"Its people should seize this historic opportunity, with international support, to rid themselves of Hezbollah. So, we say to Berri and Mikati, in the hope that you regain your Diaspora: 'Please, and for God's sake, leave us alone!'"

Also:

"Life is nothing but changing situations in time, place and circumstances, and in between all of this is the test of human character," columnist and former Deputy Director-General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) **Iqbal Al-Ahmed** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"The situations, circumstances and changes that we go through in the stages and details of our lives are like X-rays of what we cannot see with our eyes, and they reveal the depths and origins of those close to us and those around us.

"Children, friends, loved ones and relatives are people we have stuck with, loved and trusted in our lives, and we have never thought, even for a moment, that they are temporary projects that only have their own time and circumstances.

"Circumstances change and conditions alter, and these minerals are revealed in their true form during situations, crises and hardships, and we are struck with astonishment, suffocated by denial, and filled with frustration and a lack of trust in some of these people.

"They say some people's character is revealed as follows:

"The husband when his wife is sick. There are husbands who devote their lives to the comfort of their life partner. They give up many details of their day, so that they become her medicine and life.

"A wife who, when her husband is poor, changes after her husband's condition changes and his money is squandered, is a woman of very cheap metal, or rather, she has no metal at all.

"A friend in times of need, and often difficult situations reveal the true nature of the friends around us. There are those who stick closer to us in these difficult situations, and there are those whose dust you see behind them, at the first crisis you experience and the first thing you are exposed to.

"Children, when their parents grow old, if they are dutiful children, help them, and become their eyes, hands, and feet, and they also become their soul and heart.

"Brothers in inheritance, and this is unfortunately what we see a lot in our lives, as the bonds of brotherhood collapse, and the estrangement between them increases, after the problems of inheritance eat away at the threads of love, communication and companionship.

"Relatives in exile, the true nature of relatives becomes clear when leaving one's homeland and seeking refuge abroad, how much a person needs his relatives in these circumstances, the more relatives unite in their exile and the more love increases between them, the bitterness of exile and the harshness of life within them will disappear.

"True love is the one that does not appear until the interest ends, because it stands tall in the face of all the challenges of the situation without this interest."

"We conclude with the true believer, whose true nature is revealed only when tested. He knows nothing but faith and reliance on God when tested. God Almighty gives, and He alone takes away a loved one, a beloved, or money. God gives, God takes, God compensates."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



KUNA photos

Part of the work of the 65th Symposium on Military Terminology, Concepts Unification, with the participation of Kuwait represented by Assistant Head of the Kuwait Military Office Brigadier General Ayed Al-Halfi (inset).

Kuwait participates in 65th Symposium on Military Terminology, Concepts Unification

CAIRO, Oct 20, (KUNA): The 65th symposium of the Arab League's Committee for the Unification of Military Terminology and Concepts began on Sunday at the headquarters of the Arab League General Secretariat, with the Assistant Head of the Kuwait Military Office Brigadier General Ayed Al-Halfi representing Kuwait at the symposium.

In his opening remarks, Director of the Military Department at the Arab League Minister Plenipotentiary Tariq Abdul Salam affirmed the importance of the symposium, which is chaired by the Sultanate of Oman and will run until October 30.

He explained that the event will include discussions on military abbreviations in various branches, including land, sea, air, and air defense forces, as well as weapons of mass

destruction, signals, information systems, and joint supply matters (administrative affairs, logistics, transportation, and medical services).

It will continue the work of previous meetings, and focus on following the recommendations from the 64th session.

The symposium aims to study military abbreviations, examine terms, concepts, and symbols not included in the 2007 edition of the military terms dictionary, unify military concepts and add new terms to the military dictionary, which now encompasses all military terminology, symbols, and abbreviations used by Arab armed forces up to 2024. The symposium is expected to contribute to furthering joint Arab military cooperation.

PADA ordered to pay disability dues to woman since her birth

Appeals overturns 5-year prison sentence against ISIS member

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: The Court of Appeals has ordered the Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) to pay financial dues and allowances to a Kuwaiti woman with moderate motor and severe physical disabilities from the date of her birth.

According to the case file, the lawsuit was filed by Lawyer Ali Al-Ali, who was representing the disabled citizen.

He explained that she is registered with the defendant (PADA) as a disabled person with moderate and permanent motor and severe physical disabilities since birth. She applied to the authority to prove her disability, and a certificate of disability was issued based on law No. 8/2010 regarding the rights of persons with disabilities.

In light of this, she requested PADA to pay her dues retroactively from her birth. After registering her request, she did not receive a response within the stipulated 60 days. This prompted her to file a lawsuit to seek a ruling on her requests.

It is worth noting that the Court of First Instance had previously ruled in favor of the plaintiff, obligating the authority to pay her monthly dues from the date she began her claim.

Jail term against ISIS member: The Court of Appeals overturned the five-year prison sentence imposed on a 30-year-old citizen, an employee at the Ministry of Awqaf accused of planning with ISIS to kill Shiites and American forces in Saudi Arabia and urging his wife to pledge allegiance to ISIS leaders. The higher court decided to refrain from punishing the employee.

The Public Prosecution had earlier declared that the accused committed hostile acts against another country -- the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia -- from 2018 to 2023, without permission from the Kuwaiti government. He agreed and planned with others to carry out acts of sabotage, including

'Cassation' acquits ex-MP

'Appeals' to issue verdict today in vote-buying case

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: The Court of Cassation has overturned a lower court verdict and acquitted former National Assembly member Duaij Al-Jari who was accused of money laundering -- the charges linked to the sale of fictitious real estate.

However, two expatriates involved in the case received prison sentences ranging from three to seven years of hard labor.

The Public Prosecution had charged all defendants with real estate fraud and money laundering, alleging that they were involved in a scheme that involved the sale of non-existent properties, resulting in estimated losses amounting to millions.

Meanwhile, today, the Court of Appeals is set to deliver its ruling on the vote-buying case involving former MP Saadoun Hammad and several others, who are currently serving time in the Central Prison.

During the last session, Hammad defended himself in front of the Court of Appeals, claiming that the charges were part of a politically motivated attempt to undermine his image.

Upon returning from London, Hammad had voluntarily surrendered at Kuwait International Airport to begin serving his two-year prison sentence with hard labor.

During a prior session, the Court of Appeals had denied his request to suspend the execution of the sentence.

SJC appoints Al-Atiqi, Al-Nusf: The Supreme Judicial Council has appointed Counselor Haitham Al-Atiqi as Chairman of the Technical Office of the Court of Appeals and Counselor Tariq Al-Nusf as a member of the same office, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Informed sources said the Council has addressed all appeals pending before the Courts of Cassation from before 2015, either by issuing verdicts or by scheduling sessions for consideration.

The Council has now commenced work on resolving appeals registered in 2017.

Former MP Al-Jari's 'acquittal' upheld

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: The Court of Cassation upheld the acquittal of former MP Walid Al-Jari of smuggling a quarter of billion Kuwaiti dinars in the biggest money laundering and real estate fraud case, while it sentenced two Jordanians to three and eight years in prison and fined them KD1 million.

Case files indicate that the defendants swindled around 360 victims; including Qataris who were deceived by Al-Jari, a former bank president, and a Gulf businessman who owns multiple hotels in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. They sold fictitious apartments and real estate outside Kuwait; then they laundered the money they took from the victims through engineering offices and money exchange companies.

The lower court had earlier acquitted the former member of the National Assembly of the charge of money laundering through the sale of fictitious real estate and ruled to imprison two expatriates for three and eight years with hard labor.

This came after the Public Prosecution charged the defendants with real estate fraud and money laundering for amounts estimated at millions through the sale of fictitious real estate.

Nurse, woman trade barbs

30-year-old nabbed for swindling several people

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: Criminal investigation officers arrested a man, in his 30s, wanted by law for involvement in several swindling cases, reports Al-Anba daily.

A security source revealed that the officers received a tip-off on the illegal acts of a man who lured his victims through a social media program and then defrauded them.

Accordingly, a team was formed through which the officers identified the location of the accused and they arranged an entrapment, leading to his arrest.

A case was registered and investigations are

ongoing.

Nurse reports woman: A female nurse at the Ministry of Health filed an insult case against a woman after a dispute between them inside a medical facility in Ahmadi Governorate, reports Al-Anba daily.

A security source said the nurse claimed the woman uttered expletives at her while she was on duty, prompting her to lodge a complaint at a nearby police station. She provided police with the woman's information.

bers multiple times, and donating money to it.

The Public Prosecution has charged the accused with using explosives with the intent to kill, spread panic, and destroy buildings.

He received instructions from ISIS leaders to target the US Army camp in Arifjan and the Ministry of Interior's NCO School in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh.

His activities included monitoring the two security sites, using Google Maps to locate the first site, and obtaining potassium nitrate from an agricultural store, which is used in making highly explosive materials for the intended attacks.

The indictment states that the accused contacted several individuals in Iraq to bring them into Kuwait and assist him in executing the attacks. However, he was unable to complete the crimes due to unforeseen circumstances, including a traffic accident that led to his arrest by the State Security Service before he could finish the operation. This is supported by his confession, the testimony of the State Security Service officer who conducted the investigation, and evidence from his cell phone conversations.

PP, MoJ to study amendment of 21 penal laws

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: According to informed sources, a team formed by the Public Prosecution (PP) and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is studying the possibility of amending 21 penal laws with the aim of keeping pace with the legislation for emerging crimes and the associated judicial procedures, reports Al-Jarida daily.

They revealed that the Public Prosecution has already started studying proposals and requests submitted by various prosecutions to the team, aiming to enhance the system of penal regulations, including penal reconciliation and alternative penalties.

Meanwhile, the sources explained that the Public Prosecution plans to establish three specialized prosecution units in the coming months.

1. The Banking Crimes Prosecution, which will be tasked with investigating cheque-related offenses, forgery, and all matters related to banks. This unit will also address electronic fraud crimes associated with links and websites that target bank accounts. The Commercial Affairs Prosecution, which is currently handling cheque related crimes, will focus exclusively on corporate crimes after the Bank-

ing Crimes Prosecution is established. This change is prompted by the rising number of cases in this field due to which dedicated public prosecutors are needed for it.

2. The Prisons Prosecution, which will handle requests from inmates in correctional institutions. The volume of these requests has surged, reaching 72,000 awaiting classification last year alone. This unit will assess eligibility for overlapping penalties, potential amnesty, and other submitted requests.

3. The Environmental Affairs Prosecution, which will be established due to the significance of its cases. The law mandates a specialized prosecution to investigate and deal with environmental cases to which the legislator has given great attention.

On the other hand, the sources confirmed that an agreement has been reached between the prosecution and the Ministry of Justice to develop a system for electronic notifications. This initiative will facilitate the electronic announcement of civil and criminal cases, following recent legislative amendments to the Civil Procedure Law No. 9/2020, which aim to streamline announcement procedures.



KUNA photo
Minister of State for Communication Affairs Omar Al-Omar during Kuwait's participation at the Google Public Sector Summit 2024.

Cloud computing to enhance gov't operations

'Kuwait keen to advance digital economy with global partners'

WASHINGTON, Oct 20, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait is keen on developing and incentivizing its digital economy transformation in cooperation with globally renowned partners and companies, said a Kuwaiti minister on Saturday.

Speaking to KUNA during Kuwait's participation in the Google Public Sector Summit 2024 held in Washington, Minister of State for Communication Affairs Omar Al-Omar affirmed that Kuwait adopted digital strategies aiming at developing public services within state institutions.

Minister Al-Omar -- part of a Kuwaiti delegation representing the supervising committee for the partnership between Kuwait and Google Cloud -- indicated that the participation in the summit aimed at boosting digital transformation and innovation within the public sector.

He stressed the importance of Cloud computing in increasing operational capacity and pushing for creativity, pointing out that Kuwait adopted digital strategy that improved government transactions and institutional performance in line with Kuwait Vision 2035.

During his visit to Washington, Al-Omar met with CEO of Google Cloud Thomas Kurian and top brass at the company, conveying to them Kuwait's interest in further partnerships with global companies.

He indicated that the meetings focused on the executing framework agreement between the two sides as well as developing projects for soon to be established data centers in addition to exchanging views on the latest developments in the world and ways in enhance cooperation.

Al-Omar, during his visit to Washington, also meet with leading tech companies, discussing with them cooperation within digital economy.

Google Cloud announced back in January 2023 that it had signed a framework agreement with the Kuwaiti government to set a roadmap for the development of digital transformation programs for various state sectors enhancing government operations as well as cybersecurity.

Google Clouds works in cooperation Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) and Kuwait Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT).

Google Cloud offers various and advance Artificial Intelligence services within its infrastructure allowing institutions to implement their digital transformation plans with ease.

Article 43 of cooperative societies law amended

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: In a significant amendment to Article 43 of the bylaws governing cooperative societies, Minister of Social Affairs, Amthal Al-Huwailah, has transferred the authority to handle appeals related to Board of Directors elections from the Ministry of Social Affairs

to a newly established 'specialized committee', reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This committee will have full authority to either accept or reject appeals.

The amendment, published in Kuwait Alyawm, states that any interested party may appeal the election results

within 15 days of their announcement.

The appeal, which must be submitted as a reasoned petition, will be considered by the specialized committee, formed through an administrative decision. The committee's ruling on the matter will be final and binding.

New construction specs for Abdally Economic Zone set

Mixed-use plots now capped at 250% build area

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: Minister of State for Municipal and Housing Affairs Abdullatif Al-Mishari issued a ministerial decision amending some provisions of Ministerial Resolution No. 206/2009 on organizing construction works and the attached tables, as stated in Table No. 19 regarding the requirements and specifications for buildings in Abdally Economic Zone.

The first item in the table stated that the total construction percentage of the buildings in mixed investment housing plots should not exceed 250 percent of the plot area.

The ministerial decision published in 'Kuwait Al-Youm' specified the building percentages in mixed investment housing buildings (residential-commercial) as follows:

■ Not more than 60 percent of the plot area is for the commercial area facing the neighborhood's main street.

■ The residential investment portion of the repeated floors cannot be used for purposes other than housing and it cannot make up more than 190 percent of the plot area;

■ The construction of a mezzanine is allowed as long as only one is utilized for business purposes.

■ It is allowed to construct one or more basements on the entire plot, with the first one being used entirely or in part for parking, mechanical or electrical services, or for leisure activities for building occupants (sport fields, recreational games, swimming pool, etc.). It cannot be used for storage or for commercial purposes and the remaining basements should be utilized as parking spaces only.

■ Provided the building has four floors or higher, it is allowed to establish a floor for recreational services for the building's occupants, such as games, sports fields or a garden.

■ Basements, mezzanines, ground floor hall, corridor, covered areas, mechanical and electrical services floor, projections and ornamental features, all types of skylights, building services such as trash rooms, elevator rooms and building electricity are excluded from the total building percentage. This is in addition to a security control room that is not larger than seven square meters and has surveillance screens. The elevator distributor should have an area not larger than twice that of the elevators and the distributor of residential units in the investment section, as long as the width of the apartment distributor is at least two meters and its area does not exceed 20 percent of the total area of the residential units. The remaining area of the distributors is determined as part of the building percentage.

■ The walls of the units are calculated as part of the total building percentage.



Al-Seyassah photo
Abdullatif Al-Mishari, Minister of State for Municipal and Housing Affairs

The second and third clauses stipulate the requirements for building entrances and canopies, such that the canopy of the building in the repeated floors should not be less than three meters on the main street side and three meters on all other sides.

The fourth clause states the heights of buildings and floors -- the most important of which is that the maximum height of the building is 100 meters, starting from the lowest level of the ground floor slab to the level of the roof slab.

The decision referred to the system of storage buildings and logistics services in buildings constructed on plots designated for storage purposes in Abdally Economic Zone, clarifying the building ratios therein and stipulating that the total building ratio should not exceed 60 percent of the plot area, and the ground floor should not exceed 60 percent of the plot area.

It is permissible to make a mezzanine with a ratio not exceeding 40 percent of the plot area, not included in the building ratio. It is also permissible to make two basements with a building ratio of 100 percent for each basement, not included in the building ratio.

Regarding the distribution of spaces in storage and logistics buildings, the decision states that the percentage of the area used for the plot activity should not be less than 90 percent of the building percentage of each of the first and second basements and the ground floor.

The remaining 10 percent on each floor is permitted to be used for facilities affiliated with the building to operate (café, canteen, dining hall or lounge). It should be used only to serve workers inside the plot. It is not permissible to serve those from outside or car parking areas or all of them, in addition to allowing the use of the remaining 40 percent of the plot area on the ground floor for open storage activity, a loading and unloading area, container arrangements, and car park spaces.

Indemnity procedures fully automated

End-of-service settlements for gov't non-Kuwaiti employees streamlined

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) has completed the automation of end-of-service settlement procedures for non-Kuwaiti employees in government agencies, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to informed sources, this new service eliminates the need for paper documentation between employers and the relevant departments within the CSC. The process begins with the entity submitting the request through the integrated system, followed by a review by the appropriate CSC department. CSC will then issue a disbursement decision, complete with settlement details for the employee's entire period of service, which will be approved and disbursed by the entity in line with the established procedures.

This service saves time and effort as well as enhances control and auditing of the data approved by the CSC. These procedures are

in line with the CSC's efforts to implement the expatriate replacement policy in all government agencies, in accordance with Civil Service Council's Resolution No. 11/2017.

CSC has urged government agencies to direct specialists to complete and implement transactions on the integrated system starting September 16. Agencies are to cease sending official letters to the CSC and are required to input all necessary data into the integrated system, and attach the required documents to complete settlement procedures. Each agency will be held accountable for the accuracy of the data, information, and documents entered into the system, which will serve as the basis for the settlements.

The sources revealed that CSC has trained specialists from government agencies over two days on the procedures necessary to implement these changes on the integrated system.

Bureaucratic hurdles hinder efficiency

Society presses minister to resolve higher education admin challenges

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: The Kuwait Society for Administrators of Educational Institutions has urged the Minister of Higher Education and Acting Minister of Education Dr. Nader Al-Jalal to address the challenges facing administrators in the Ministry of Higher Education and its auditors, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a press statement, the society explained that bureaucracy and administrative routines have resulted in delays in making important decisions that impact operational efficiency. The backlog of important files within the ministry, particularly the "equivalency of academic certificates" file, which has been unresolved for months, has led to dissatisfaction among a number of auditors.

The society stressed the need for establishing effective mechanisms and controls to expedite the resolution of this file as soon as possible.

It indicated that limited financial resources could hinder the development of systems and training programs, as well as the modernization of the administrative infrastructure within the Ministry of Higher Education.

The society affirmed the importance of allocating a budget specifically for developing departmental infrastructure and equipping administrators with the necessary skills through training programs to effectively engage with auditors and improve overall work efficiency.

Furthermore, it highlighted that the lack of training and professional development poses a significant challenge for employees, due to their failure to keep up with developments in corresponding ministries of higher education.

The society stressed the urgent need to address this issue by conducting regular training courses and workshops to enhance employees' skills and capabilities.

It affirmed the importance of attracting new employees and establishing incentives and rewards to retain skilled national talent for ensuring that the ministry does not become an unattractive environment for administrators, particularly in light of competition from the private sector.



KUNA photo
Part of the aid distribution.

Kuwait charity aids Sudan flood victims

KHARTOUM, Oct 20, (KUNA): The Kuwait-based Direct Aid charity has distributed 500 food baskets to families affected by floods in Tokar area in eastern Sudan.

Head of the projects department at the Direct Aid-Sudan Ahmad Al-Sheikh told KUNA Saturday that each basket included 10 kg of sugar, 10 kg of premium flour, 10 kg of red lentils, 5 kg of corn flour, 4 liters of oil, and infants powdered milk.

Electricity restored in Sulaihiya W area

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy has announced the restoration of electricity to the Sulaihiya W area, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The power outage was caused by the Sulaihiya W transformer station being temporarily out of service, affecting limited parts of several neighborhoods.

October

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KUNA photo
Minister of Public Works Dr. Nora Al-Mashaan during her meeting with the Director General of Ports Sheikh Khaled Salem Al-Sabah and members of the Corporation's Board of Directors.

New policy cuts out middlemen

Kuwait included in Russia's direct grain sales initiative

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: The Russian Grain Union has announced a new policy allowing the direct sale of Russian grain to 13 countries, including Kuwait, effectively bypassing foreign intermediaries, reports Al-Rai daily.

This decision, reported by the Interfax news agency, aims to address concerns regarding the involvement of middlemen and the low prices associated with grain sales.

The announcement follows a meeting on October 11, where it was decided that exporters should limit their sales to the designated countries and refrain from selling to foreign tender winners.

According to Edward Zernin, the association's chief executive, shipments commenced from October 11, targeting government agencies and sov-

eign buyers in Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Qatar, Kuwait, South Korea, Pakistan, India, and Iraq.

This move is seen as a way to better organize and control the flow of Russian grain, particularly as government entities become the world's largest wheat buyers.

As the world's largest wheat exporter, Russia continues to seek tighter control over its export sales, recently calling for the exclusion of foreign traders and brokers from the sales process.

This new policy reflects Russia's commitment to ensuring that its grain exports are managed more directly and efficiently, benefiting both the exporting nation and the importing countries involved.

Enhancing food security

Mongolia's first shipment of chilled meat lands in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: Commenting on the arrival of the first shipment of chilled Mongolian meat to Kuwait, the Ambassador of Mongolia to Kuwait Sergelin Burev said this export of meat opens doors for increasing the export of organic agricultural products to all Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, reports Al-Rai daily.

In a press statement issued after the arrival of the first batch of chilled lamb meat to Kuwait, Ambassador Burev explained that this operation will strengthen trade and economic relations between Mongolia and Kuwait. Both countries stand to benefit from cooperation that will broaden opportunities in the fields of food security and agriculture.

The Mongolian Embassy in Kuwait began carrying out meat export operations to Kuwait and the Gulf from July 2022. During this period, it successfully obtained the necessary accreditations to export halal meat from the Gulf Accreditation Center based in Saudi Arabia, followed by registration with the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition in Kuwait.

Mongolian meat and meat products are considered completely organic, as the country has vast, unpolluted pastures that provide an ideal environment for livestock. This allows for the production of high-quality, fully organic meat products that are well-regarded in the international market.

Ambassador Burev revealed a plan to import approximately 30 to 100 tons of chilled mutton from Mongolia to Kuwait on a weekly basis, with the quantity expected to increase depending on supply capacity.



H.E. Sergelin Burev, Ambassador of Mongolia to Kuwait.



Al-Rai photo
The first shipment of chilled Mongolian meat to Kuwait.

Kudos to

Continued from Page 1

Years ago, some studies revealed that employee productivity does not exceed 25 minutes per day. We must acknowledge that five decades of mismanagement in Kuwait have led to a decline in productivity across all public sector institutions. Consequently, the saying "Kuwaitis do not work" has become widespread.

There is no doubt that this has contributed to the decline of all sectors, negatively impacting the country's economic and social situations and allowing the deep state and influential figures to infiltrate institutional frameworks.

This complacency stems from a misunderstanding of the parliamentary mission. Rather than exercising honest oversight over the work of ministries, it has often been exploited to further personal interests, which is a trend observed in all parliaments except the first three.

Moreover, some extremist MPs have pressured ministers to freeze decisions that were in line with the public's wishes and to implement others that contradict the society's customs, traditions, and culture. This has contributed to the unfortunate situation the state has faced in recent years.

Furthermore, due to the numerous interventions by MPs and the committees they impose, ministers have been preoccupied with these challenges for decades. As a result, every minute of work is crucial today, especially af-

ter years of inefficiency, particularly in completing the projects the nation needs.

In this sense, all legislation must be aimed at benefiting Kuwaitis, helping them escape the situation they found themselves in, making up for what we missed, and fixing the damage caused by the previous phase.

The Council of Ministers has the chance to work and breathe with all of its energy today. It has to do twice as much work as it has no more excuses. It now has both executive and legislative authority, and it has a number of tasks to complete.

Therefore, there is widespread approval for the decision to implement evening work hours.

46 KU

Continued from Page 1

This accomplishment underscores Kuwait University's commitment to enhancing the quality of scientific research and its ongoing efforts to develop its research and academic programs.

Crown Prince

Continued from Page 1

General Jamal Mohammad Al-Thayab, Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs at the Diwan of His Highness the Crown Prince Mazen Al-Isa, and the Assistant Foreign Minister for GCC Affairs, Ambassador Najib Al-Bader.

Kuwait, Bahrain forge stronger bonds with 4 new agreements

Key pacts signed in education and trade

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20, (KUNA): The 11th session of the Kuwaiti-Bahraini Joint Higher Committee was held on Sunday at the Foreign Ministry's General Diwan. The Kuwaiti delegation was headed by Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya, while the Bahraini delegation was led by Foreign Minister Dr. Abdullah Al-Zayani.

The joint committee reviewed all vital areas of cooperation between the two brotherly countries, particularly in the economic, investment, security, and developmental sectors. They discussed ways to enhance these areas and take them to new horizons of close cooperation and integration, reflecting the common desire to develop and consolidate bilateral relations at all levels.

The committee's work culminated in the signing of four agreements and memoranda of understanding, supporting and contributing to opening wider horizons for close cooperation between the two countries and demonstrating the determination to develop their close partnership and solid cooperation in various vital fields.

The agreements included the following areas:

■ Cooperation Agreement in the field of ports and commercial maritime navigation between the Government of the State of Kuwait and the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

■ Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Kuwait, represented by the Administrative Development Sector of the Civil Service Bureau, and the Kingdom of Bahrain, represented by the Institute for Public Administration.

■ Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the State of Kuwait, represented by the Sheikh Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Kuwaiti Diplomatic Institute, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Kingdom of Bahrain, represented by the Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa Academy for Diplomatic Studies, focusing on diplomatic studies, research, and training.

■ Executive Program between the Government of the State of Kuwait, represented by the Ministry of Education, and the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain, represented by the Ministry of Education, for cooperation in the field of education for the years 2024-2027.

Earlier, Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya received at Kuwait International Airport on Sunday visiting Bahraini counterpart Dr. Abdullah Al-Zayani on the occasion of his official visit to the country.

87 dead

Continued from Page 1

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Abu Marei explained that this initiative is part of Namaa Charity's "Water Supply" campaign, which has already benefited over 26,000 families across the Strip. He expressed gratitude for this support, emphasizing its role in alleviating the humanitarian suffering caused by ongoing aggression and blockade.

"This generous support showcases Kuwait's commitment to standing by its brothers in times of crisis," he said. He highlighted that Namaa Charity's efforts continue to enhance Kuwait's humanitarian leadership globally, reflecting the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Abu Marei noted that such initiatives are crucial for hundreds of thousands of families amid a worsening water crisis in Gaza, where access to clean water has become a matter of life and death due to the significant deterioration of infrastructure caused by the blockade and occupation.

He stressed the urgent need for ongoing humanitarian efforts, as the situation continues to deteriorate, particularly in

Ports Authority targets non-oil revenue growth

Al-Mashaan pledges full support for KPA expansion and efficiency

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20, (KUNA): Minister of Public Works Dr. Nora Al-Mashaan affirmed her keenness to develop the work of the Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA) by providing all the necessary human and material resources, overcoming obstacles, and following up to stimulate diligent work aimed at achieving the desired goals of the state's development projects to maximize revenue.

In a press statement today, Sun-

day, following her meeting with the Director General of Ports, Sheikh Khaled Salem Al-Sabah, and members of the Authority's Board of Directors, Minister Al-Mashaan emphasized the importance of ports in strengthening the economy, noting the efforts of all workers in this vital facility.

For his part, Sheikh Khaled Al-Sabah stated that the Authority will continue to study its plans, projects, and implementation mechanisms according to the

vision of New Kuwait 2035 to enhance the state's non-oil revenues.

The meeting also focused on following up on the decisions of the Board of Directors, reviewing the decisions of the Contracts Committee, and forming executive committees emanating from the Board. Two memoranda from the General Administration regarding some operational projects at the Authority were also discussed.



KUNA photo
Foreign Ministers of Kuwait and Bahrain after signing 4 agreements and memoranda of understanding.

Ministry joins private sector for stock assessment

Ministry takes bold steps to secure food supply amid market demands

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: In a proactive step towards ensuring food security, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is working to identify precise estimates of the strategic food stock held by approximately 20 major private sector companies. These companies are key players in the market, dealing with essential food items and commodities, reports Al-Rai daily.

This initiative reflects a spirit of collaboration between the government and the private sector, overseen by Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajeel. The aim is to secure market needs for both citizens and residents, while also bolstering the overall food stock.

This effort follows the Ministry's previous actions to ensure government companies are equipped to meet market demands.

In addition to assessing private sector stocks, the Ministry is closely monitoring the storage capabilities of

the Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company and its affiliates.

Recent assessments indicate that the company has successfully doubled its storage capacity, significantly increasing its strategic food supply stock. This contrasts with the private sector, which faces limitations in its stock levels.

The Ministry of Commerce emphasizes the importance of food security and recognizes the joint responsibilities of both public and private sectors.

Coordination between the Ministry and companies is ongoing to meet market demands effectively. This includes a thorough examination of inventory sizes and types across companies, aiming to produce accurate statistics on food supplies.

The Ministry is also focused on the role of the Cooperative Societies Union in this initiative, ensuring that all relevant entities are included in the assessment. As part of its commitment, the Ministry prepares detailed reports

to identify any potential shortages in materials, demonstrating its readiness to respond to market fluctuations.

Moreover, the committee overseeing the implementation of the National Food Security Strategy is dedicated to exploring emergency food security plans and fostering cooperation between public and private sectors.

The Ministry is keen on expanding imports of food supplies that may be at risk of shortages, leveraging both digital tools and on-the-ground monitoring to ensure effectiveness.

Regular coordination among various departments within the Ministry of Commerce, including the Kuwait Supply Company and its distribution branches, is crucial to maintaining a consistent supply of necessary goods.

With over 90 supply branches, the Ministry is committed to ensuring that essential food items remain readily available to meet the needs of the population.

the central and southern governorates, where potable water is in short supply, and nearly nonexistent in the north. He called on the international community and humanitarian organizations to swiftly provide the necessary assistance to residents facing the risk of diseases and epidemics from contaminated water and inadequate health services.

The United States is meanwhile investigating an unauthorized release of classified documents that assess Israel's plans to attack Iran, according to three U.S. officials. A fourth U.S. official said the documents appear to be legitimate.

The documents, attributed to the U.S. Geospatial Intelligence Agency and National Security Agency and marked top secret, indicate that Israel was moving military assets in place to conduct a military strike in response to Iran's ballistic missile attack on Oct. 1.

The U.S. officials spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

The U.S. is urging Israel to press for a cease-fire in Gaza following the killing of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar last week. But neither Israel nor Hamas has shown any renewed interest in such a deal, after months of negotiations sputtered to a halt in August.

Iran supports Hamas and the Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon, where a year of escalating tensions boiled over into all-out war last month. Israel sent ground troops into Lebanon at the start of October.

The Lebanese army said three of its soldiers were killed in an Israeli strike on their vehicle in southern Lebanon. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military on Sunday's strike.

Lebanon's army has largely kept to the sidelines in the war between Israel and the Hezbollah. The military is a respected institution in Lebanon but is not powerful enough to impose its will on Hezbollah or defend the country from an Israeli invasion.

On Saturday, a drone targeted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's house, causing no casualties. It wasn't clear if the house was hit. The military said Hezbollah fired around 160 projectiles into Israel on Sunday. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

Israel has meanwhile ramped up strikes on southern neighborhoods of Beirut known as the Dahiyeh, a crowded residential area. Hezbollah has a strong presence there, but it is also home to large numbers of civilians and people unaffiliated with the militant group.

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, has called civilian casualties in Lebanon "far too high" in the Israel-Hezbollah war and urged Israel to scale back some strikes, especially in and around Beirut.

Among the dead from the strikes in Beit Lahiyah were two parents and their four children, and a woman, her son and her daughter-law and their four children, according to Raheem Kheder, a medic. He said the strike flattened a multi-story building and at least four neighboring houses.

The Israeli military said it used precise munitions against a Hamas target and rejected casualty figures published by the Hamas-run government's media office, which is separate from the Health Ministry. It said the area is an active war zone and that it is trying to avoid harming civilians.

Mounir al-Bursh, director general of the Health Ministry, said the flood of

wounded from the strikes compounded "an already catastrophic situation for the health care system" in northern Gaza, in a post on X.

Doctors Without Borders, the international charity known by its French acronym MSF, called on Israeli forces "to immediately stop their attacks on hospitals in North Gaza" after the Health Ministry said Israeli troops had fired on two hospitals over the weekend.

The military said it was operating near one of the hospitals but had not fired directly at it, and that it was looking into the other incident.

"The ever-worsening escalation of violence and non-stop Israeli military operations that we have been witnessing over the past two weeks in northern Gaza have horrifying consequences," said Anna Halford, an emergency coordinator for MSF.

"When hospitals are attacked, their infrastructure destroyed, and the electricity cut off, the lives of patients and medical staff are under threat."

Internet connectivity went down in northern Gaza late Saturday and had not yet been restored by midday Sunday, making it difficult to gather information about the strikes and complicating rescue efforts.

Israel has been carrying out a major operation in Jabaliya, also in northern Gaza, for the last two weeks. The military says it launched the operation against Hamas militants who had regrouped there.

Over the course of the war, Israeli forces have repeatedly returned to Jabaliya, a densely populated urban refugee camp dating back to the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation.

'Hovde should stay out of my personal life'

Wisconsin Senate candidates trade accusations of lying during debate

MADISON, Wis., Oct 20, (AP): Democratic US Sen Tammy Baldwin and Republican challenger Eric Hovde repeatedly accused each other of lying over the course of their closely watched Senate race during an often-testy and confrontational debate Friday.

In their back-and-forth, each candidate accused the other of playing fast and loose with the truth, both on the campaign trail and during the debate itself.

"The one thing you've perfected in Washington is your ability to lie," Hovde said during an exchange about Social Security.

His comment came after Baldwin pointed out that Hovde supports returning the federal budget to 2019 levels, which she said will result in massive cuts to popular programs like Social Security.

"He supports spending, just not for you," Baldwin said.

Baldwin noted that more than a dozen independent fact-checkers found that Hovde made false statements during the campaign.

Hovde responded by alleging that "Every single one of her ads has been false." He offered no evidence to back that up.

Hovde repeatedly called on Baldwin to disclose more information about the investments and business dealings of her partner, Maria Brisbane, ranked by Forbes as one of the nation's top female wealth advisers. There is no requirement for Baldwin to release that information.

"They don't disclose those investments and how much they're profiting from it," Hovde said, calling it a conflict of interest for Baldwin. "That's fundamentally wrong."

"Eric Hovde should stay out of my personal life," Baldwin shot back. "And I think I speak for most Wisconsin women that he should stay out of all of our personal lives."

If elected, Hovde would be one of the richest members of the Senate based on his campaign finance report, which showed he has assets worth between about \$195 million and more than \$564 million. Baldwin listed assets between \$601,000 and nearly \$1.3 million.

Baldwin voiced her support for passing a federal law that would make abortion legal nationwide, as it was before the US Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade in 2022.

"Women are dying because of the



Wisconsin Senate candidates Republican Eric Hovde and Democratic US Sen Tammy Baldwin are seen before a televised debate on Oct 18, in Madison, Wisconsin. (AP)

current situation," she said. "Harrowing things are happening to women in this state."

Hovde previously said he supported the overturning of Roe v. Wade, but now says he would not vote for a federal ban on abortion. Instead, he says, states should decide. That is a change

of position from 2012, when Hovde last ran for Senate as someone "totally opposed" to abortion.

"I'm not for a national abortion ban," Hovde said during the debate. "I never have been."

Former President Donald Trump, who has endorsed Hovde, has suggest-

ed that he would support a federal ban.

Baldwin and her supporters have tried to paint Hovde as more California than Wisconsin because he owns a \$7 million estate in the Pacific seaside city of Laguna Beach and owns Sunwest Bank, which operates on the West Coast.

Hovde was born and raised in Wisconsin.

Baldwin voiced strong support for the national health care law, while Hovde called for changes.

"We need to build upon the Affordable Care Act," Baldwin said.

Hovde said the law has not slowed health care cost increases, improved access or allowed people to keep their doctors.

"I'm a believer in results, and if you look at the results, every one of those promises has failed," he said.

Hovde questioned the use of the drop boxes, which the Wisconsin Supreme Court banned in 2022 but then allowed again this year after the court became controlled by liberal justices.

"We have to create confidence in our voting system," Hovde said. "It is causing too much tension in our country. And let me tell you, it doesn't help when our state Supreme Court brings

back drop boxes, when those were only used for a pandemic. So why are they being brought back?"

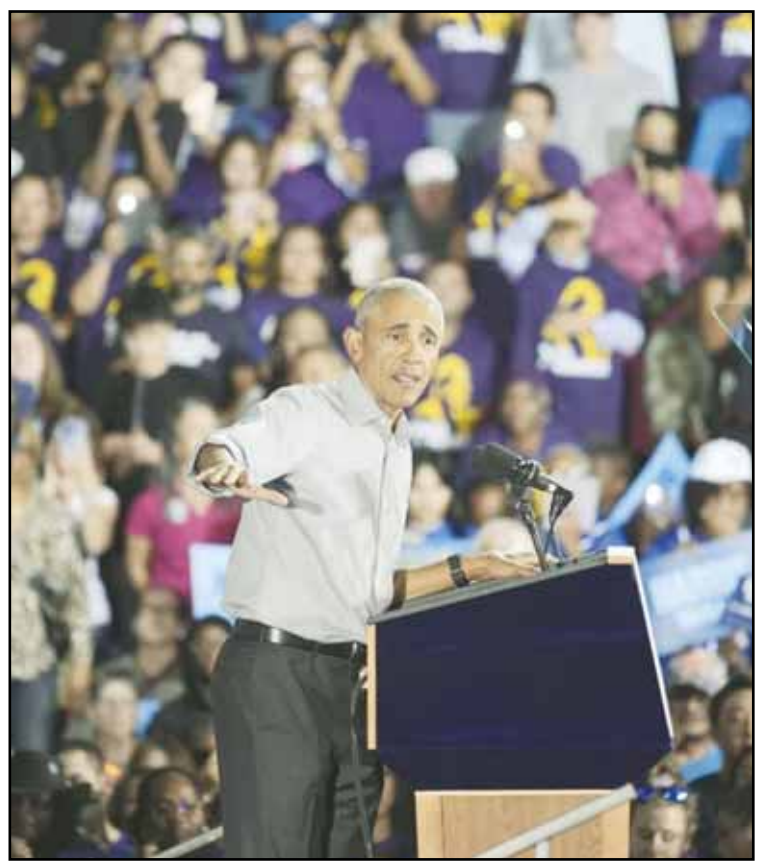
Drop boxes have been used for years in Wisconsin, but they became more prevalent in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

More than 500 boxes were used in 2020, but this year the Wisconsin Elections Commission said it is aware of only 78 in use. There could be more since communities don't have to report them.

There was only one passing reference to Trump and not a single mention of Democratic candidate Vice President Kamala Harris during the hourlong debate. Hovde backs Trump and has appeared at his rallies. Baldwin supports Harris and has spoken at her events in the state.

Democrats must hold onto the Wisconsin seat if they hope to maintain their slim majority in the Senate. Democrats are defending 23 seats, while Republicans have just 11 up for grabs this election.

Republicans see an opportunity in swing-state Wisconsin, and both sides have poured money into the campaign, making it one of the five most expensive Senate races this year.



Former US president Barack Obama speaks during a campaign rally supporting Democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris, Saturday, Oct. 19, 2024, in North Las Vegas, Nevada. (AP)

More than 1m Michigan residents already voted by mail

VP Harris and Lizzo praise Detroit in contrast to Trump

DETROIT, Oct. 20, (AP): US Vice President Kamala Harris appeared with Lizzo on Saturday in the singer's hometown of Detroit, marking the beginning of in-person voting and lavishing the city with praise after Republican nominee Donald Trump recently disparaged it.

"All the best things were made in Detroit. Coney Dogs, Faygo and Lizzo," the singer joked to a rally crowd, pointing to herself after listing off the hot dogs and soda that the city is famous for.

She said it was time to "put some respect on Detroit's name" noting that the city had revolutionized the auto and music industries and adding that she'd already cast her ballot for Harris since voting early was "a power move."

Heaps of praise for the Motor City came after Trump, the former president, insulted it during a recent campaign stop. And Harris continued the theme, saying of her campaign, "Like the people of Detroit, we have grit, we have excellence, we have history."

Arms wide open as she took the stage, Harris let the crowd see she was wearing under her blazer a "Detroit vs. Everybody" T-shirt that the owner of the business that produces them gave

her during a previous stop in the city earlier in the week. She also moved around the stage during her speech with a hand-held mic, not using a teleprompter.

More than 1 million Michigan residents have already voted by mail in the Nov 5 election, and Harris predicted that Detroit turnout for early voting would be strong.

"Who is the capital of producing records?" Harris asked when imploring the crowd to set new highs for early voting tallies. "We are going to break some records here in Detroit today."

She slammed Trump as unstable: "Somebody just needs to watch his rallies, if you're not really sure how to vote."

"We're not going to get these 17 days back. On Election Day, we don't want to have any regrets," the vice president said.

Lizzo also told the crowd, "Mrs. Commander-in-Chief has a nice ring to it."

"This is the swing state of all swing states, so every last vote here counts," the singer said. Then, referencing her song of the same title, Lizzo added, "If you ask me if America is ready for its first woman president, I only have one

thing to say: "It's about damn time!"

Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Whatley said in a statement that Harris needed Lizzo "to hide the fact that Michiganders were feeling good under President Trump - real wages were higher, prices were lower, and everyone was better off."

Talona Johnson, a product manager from Rochester, Michigan, attended Harris' rally and said that Harris "and her team are doing the things that are required to make sure that people are informed."

"I believe she's telling the truth. She's trying to help the people," said Johnson, who said she planned to vote for Harris and saw women's rights as her top concern.

"I don't necessarily agree with everything that she's put out, but she's better than the alternative."

In comments to reporters before the rally, Harris said she was in Detroit "to thank all the folks for the work they are doing to help organize and register people to vote, and get them out to vote today. She also called Detroit "a great American city" with "a lot of hard-working folks that have grit and ambition and deserve to be respected."

The vice president was asked about

whether the Biden administration's full-throated support for Israel in its war with Hamas in Gaza might hurt her support in Michigan. Dearborn, near Detroit, is the largest city with an Arab majority in the nation.

"It has never been easy," Harris said of Middle East policy. "But that doesn't mean we give up."

She will get more star power later Saturday when she holds a rally in Atlanta featuring another wildly popular singer, Usher.

Before Harris became the Democratic nominee, Ian Summer, 19 planned on voting against Trump - but he wasn't enthusiastic about President Joe Biden. Since Harris stepped into the race "she's brought great energy," Summer said. Summer is worried about restrictions on abortion access under Trump. "The fact that I could have a wife in the future that may not be able to receive the care that she needs, that's a very scary thing," he said.

Early voting is also underway in Georgia. More than 1.2 million ballots have been cast, either in person or by mail. Democrats hope an expansive organizing effort will boost Harris against Trump in the campaign's final weeks.

Missile strike on Ukraine injures 17

Kyiv launches more than 100 drones over Russia

KYIV, Ukraine, Oct 20, (AP): Russian air defenses shot down more than 100 Ukrainian drones Sunday over Russia's western regions, Moscow officials said, while 17 people were injured in the Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih in a ballistic missile attack.

The Russian Defense Ministry said 110 drones were destroyed in the overnight barrage against seven Russian regions. Many targeted Russia's border region of Kursk, where 43 drones were reportedly shot down.

Social media footage appeared to show air defenses at work over the city of Dzerzhinsk in the Nizhny Novgorod region, close to a factory producing explosives.

Local Gov Gleb Nikitin wrote on social media Sunday that four fire fighters had been injured repelling a drone attack over Dzerzhinsk's industrial zone, but did not give further details.

Such large-scale aerial attacks are still relatively rare over Russia 2 1/2 years after Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February

2022. A similar attack at the end of September saw Russia's Ministry of Defense report the destruction of 125 drones across seven regions.

Meanwhile, 17 people were injured in Ukraine's Kryvyi Rih after the city was hit with two Russian ballistic missiles, officials said Sunday.

The attack late Saturday evening damaged homes and businesses, said local administration head Oleksandr Vilkul.

The Ukrainian air force said that Russia launched 49 drones and two Iskander-M ballistic missiles in total overnight. It said 31 of the drones were shot down over 12 regions, including the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, while another 13 disappeared from radar - suggesting they were knocked out by electronic defenses.

In a statement on social media, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that Russia had launched some 800 guided aerial bombs and more than 500 attack drones over

Ukraine in the past week alone.

"Every day, Russia strikes our cities and communities. It is deliberate terror from the enemy against our people," he said, renewing calls for continued air support from the country's allies.

"United in defense, the world can stand against this targeted terror."

In another development, a video purporting to show dozens of North Korean recruits lining up to collect Russian military fatigues has been released by Ukrainian officials, who say it shows the introduction of troops sent by Pyongyang into the conflict.

The video, published by Ukraine's Center for Strategic Communications and Information Security, which operates under the Culture and Information Ministry, allegedly shows North Korean soldiers standing in line to pick up bags, clothes and other apparel from Russian servicemen. The Associated Press couldn't verify the video independently.



Ukrainian servicemen of Khartia brigade fire D-30 Howitzer towards Russian positions in Kharkiv region, Ukraine on Oct 16. (AP)

Europe

Moldovans cast votes: Moldovans have started casting ballots in two key votes Sunday that could determine whether the European Union candidate country, which neighbors Ukraine, remains on a pro-western path amid ongoing allegations that Russia has tried to undermine the electoral process.

Incumbent President Maia Sandu is the favorite to secure another term in office in a presidential race in which 11 candidates are running. Voters will also choose "yes" or "no" in a referendum on whether to enshrine in the country's constitution its path toward the 27-nation EU.

Polls by WatchDog, a Chisinau-based think-tank show a clear majority of more than 50% support the EU path. The referendum needs a one-third turnout to be valid.

Polling stations opened at 7 a.m. (0400GMT) and are expected to close at 9 p.m. (1800GMT). By 1 p.m., more than 730,000 voters - about 25% of eligible voters - had cast ballots, according to the Central Electoral Commission. A delegation of electoral observers from more than a dozen countries is helping to monitor the two polls.

If Sandu fails to win an outright majority on Sunday, a runoff will be held on Nov. 3 which could pit her against Alexandr Stoi-anoglo, a Russia-friendly former prosecutor general who is polling at around 10%.

The two pivotal ballots are held amid ongoing claims by Moldovan authorities that Moscow has intensified an alleged "hybrid war" campaign to destabilize the country and derail its EU path. The allegations include funding pro-Israel opposition groups, spreading disinformation, meddling in local elections, and backing a major vote-buying scheme.

U.S. national security spokesman John Kirby echoed those concerns this week, saying in a statement that "Russia is working actively to undermine Moldova's election and its European integration". Moscow has repeatedly denied it is interfering in Moldova. (AP)

Cyprus thwarts cyberattacks: Three of Cyprus' largest economic institutions came under cyberattacks, a Cypriot official confirmed on Saturday.

Commissioner of Communications George Michaelides announced that Hermes Airports, which operates the country's airports, the Cyprus Electricity Authority, and the Bank of Cyprus, the island's largest lender, were consecutively attacked following threats posted online on Thursday.



Michaelides assured that the institutions' operations were not disrupted, as their cyberdefense defenses successfully thwarted the cyberattacks. He still cautioned that further attacks could be imminent.

The attacks followed an online statement by a hacker group known as LutzSec Black, which announced it would shift its focus from France to Cyprus. The group accused Cyprus of consistently supporting Israel on military, security, and economic fronts.

When asked whether the cyberattacks were linked to the ongoing Middle East

crisis, Michaelides stated, "These attacks could happen at any time, and authorities remain on high alert 24/7."

Cyprus' Digital Security Authority is part of the European cybersecurity network, which provides support to member countries whenever needed. (Xinhua)

Hotel faces likely demolition: Belgrade's iconic Hotel Yugoslavia, once a symbol of progress in the former socialist state of Yugoslavia that broke apart in the 1990s and a favorite gathering place for local residents as well as world leaders, now stands in eerie silence awaiting its likely demolition.

The once-bustling landmark - a leading example of modernist architecture when it was built in the 1960s - has fallen into disrepair, its future clouded by debates over its historical significance and the push for advanced development.

Its white facade, once polished and welcoming, is marred by crumbling concrete and graffiti. Inside, debris litters once-pristine red carpeted floors, while scattered pieces of broken furniture hint at the opulence that once filled its rooms and lobbies: Faded velvet armchairs, torn bed mattresses, sagging curtains and broken windows are all that remain of the luxury that once was. The wood-paneled presidential suite where top dignitaries would stay is now home to pigeons that fly in through the shattered glass.

As the Serbian capital grapples with hectic growth and new high-rises that dot its skyline, the almost certain fate of the hotel has sparked controversy, with some seeing it as a relic worth preserving and others envisioning new possibilities rising from its ruins. (AP)

Vasso Papandreou, champion of women in Greece politics, dies at age of 79

ATHENS, Greece, Oct 20, (AP): Vasso Papandreou, a trailblazing Greek politician who served as a government minister, European commissioner and leading advocate for women's representation in politics, has died at her home in an Athens suburb. She was 79.

No cause of death was given, but she had been in poor health for several years.

Her funeral was held Saturday outside Aegio, near the town of her birth in southern Greece, and was attended by former Socialist prime minister Costas Simitis and other veteran politicians.

Politicians across party lines paid tribute to Papandreou following her death Thursday, recognizing her contributions to Greece and dedication to social justice.

"Even though we found ourselves on opposite sides, I must admit she was a strong personality ... she earned the devotion of her friends and the respect of her opponents," said the conservative Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

Papandreou was a founding member of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement in 1974. She was unrelated to the party founder, Andreas Papandreou, but they had a brief affair in the mid-1970s, after which she left for the U.K. to complete her graduate studies.

She served in various ministerial positions in the Costas Simitis governments from 1996 to 2004, including

minister of economic development, minister of interior, and minister for the environment, physical planning and public works.

Papandreou broke barriers as Greece's first female European Commissioner from 1989 to 1992, overseeing employment, industrial relations and social affairs in the second commission led by Jacques Delors and was admired for her strong advocacy of democratic rights.

A champion for women's representation, Papandreou led efforts to increase female participation in Greek politics. She successfully pushed for legislation requiring 33% female representation on candidate lists, starting with municipal elections in 2002 - building a foundation for greater gender balance in Greek politics.

Throughout her career, she advocated for workers' rights, educational opportunities and support for mothers and individuals with special needs.

Papandreou won election to Parliament in six consecutive elections, from 1993 to 2009.



Athens Mayor Dora Bakoyanni, (right), speaks during a news conference as Public Works Minister Vasso Papandreou, (center), and Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki listen in Athens, Greece on Feb 18, 2003. (AP)

INTERNATIONAL



Britain's King Charles and Queen Camilla greet well wishers as they leave St Thomas' Anglican Church in Sydney on Oct 20. (AP)

Children greet Charles, Camilla outside Sydney church

King Charles III and Queen Camilla were greeted by children Sunday outside a Sydney church in their first public appearance of their Australian visit. Charles' arrival Friday marked the first reigning British monarch visit to Australia since his late mother Queen Elizabeth II made her 16th journey to the distant nation in 2011.

Charles, 75, is being treated for cancer, which has led to a scaled-down itinerary. The couple spent a rest day on Saturday at Admiralty

House, the official Sydney residence of the monarch's representative in Australia, Governor-General Sam Mostyn.

The royals' first public engagement was at a service at St. Thomas' Anglican Church in North Sydney. As Charles and Camilla made their way to the front of church, Sunday school children waving Australian flags cheered and shook hands with the couple. Inside, dozens of phones pointed in their direction, while excited whispers echoed

through the room. After the service, the king and queen were greeted outside by hundreds of cheering people hoping to catch a glimpse or snap a photo.

Sunday's service was restricted to the local congregation, with only a few special guests allowed to attend, such as Mostyn and New South Wales state Governor Margaret Beazley. A small group of protesters demonstrated nearby under a banner that read, "Empire Built on Genocide." (AP)

Couple enjoy quiet life together

Japan former empress Michiko marks 90th b'day

TOKYO, Oct 20, (AP) - Japan's beloved former Empress Michiko received greetings from her relatives and palace officials to celebrate her 90th birthday Sunday as she steadily recovers from a broken leg, officials said.

Michiko is the first commoner to become empress in modern Japanese history. Catholic-educated Michiko Shoda and then-Crown Prince Akihito married on April 10, 1959, after what is known as their tennis court romance.

The couple retired after Akihito abdicated in 2019 as their son, Emperor Naruhito, ascended the Chrysanthemum Throne and his wife, Masako, became empress.

Since then, Akihito and Michiko have largely withdrawn from public appearance to enjoy their quiet life together, taking daily walks inside the palace gardens or occasionally taking private trips, hosting small gatherings for book reading and music, according to the Imperial Household Agency.

Former Emperor Akihito has been concerned about Michiko's physical strength and asking how she is feeling, officials said.

Michiko, who fell earlier in October at her residence and had a surgery for her femoral fracture, was steadily recovering with a daily rehabilitation session for about an hour at a time, palace officials said. She was expected to be in a wheelchair when joining her well-wishers for Sunday's celebration.

The former empress was deeply concerned about the people affected by the deadly Jan 1 earthquake in Japan's north-central region of Noto, especially those who suffered additional



In this photo provided by the Imperial Household Agency of Japan, its Emperor Emeritus Akihito and Empress Emerita Michiko pose for a photograph at their residence in Tokyo, Japan on Oct 4 ahead of Michiko's 90th birthday on Oct 20. (AP)

damage from September's heavy rains and floods, the palace said.

Since retirement, Michiko has shared her love of literature, including children's books, English poetry and music, with her friends as well as with Akihito.

The palace said she reads parts of a book aloud with her husband as a daily routine after breakfast. They are currently reading a book chosen by Akihito about war and Okinawa, a

southern Japanese island where one of the harshest ground battles took place at the end of World War II fought in the name of his father.

The couple broke with traditions and brought many changes to the monarchy. They chose to raise their three children themselves, spoke more often to the public, and made amends for war victims in and outside Japan. Their close interactions have won them deep affection among Japanese.

Banners, billboards welcome new leader

Indonesia swears in Prabowo Subianto as country's eighth president

JAKARTA, Indonesia, Oct 20, (AP) - Prabowo Subianto was inaugurated Sunday as the eighth president of the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation, completing his journey from an ex-general accused of rights abuses during the dark days of Indonesia's military dictatorship to the presidential palace.

The former defense minister, who turned 73 on Thursday, was cheered through the streets by thousands of waving supporters after taking his oath on the Quran, the Muslim holy book, in front of lawmakers and foreign dignitaries. Banners and billboards to welcome the new president filled the streets of the capital, Jakarta, where tens of thousands gathered for festivities including speeches and musical performances along the city's major thoroughfare.

Subianto was a longtime rival of the immensely popular President Joko Widodo, who ran against him for the presidency twice and refused to accept his defeat on both occasions, in 2014 and 2019.

But Widodo appointed Subianto as defense chief after his reelection, paving the way for an alliance despite their rival political parties. During the campaign, Subianto ran as the popular outgoing president's heir, vowing to continue signature policies like the construction of a multibillion-dollar new capital city and limits on exporting raw materials intended to boost domestic industry.

Backed by Widodo, Subianto swept to a landslide victory in February's direct presidential election on promises of policy continuity.

Subianto was sworn in with his new

vice president, 37-year-old Surakarta ex-Mayor Gibran Rakabuming Raka. He chose Raka, who is Widodo's son, as his running mate, with Widodo favoring Subianto over the candidate of his own former party. The former rivals became tacit allies, even though Indonesian presidents don't typically endorse candidates.

But how he'll govern the biggest economy in Southeast Asia - where nearly 90% of Indonesia's 282 million people are Muslims - remains uncertain after a campaign in which he made few concrete promises besides continuity with the popular former president.

Subianto, who comes from one of the country's wealthiest families, is a sharp contrast to Widodo, the first Indonesian president to emerge from outside the political and military elite who came from a humble background and as president often mingled with working-class crowds.

Subianto was a special forces commander until he was expelled by the army in 1998 over accusations that he played a role in the kidnappings and torture of activists and other abuses. He never faced trial and went into self-imposed exile in Jordan in 1998, although several of his underlings were tried and convicted.

Jordanian King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein was expected to attend Sunday's ceremony, but canceled at the last minute because of escalating Middle East tensions, instead deciding to send Foreign Affairs Minister Nancy Namrouqa as his special envoy. Subianto and Abdullah met in person in June for talks in Amman on humanitarian assistance to people affected by



Newly-inaugurated Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, (center), reacts as his predecessor Joko Widodo, (left), and leaders of the People's Consultative Assembly applaud after Subianto was sworn in as the country's eighth president at the parliament building in Jakarta, Indonesia on Oct 20. (AP)

the war in Gaza.

Subianto, who has never held elective office, will lead a massive, diverse archipelago nation whose economy has boomed amid strong global demand for its natural resources. But he'll have to contend with global economic distress and regional tensions

in Asia, where territorial conflicts and the United States-China rivalry loom large.

Leaders and senior officials from more than 30 countries flew in to attend the ceremony, including Chinese Vice President Han Zheng and leaders of Southeast Asia countries. U.S. Pres-

ident Joe Biden sent Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the US ambassador to the United Nations. Adm. Samuel Paparo, the US Commander of the Indo-Pacific Command, was also among the American delegation.

Army troops and police, along with armored vehicles, fire trucks and am-

bulances, were deployed across the capital, and major roads were closed to secure the swearing-in.

The election outcome capped a long comeback for Subianto, who was banned for years from traveling to the United States and Australia.

He has vowed to continue Widodo's modernization efforts, which have boosted Indonesia's economic growth by building infrastructure and leveraging the country's abundant resources. A signature policy required nickel, a major Indonesian export and a key component of electric car batteries, to be processed in local factories rather than exported raw.

He has also promised to push through Widodo's most ambitious and controversial project: the construction of a new capital on Borneo, about 2,000 kilometers (1,240 miles) away from congested Jakarta.

Before February's presidential election, he also promised to provide free school lunches and milk to 78.5 million students at more than 400,000 schools across the country, aiming to reduce malnutrition and stunted growth among children.

Indonesia is a bastion of democracy in Southeast Asia, a diverse and economically bustling region of authoritarian governments, police states and nascent democracies. After decades of dictatorship under President Suharto, the country was convulsed by political, ethnic and religious unrest in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Since then, it has consolidated its democratic transition as the world's third-largest democracy, and is home to a rapidly expanding middle class.

Subcontinent

Crude blast rocks Delhi: A crude bomb blast took place in New Delhi in the early hours of Sunday morning, though no injuries were reported. Soon after the incident, the whole area was cordoned off, and investigating agencies were probing to ascertain the nature of the bomb.

A huge ball of white smoke was seen immediately after the blast, eyewitnesses were quoted as saying.

The blast took place near a school run by the paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in New Delhi's Prashant Vihar residential area.

Officers of several investigating agencies, the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL), the Delhi Police and the Delhi Fire Services (DFS) reached the spot and investigated till the last reports came in. (Xinhua)

India road accident kills 12: At least 12 people, including eight children and two women, died, and several others were injured in a road accident in India's western state of Rajasthan on the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday, confirmed local police over the phone.

The road mishap occurred in the state's Dholpur area when a bus rammed into the vehicle carrying the victims. The bus was moving at a high speed from Dholpur towards the state capital, Jaipur.

The victims were returning from a pre-wedding ceremony at their relatives' house in Dholpur. Those injured were admitted to a local hospital. (Xinhua)

2 terrorists killed in Pakistan: Two terrorists were killed and five others arrested in two separate operations in Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province over the last three days, according to the Pakistan Army on Saturday.

In Pishin district of the province on Saturday security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation on the reported presence of terrorists, the military's media wing Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement.

Five terrorists were arrested and a large quantity of weapons, ammunition and explosives were seized during the operation, the statement said. (Xinhua)

South Africa asks Taiwan to move embassy out of capital

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, Oct 20, (Agencies): South Africa has asked Taiwan to move its unofficial embassy out of the administrative capital, Pretoria, in a move that's seen as appeasing ally China.

The South African foreign ministry said Friday that it had given Taiwan a "reasonable" timeframe of six months to relocate its "liaison office" to the commercial hub of Johannesburg. The decision was communicated to China last month by South African Foreign Minister Ronald Lamola when he was in China for the China-Africa summit, the ministry said.

South Africa severed formal diplomatic ties with the self-governing island of Taiwan - over which China claims sovereignty - in 1997, but has an unofficial diplomatic relationship with it, as do many countries.

The move comes during heightened tensions between China and Taiwan. Taiwan celebrated the founding of its government and its national day this month and again rejected China's claims of sovereignty. China then held large military exercises around Taiwan.

Chinese foreign ministry spokes-

person Mao Ning said "we appreciate South Africa's correct decision to relocate the Taipei liaison office in South Africa out of its administrative capital, Pretoria. Taiwan independence is unpopular and doomed to failure."

Taiwanese Foreign Minister Lin Chia-long said his government would consider closing South Africa's own liaison office in Taiwan, cutting off a major channel for travel, trade and educational exchange.

China and South Africa are both members of the BRICS bloc of developing economies, which will hold its annual summit in Kazan, Russia, next week. China is by far South Africa's largest trade partner.

Meanwhile, five people were killed and two children were injured in yet another mass shooting in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, local police said Saturday.

According to a statement issued by the Eastern Cape provincial police, the killings occurred at around 8:30 p.m. (1830 GMT) on Friday in Bityi in the Ncenjana Location, Mthutu Administrative area outside Mthatha. The victims were all members of the same family.



Thunder Tiger Aerobatics Team aircraft fly over the Presidential Office during National Day celebrations in front of the Presidential Building in Taipei, Taiwan on Oct 10. (AP)



People mill about on the Malecon during a massive blackout after a major power plant failed in Havana, Cuba on Oct 18. (AP)

Cuba gets some electricity back after power outage left millions in the dark

HAVANA, Oct 20, (AP) - Some electricity was restored in Cuba, the government said Saturday, after the island nation's worst blackout in at least two years left millions without electricity for two days.

Energy Minister Vicente de la O Levy said the country had 500 megawatts in its electrical grid early Saturday, compared to the 3 gigawatts that are normally generated. He posted on the social media platform X that "several substations in the west now have electricity." De la O Levy also said two thermoelectric power plants are back and two more will resume their operations "in the next few hours."

About half of Cuba was plunged into darkness on Thursday evening, followed by the entire island on Friday morning after the plant failed.

Havana's electricity company said in a statement earlier Saturday that a part of its western system was disconnected "after the exit of one of the plants that was delivering service." That issue has left some parts of the city in the dark once again, with the total megawatts dropping from 500 to 370.

The streets of Cuba's capital, where 2 million people live, were quiet on Saturday, with few cars driving by after a night that was lit by candles and lamps. The impact of the blackout goes beyond lighting, as services like water supply also depend on electricity to run pumps.

The blackout was considered to be Cuba's worst in two years, after a Category 3 hurricane damaged power installations and it took days for the government to fix them. This year, some

homes have spent up to eight hours a day without electricity.

Besides the Antonio Guterres plant, whose failure on Friday affected the entire national system, Cuba has several others and it wasn't immediately clear whether they remained functional.

There is no official estimate for when the blackout will end. Even in a country that is used to outages as part of a deepening economic crisis, Friday's collapse was massive.

The Cuban government has announced emergency measures to slash electricity demand, including suspending school and university classes, shutting down some state-owned workplaces and canceling nonessential services. Officials said that 1.64 gigawatts went offline during peak hours, about half the total demand at the time.

Change	Closing pts	SAUDI	Tadawul	Change	Closing pts
↑		EGYPT	- EGX 30	-24.50	11,882.93
↓				-615.07	29,528.79

Business

Boursa Kuwait general index dips 0.43 percent

Main market index declines 0.57%

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Sunday with its general index down by 30.58 points, or 0.43%, settling at 7,049.59 points. A total of 401.7 million shares were traded through 17,538 cash transactions, amounting to KD 59.9 million (approximately USD 183.2 million).

The main market index declined by 36.92 points, or 0.57%, closing at 6,459.79 points, with

334.6 million shares traded through 12,981 transactions, valued at KD 40.3 million (around USD 123.3 million).

Similarly, the premier market index fell by 30.37 points, or 0.40%, to reach 7,546.29 points, with 67.15 million shares traded through 4,557 transactions, worth KD 19.5 million (approximately USD 59.6 million).

The Main 50 index also dropped 60.57 points, or 0.94%, closing at 6,384.86 points, with 281.3 million shares traded through 9,190 transactions, valued at KD 34.19 million (about USD 104.6 million).

UAE project awards drop 61.5% to \$10 bln

GCC project awards decline 15.4% in Q3-2024

By KAMCO Invest

Total project awards in the GCC witnessed a decline during Q3-2024 mainly due to the unprecedented slump in project awards in the UAE coupled with a steep fall in contract awards in Oman. Aggregate GCC project awards declined by 15.4% to USD 54.2 Bn during Q3-2024 as compared to USD 64.0 Bn during Q3-2023. The quarter saw three out of the six countries in the GCC registered a y-o-y growth in their project awards while the remaining three markets witnessed y-o-y declines.

Saudi Arabia recorded 22.7% y-o-y jump in its Q3-2024 total value of contracts awarded which reached USD 35.4 Bn as compared to USD 28.8 Bn in Q3-2023 driven mainly by the continuous award and execution of the Kingdom's economic diversification driven projects as well as recovering economic activity in the Kingdom. This comes against a backdrop of expected decline in economic growth rate in the Kingdom due to lower oil production coupled with relatively low oil prices. Based on government forecast, Saudi Arabia is expected to see a marginal GDP growth of 0.8% this year followed by 4.6% in 2025 backed by higher oil production. In terms of fiscal balance, the fiscal deficit is expected to widen to 3% of GDP in 2024 as government increases spending to boost growth and meet the objectives of its Vision 2030 Plan.

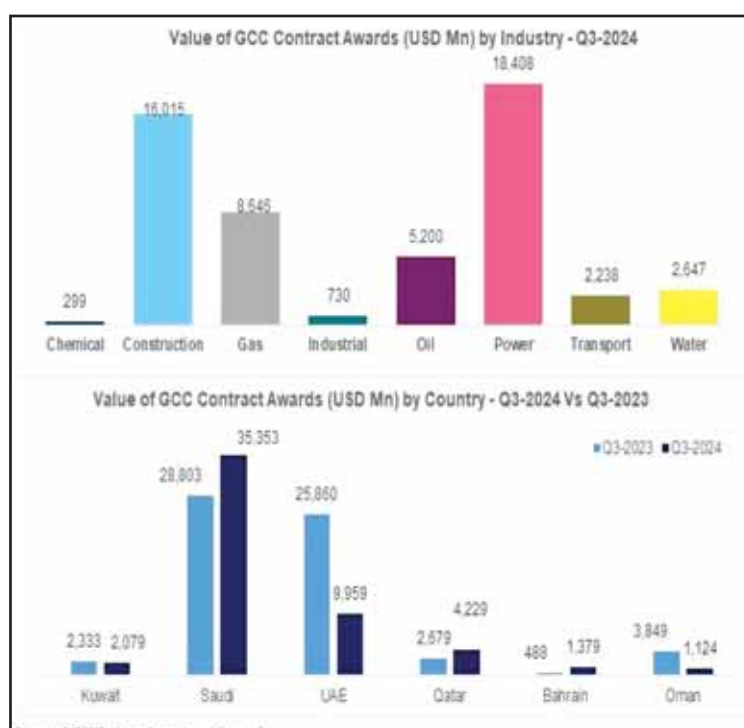
On the other hand, total contracts awarded in the UAE declined by 61.5% y-o-y during Q3-2024 to reach USD 10.0 Bn as compared to USD 25.9 Bn during Q3-2023. Similarly, aggregate projects awarded in Oman dropped 70.8% y-o-y during Q3-2024 to reach USD 1.1 Bn as compared to USD 3.8 Bn in Q3-2023. Meanwhile, Qatar has had a robust 57.9% growth in its y-o-y Q3-2024 projects awarded while Kuwait suffered 10.9% y-o-y drop in contracts awarded during the quarter.

In terms of sectors, Q3-2024 witnessed a jump in the value of projects awarded in only two out of the eight sectors i.e. the Oil and Power sectors. Total GCC Power Sector contracts awarded during the quarter jumped 5.5 times to reach USD 18.4 Bn as compared to USD 3.4 Bn during Q3-2023. Moreover, the total value of contracts awarded in the GCC Oil sector has reached USD 5.2 Bn recording an increase of 86.1%.

Kuwait

Total contract awards in Kuwait stayed above the USD 2 Bn mark during Q3-2024 despite witnessing 10.9% y-o-y drop to reach USD 2.1 Bn as compared to USD 2.3 Bn in Q3-2023. The total value of projects awarded in Kuwait has reached the third highest level in 16 consecutive quarters.

In terms of outlook, Kuwait's projects market is expected to pick



in the near term. Recently it has been reported that the Kuwait government has approved 35 projects worth up to USD 51 Bn for plans that included the modernization of infrastructure and other facilities. Nearly USD 25 Bn worth of these projects are expected to be completed by 2030.

Some of the key projects approved include the USD 3.3 Bn development of 9,800 houses, a USD 1.4 Bn initiative to construct and develop roads and the construction of 111-kilometer rail line that connects to the six-nation GCC rail-network. Furthermore, the USD 3.2 Bn project to develop the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port was also one of the major projects among the 35 projects.

In terms of sectoral performance, Q3-2024 contract awards in Kuwait's Power Sector jumped 14 times to reach USD 1.4 Bn as compared to USD 98 Mn during Q3-2023. One of the significant contracts awarded in the sector during the quarter was the USD 126 Mn contract by Kuwait Oil Company develop the power distribution network for ESP in area 1 and 2 S&EK 11 KV. Moreover, total contracts awarded in the Oil Sector recorded 265% y-o-y, jump to reach USD 168 Mn as compared to USD 46 Mn during Q3-2023. Comparatively, the aggregate value of contracts awarded in the Transport Sector recorded a 77% y-o-y decline to reach USD 440 Mn during the quarter down from USD 1.9 Bn in Q3-2023.

One of the main contracts that were awarded in the quarter was the multi sector USD 294 Mn project to develop works in the South Sabah Al-Ahmed City project. The contract was awarded by Kuwait's Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) to the Chinese company Avic International Holding Corp. The range of the project includes the construction and development of road works, irrigation, sewage,

road lighting, electrical cable crossings, irrigation tank buildings and telephone networks for over six thousand and five hundred residential units.

Another significant project that was awarded during the quarter was the USD 140 Mn engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contract to construct flowlines and associated works for explanatory and Jurassic wells in North Kuwait. This project was awarded to the Mechanical Engineering and Contracting Company.

GCC Projects Market Outlook

According to MEED Projects, the total value of projects that are planned or in pipeline in the GCC stood at USD 2.7 Trillion as of 10 October-2024. Saudi Arabia comprised the lion's share of ongoing or upcoming GCC projects (55.9% or USD 1.53 trillion) followed by the UAE which has USD 627.6 Bn and Oman with estimated ongoing or upcoming projects at USD 208.9 Bn. However, the picture was different in terms of only upcoming projects in the region excluding ongoing contracts. Total GCC projects in the pipeline (upcoming projects) reached USD 1.43 trillion as of 10-October-2024. Expectedly, Saudi Arabia also dominated the MENA region's projects in the pipeline representing 53.0% (USD 763.0 Bn) followed by the UAE which comprised 20.0% (USD 287.1 Bn). Total value for upcoming projects for Kuwait reached USD 108.5 Bn during October-2024 comprising 7.5% of the total GCC upcoming projects. In terms of sector representation, the Construction Sector comprised the largest sector, 30.9% or USD 444.6 Bn, of upcoming projects in the GCC followed by the Transport Sector which comprised 19.7% or USD 283.5 Bn of upcoming projects in the region.



Watheefti-Markaz Group photo

Fair attracts 30,000 job seekers and 120 companies

Markaz sponsors Watheefti Career Fair 2024

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: As part of its continuous commitment to developing local talent and supporting recent graduates, Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" sponsored the Watheefti Career Fair, held from October 17 to 19 at The Arena in 360 Mall, under the patronage and presence of Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and Acting Minister of Education Dr. Nader Al-Jalal. Markaz's sponsorship of this event for the second time underscores its dedication to contributing to job creation and enhancing professional skills, which aligns with one of the core pillars of its corporate social responsibility strategy - building human capacity. Markaz participated in the Watheefti Career Fair as it provides an attractive platform to connect with national talent, engage with job seekers, and assess their capabilities firsthand.

As part of its sponsorship, the Markaz team interacted with many participants at its booth, offering insights into the company's work environment and available opportunities. The team also provided guidance on essential skills required to develop career paths and meet the growing demands of

the labor market.

For over 50 years, Markaz has been committed to supporting national talent and encouraging young professionals to enhance their skills. The Markaz Graduate Development Program (MGDP) continues to offer practical training and professional mentorship over the course of a full year, aimed at preparing young talent to tackle the ever-changing challenges of Kuwait's labor market. Since its launch in 2017, the program has trained 57 Kuwaiti graduates, 42% of whom have been employed.

The career fair brought together job seekers and leading companies to explore the available job opportunities in the labor market. It attracted over 30,000 participants, with more than 120 companies from 14 sectors, including financial services, healthcare, logistics, technology, real estate, retail, oil and gas, food and beverages, and sports. The fair also featured panel discussions and workshops on employment, training, workplace environment, effective communication, and key skills required to secure suitable job opportunities and achieve professional excellence.

ECB cuts interest rates by 25 bps to 3.25%

US retail sales rise 0.4% in September

By National Bank of Kuwait

United States & Canada

US Retail Sales Print Exceeds Forecast

US retail sales rose by 0.4% in September, exceeding economists' expectations of a 0.3% increase, according to data from the Commerce Department. This represents a 1.7% gain annually. The growth was driven by lower gasoline prices, which gave consumers more disposable income to spend on dining out and shopping at clothing stores, miscellaneous retailers, and health and personal care stores. Online purchases also saw an uptick. Gas prices fell by about 12 cents per gallon, further supporting consumer spending. Sales at restaurants and bars, a key indicator of household financial health, rose 1.0%. Despite strong consumer spending, economists expect the Federal Reserve to deliver a modest 25-basis-point interest rate cut next month.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen Sounds Tariff Warning

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen cautioned that broad tariff proposals would increase inflation and harm American businesses. She criticized the idea of imposing high tariffs on both allies and competitors, warning that such measures would raise prices for American consumers and reduce business competitiveness. Yellen argued that while challenges like supply chain disruptions, climate change, and China's industrial overcapacity need addressing, outdated approaches like blanket tariffs are not the solution. Instead, she emphasized the need for targeted and thoughtful economic strategies.

The US Dollar index closed the week at 103.46.

Canada Inflation Drops Below 2%
The likelihood of a 50 bps interest rate cut by the Bank of Canada has increased after annual inflation fell to 1.6% in September, according to Statistics Canada. This inflation drop, along with a strong labor market report showing 47,000 new jobs and a lower unemployment rate of 6.5%, provides key data ahead of the central bank's interest rate decision on October 23. Falling gasoline prices contributed to the decline in inflation, but excluding gasoline, inflation stood at 2.2%. Rent and food prices remained elevated, with rent rising 8.2% year-over-year and food prices increasing faster than the headline inflation rate. The Bank of Canada, which has already cut interest rates three times this year, may continue with further reductions depending on its economic evaluation. Governor Tiff Macklem has hinted that additional cuts could be forthcoming, though the pace and timing remain uncertain.

The USD/CAD currency pair closed the week at 1.3800.

Europe

ECB Delivers Quarter Percentage Reduction

European Central Bank (ECB) reduced its key interest rate by 25 bps to

Currencies	Previous Week Levels			This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward	
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum		Maximum
EUR	1.0932	1.0810	1.0936	1.0865	1.0815	1.0960	1.0910
GBP	1.3060	1.2971	1.3102	1.3048	1.3000	1.3135	1.3050
JPY	149.12	148.84	150.32	149.52	147.60	150.00	147.70
CHF	0.8566	0.8565	0.8669	0.8647	0.8550	0.8700	0.8562

3.25% on Thursday, marking the third quarter-point cut this year. This move was widely expected, following earlier signals from policymakers about lower inflation risks and a slowing economic outlook. The ECB noted that the disinflation process is "well on track," and inflation in the eurozone eased to 1.8% in September, falling below the ECB's 2% target for the first time in three years. However, the central bank warned that inflation could rise again in the coming months before stabilizing next year. Additionally, the ECB revised its 2024 growth forecast for the eurozone down to 0.8%, citing weaker domestic demand and challenges in major economies like Germany and France. This is the first time the ECB has cut rates in consecutive meetings since 2011.

The EUR/USD currency pair closed the week at 1.0865.

United Kingdom

UK Inflation Falls Below Bank of England Target

The Office for National Statistics announced on Wednesday that inflation in the United Kingdom had decreased significantly to 1.7% in September, surpassing market expectations and raising the likelihood of an interest rate cut by the Bank of England in November. Economists had predicted a higher inflation rate of 1.9% for the month, but the actual figure marked the first time it had fallen below the BOE's target of 2% since April 2021. Inflation had been hovering near this target for the past four months, reaching 2.2% in August. Core inflation, which excludes energy, food, alcohol, and tobacco, also declined from 3.6% in August to 3.2% in September, falling below the forecast of 3.4%. Price increases in the services sector, the primary component of the U.K. economy, experienced a notable decrease to 4.9% in September from 5.6% in August, reaching the lowest level since May 2022. Core and services inflation are closely monitored by Bank of England policymakers as they consider whether to implement another interest rate reduction at their upcoming meeting in November. Markets are now pricing in 86% probability of a rate cut by 25 basis points.

Retail Sales Rise Unexpectedly

In September, British retail sales unexpectedly rose by 0.3%, surpassing economists' expectations of a 0.3% decline. This increase, combined with stronger sales in July and August, led to a 1.9% rise in sales for the third quarter, marking the joint largest growth since mid-2021. The telecom and computer sectors were key drivers of this non-food sales boost, with a nearly 35% surge in sales for September. This rise contrasts

with concerns that consumers might cut spending due to potential tax increases ahead of the new government's budget later this month.

The GBP/USD currency pair closed the week at 1.3048.

Asia Pacific

Chinese Inflation Falls

Consumer price index in China dropped, with the y/y figure showing a 0.4% increase, lower than the previous and forecasted figure of 0.6%. The producer price index deflation also further deepened, with the y/y figure at -2.8%, versus August's -1.8% figure. The figures highlight the need for stronger stimulus measures, where finance minister Lan Fao spoke on Saturday, stating that there will be more "counter-cyclical measures" in hopes of reducing deflationary pressures in China.

China GDP Figures Surpass Expectations

China's National Bureau of Statistics reported that the country's GDP grew by 4.6% year-on-year in the third quarter of 2024, slightly surpassing economists' expectations of 4.5%. This was a slight decrease from the 4.7% growth in the second quarter. On a quarterly basis, GDP expanded by 0.9%, up from 0.7% in the previous quarter. Officials noted positive economic signs in September, with growing confidence in meeting the full-year GDP growth target of around 5%.

This follows government efforts to stimulate the economy, including reducing bank reserve requirements by 50 basis points. Following the data release, China's CSI 300 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index both saw gains.

China Industrial Production & Retail Sales Accelerate

China reported stronger-than-expected retail sales and industrial production for September. Retail sales grew by 3.2% year-on-year, exceeding the 2.5% forecasted by analysts and accelerating from the 2.1% growth in August. Industrial production also outpaced expectations, expanding by 5.4% compared to the predicted 4.5% increase. Fixed asset investment grew 3.4% from January to September, while the urban unemployment rate fell to 5.1%, down from 5.3% the previous month. These positive figures come as Beijing introduces measures to stimulate consumption and support the real estate sector.

The USD/CNY currency pair closed the week at 7.1015.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30610.

Dollar weakens against major currencies

Gold hits record high amid geopolitical tensions

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: The yellow metal prices soared past \$2,700 an ounce for the first time, driven by rising concerns over the upcoming US election and escalating tensions in the Middle East, leading to increased demand for safe-haven assets, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

At the close of trading on Friday, gold futures for December delivery increased by

0.8 percent, gaining \$22.5 to reach \$2,730 per ounce, marking a weekly gain of over 2 percent. Spot gold transactions also rose by about \$27, or 0.9 percent, to \$2,719 per ounce.

In contrast, the dollar weakened against several major currencies, falling 0.3% against the euro to \$1.0864, 0.5 percent against the Japanese yen to 149.5100 yen, and 0.2 percent against the British pound

to \$1.3044.

This surge in gold prices comes amid military escalations in the region, coinciding with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's planned tour of the Middle East to negotiate a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, following significant developments such as the assassination of Yahya Sinwar, the head of Hamas's political bureau.

NBK continues to prove its resilience against shifting operating conditions: Al-Sager

On the sidelines of the bank's Analyst Conference for 9M2024

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: Mr. Isam Al-Sager, the Vice Chairman and Group CEO of National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), said, "NBK continues to prove its resilience against shifting operating conditions, its prudent approach to risk management and its ability to sustain growth from diversified income streams."

On the sidelines of the Analyst Conference for the results of 9M2024, Al-Sager added, "We reported net profits of KD 457mn for the nine-months of the year; growing by 6% on an annual basis. As for the three-months ended September 2024, net profits reached KD 164.6mn; posting a growth of 5.7% year-on-year.

"Our diversified business portfolio across geographies and business segments has further driven growth while capturing opportunities even in volatile market conditions. We achieved growth of 7.8% year-on-year in net operating income to reach KD 931.0mn for the nine-months period," he noted.

Digital Excellence

Al-Sager mentioned, "In line with the evolving needs of our clients, we continue to excel in digital innovation and deliver a holistic banking experience that reflects positively on operational efficiency while reinforcing our commitment towards long-term value creation to both stakeholders and customer. Accordingly, our return on average assets for the reporting period reached 1.60% whereas our return on average equity reached 15.4%." "Our strategic initiatives continue to contribute to the leadership position that the Bank is recognized for in Kuwait. We will continue advancing our technological and digital investments and growing our products and services portfolio in the market. Furthermore, by deepening the relationships with existing clients and actively seeking new business opportunities, we will endorse the Group as a trusted financial partner," he explained.

"Moreover, we will remain focused on leveraging our unique competitive advantage domestically, as the only bank in Kuwait with access to both conventional and Islamic banking markets. Our subsidiary Boubyan Bank continues to support the Group in diversifying our client base and income streams. Meanwhile, NBK wealth will solidify its proposition and offering best-in-class wealth management experience in the market. Similarly, our international operations remains vital for the Bank's stability and growth prospects," he continued.

Robust Governance

Al-Sager pointed out, "At NBK, ESG principles remain a cornerstone of our operations and lending philosophy. Our robust governance framework is central to every strategic decision that we continue or intend to make. This affirms our dedication to ESG stewardship, our commitment to transition to a low-carbon economy and our carbon neutrality pledge."

Saudi Market

On a question about NBK's strategy in Saudi Arabia, Al-Sager said, "Our strategy in Saudi Arabia is to increase our presence in the wealth management business through NBK Wealth. This is in line with the focus on increasing wealth management offerings to private banking customers beyond Kuwait and Saudi is a key growth market for us."

"With respect to corporate banking, we continue to provide credit facilities and other trade finance services to different companies in Saudi Arabia - some GREs while others are high-quality corporates. We of course maintain our conservative approach to credit, which has resulted in a sound credit quality and lower NPLs for the Group," he added.

Economic Conditions

Commenting on local economic conditions, Al-Sager said, "In Kuwait, economic indicators point to subdued pace of growth but not far from a rebound. Latest provisional data showed that non-oil GDP grew modestly in 2Q-2024. Meanwhile, oil GDP contracted on lower crude production."

"Inflation on the other hand softened marginally to 2.9% as of August-2024 and expected to continue to trend lower to remain on track for an average annual rate of 3.0% compared to 3.6% recorded in 2023."

"On a positive note, Project activity maintained its momentum and remained solid in 3Q 2024 with the power and water sector constituting three quarters of the value awarded during the period. Activity is likely to pick up for the remainder of the year, in line with government development plan priorities with around KD 3.3bn worth of awards pencilled for next couple of quarters," he clarified

Mortgage Law

On a question about the mortgage law, Al-Sager said, "The previous parliament pencilled various housing-related laws and initiatives that position the law closer to getting passed; minding that the political scene has changed in the meantime. Given the growing number of housing applications which reached 97.6 thousand as of September 2024, there is an increased likelihood that the law will be passed to address this financing mechanism issue going forward. Looking at the political scene recently in Kuwait, there is no solution other than passing the law and the sooner it does the better." "In the GCC region, performance across markets witnessed relatively positive economic developments with strong non-oil growth amid looming uncertainties. On the other hand, the challenging geopolitical scene and oil price volatility will continue to have an economic impact on GCC economies."

"On a global scale, uncertainty continues to shadow the economic outlook as major central banks shift their attention from rising prices and inflation towards potential recession challenges. The sluggish demand and increased geopolitical tensions added to the uncertainty of the outlook," he added.



Mr Isam Al Sager



NBK headquarters

Al-Sager:

- NBK continues its prudent risk management approach, maintaining its ability to sustain growth from diversified income streams
- Our diversified business portfolio across geographies and business segments has further driven growth while capturing opportunities even in volatile market conditions
- We continue to excel in digital innovation and deliver a holistic banking experience that reflects positively on operational efficiency
- By deepening relationships with existing clients and actively seeking new business opportunities, we will endorse the Group as a trusted financial partner
- Boubyan Bank continues to support the Group in diversifying our client base and income streams, NBK wealth offers the best-in-class wealth management experience in the market
- Our international operations remains vital for the bank's stability and growth prospects
- ESG principles remain a cornerstone of our operations and lending philosophy
- Our robust governance framework is central to every strategic decision that we continue or intend to make
- Saudi Arabia is a key growth market for us, and our strategy there is to increase our presence in the wealth management business
- Economic indicators in Kuwait point to subdued pace of growth but not far from a rebound
- Project activity is likely to pick up for the remainder of the year, in line with government development plan priorities
- Given the growing number of housing applications, there is an increased likelihood that the mortgage law will be passed, and the sooner the better

Strong Operating Performance

On his part, Mr. Sujit Ronghe, Group CFO of National Bank of Kuwait commented, "Our results for 9M2024 stem from a strong operating performance by the Group and demonstrate the continued growth in our business. The higher interest rate regime for a significant part of the reporting period and an overall stable operating environment in Kuwait have generally benefited the bank."

"The Group's Balance Sheet remains strong with a stable credit quality. NBK's capital base along with the ability to generate healthy operating profits provides a strong credit loss-absorption capacity," he added.

"Average earning assets grew by KD 1.8bn i.e. 5.2% over September 2023, to reach KD 36.4bn. NBK's focus on digital channels and product offerings continues to play a vital role in attracting and servicing customers, with increased volume of electronic transactions. We also continue to press ahead with selective product offerings in certain geographies e.g. through our global wealth management business i.e. NBK Wealth, Islamic banking through Boubyan Bank and by further leveraging our overseas network."

Ronghe mentioned that NBK's Consumer Banking contributed 20% and 17%

Ronghe:

- Our results for 9M2024 stem from a strong operating performance by the Group and demonstrate the continued growth in our business
- International Banking contributed 24% to net operating income, 23% to the Group's profit, and 42% to Group's total assets
- Boubyan Bank contributed 23% to Group's total assets, NBK Wealth contributed to 10% and 11% of Group's operating income and profit respectively
- We continue to expect the overall loan growth for 2024 to be in the mid-single digit range

to the Group's net operating income and profit respectively. Similarly, Corporate Banking contributed 13% and 19% to the Group's net operating income and profit," he added.

International Operations

"International Banking contributed 24% to net operating income and 23% to the Group's profit, reflecting a strong operating performance. The Group's Islamic banking subsidiary, Boubyan Bank, delivered a net profit of KD 73.5mn, up 20.3% on 9M2023. International Banking and Boubyan Bank contributed 42% and 23%, respectively, to Group's total assets reinforcing the Group's diversification strategy," Ronghe said.

"NBK Wealth contributed to 10% and 11% of the Group's operating income and profit respectively. NBK Wealth provides asset management, brokerage, lending, deposits and other customized and innovative offerings to high-net-worth individuals and institutional clients, further advancing the Group's diversification agenda," he added.

Operating Environment

On the operating outlook for the coming period, Ronghe said, "In light of the ongoing regional and international geo-politics, we remain cautiously optimistic that the overall operating environment, although challenging, will remain generally stable in the coming quarter. As regards loan growth, given the current geopolitical and the general macroeconomic situation, we continue to expect the overall loan growth for 2024 to be in the mid-single digit range."

"At the same time, we remain very optimistic that the significant project activity expected, would lead to first non-cash in the business i.e. guarantees, LC's, etc. and later translate into loan growth," he noted.

Saudi Market

On a question about NBK's strategy in Saudi Arabia, Ronghe said, "Our strategy in Saudi Arabia is to increase our presence in the wealth management business through NBK Wealth. This is in line with the focus on increasing wealth management offerings to private banking customers beyond Kuwait and Saudi is a key growth market for us."

"With respect to corporate banking, we continue to provide credit facilities and other trade finance services to different companies in Saudi Arabia - some GREs while others are high-quality corporates. We of course maintain our conservative approach to credit, which has resulted in a sound credit quality and lower NPLs for the Group," he added.

Automakers are exploring strategies to gain an advantage

China's auto industry accelerates toward intelligent transformation

BEIJING, Oct. 20, (Xinhua): Having surged to the forefront of the global new energy vehicle (NEV) market with their outstanding performance, Chinese automakers are exploring strategies to gain an advantage over their competitors in the more challenging latter phase of the market race, which is increasingly driven by intelligent development and artificial intelligence.

One of the latest efforts in this push is the 2024 World Intelligent Connected Vehicles Conference (WICV), held from Oct. 17 to 19 in Beijing.

The WICV attracted over 250 auto firms and institutions from home and

abroad, with more than 200 new technologies and products making their debut.

"Intelligent connected vehicles (ICVs) have become a focus of industry innovation, and Chinese automobiles are accelerating into a new stage with intelligence as their core competitiveness," said Li Shufu, chairman of Geely Holding Group, at the event.

Seizing the opportunities presented by intelligent technology and promoting China's transformation into an automotive powerhouse is a challenge the entire Chinese auto industry must address, he added.

Like many of China's leading car companies, Geely has made significant strides in intelligent innovation, driving advancements in areas such as automobile safety, human-machine interaction, intelligent driving, onboard chips and low-orbit satellites. The company is also committed to creating an integrated space-ground smart network. According to Zhu Huarong, chairman of Chongqing Changan Automobile Co., Ltd, China's ICVs saw rapid growth this year, with sales projected to reach 17 million and a penetration rate surpassing 63 percent.

Stefan Mecha, CEO of the Volk-

swagen China Passenger Cars Brand, said that China actively fosters innovation opportunities through consistent government plans for ICV and NEV development, a tech-savvy consumer base, and an openness to technology within an advanced tech ecosystem.

A comprehensive industrial system for China's ICV sector has basically taken shape, covering products and technologies such as basic chips, sensors, computing platforms and chassis control, Minister of Industry and Information Technology Jin Zhuanglong said Thursday during the opening ceremony of WICV.



Workers on strike picket in front of a CVS pharmacy on Saturday, Oct. 19, 2024, in Los Angeles. (AP)

Call for better pay

CVS workers go on strike

LOS ANGELES, Oct 20, (AP): Workers at seven CVS pharmacies in Southern California have gone on strike for better pay and health care and to protest what they say is bad-faith contract bargaining by the company.

The walkout, which affected four stores in Los Angeles and three in Orange County, began Friday morning and continued into the weekend. On Saturday outside one of the LA stores, strikers urged customers not to cross the picket lines.

Melissa Acosta, a pharmacy technician who is on the contract bargaining committee, accused the company of "intimidating workers, observing them, getting in the way of them speaking to union representatives."

The CVS locations affected have remained open, staffed by managers and nonunion employees.

Workers planned to continue picketing until negotiations resume Wednesday. The strike was authorized by a vote of the two local United Food and Commercial Workers unions involved on Sept. 29, with more than 90% in favor.

"We're disappointed that our UFCW member colleagues have gone on strike

at a few select locations in the Los Angeles area," company spokesperson Amy Thibault said in a statement.

Thibault said CVS has made progress on getting to a final contract and reached "tentative agreements" to raise pay and increase the company's health insurance contributions.

Acosta said she cannot meet the cost of the insurance CVS offers and instead is enrolled in the state-run program Covered California.

"In my nine years of working with CVS, I've never been able to afford their health care plan," she said.

Major pharmacy chains across the country have been struggling with costs and online competition. CEO Karen Lynch of CVS Health, which owns the chain, recently stepped down as shares dropped 19%. CVS is nearing the end of a three-year plan to close 900 stores.

CVS pharmacy technicians, who are required to complete an extensive training program and satisfy licensing requirements, currently make \$24.90 an hour after five years on the job, according to the union.

Carlos Alfaro, a technician who joined the strike, said stores are understaffed as the flu season begins.

Rate rises to 6.44% from 6.32%

30-year mortgage rates in US continue to rise, hitting highest mark in 8 weeks

WASHINGTON, Oct 20, (AP): The average rate on a 30-year mortgage in the U.S. rose for the third week in a row, reaching its highest level in eight weeks. The rate rose to 6.44% from 6.32% last week, mortgage buyer Freddie Mac said Thursday. A year ago, the rate averaged 7.63%.

The last time the average rate was higher was on August 22, when it was 6.46%. Borrowing costs on 15-year fixed-rate mortgages, popular with homeowners seeking to refinance their home loan to a lower rate, also increased this week. The average rate rose to 5.63% from 5.41% last week. A year ago, it averaged 6.92%, Freddie Mac said.

Mortgage rates are influenced by several factors, including how the bond market reacts to the Federal Re-



A housing development in Cranberry Township, Pa., is shown on March 29, 2024. (AP)

serve's interest rate policy decisions. That can move the trajectory of the 10-year Treasury yield, which lenders use as a guide to pricing home loans. The yield on the 10-year Treasury was 4.09% Thursday, up from 3.62% in mid-September, just days before the Fed slashed its benchmark lending rate by a half a point.

The average rate on a 30-year mortgage has been rising since reaching its lowest level in two years - 6.08% - three weeks ago. The rate remains well below the 7.22% it hit in May, its 2024 peak.

Mortgage rates have been climbing in recent weeks following a spate of encouraging reports on the U.S. economy, including a hotter-than-expected September jobs report and snapshots of consumer prices.

The program benefits 250 college students and recent graduates

Boursa Kuwait sponsors and hosts CODED Academy's UniCODE program

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: Boursa Kuwait entered a strategic partnership with CODED Academy, the first coding bootcamp in the Middle East. As part of this partnership, the Kuwaiti stock exchange will sponsor and host the academy's UniCODE coding program for college students and recent graduates. The Kuwait Financial Centre (Markaz) will also participate in the program as a co-sponsor.

CODED Academy's UniCODE program empowers college students and recent graduates with the coding and programming skills needed to thrive in today's competitive job market. Through training in cybersecurity, mobile, and web development, participants gain valuable expertise and enhance their career prospects.



Naser Al-Sanousi

The fourth edition of the program commenced on October 19th and will run until December 14th, 2024. The seven-week program, composed of three tracks, will help students master key cybersecurity topics including Linux, web security, cryptography, and digital forensics to help them effectively secure digital environments. The mobile development track will focus on Flutter, which will help students become proficient in building high-performance, cross-platform apps using its reactive framework and widget-based architecture while the web development track will explore some of the more fundamental languages of webpage development.

Speaking about the partnership, Boursa Kuwait's Senior Director of Marketing and Communication Mr. Naser Meshari Al-Sanousi said, "Boursa Kuwait is proud to support CODED Academy's UniCODE program, an initiative providing intensive training to 250 students in the dynamic fields of AI-powered mobile application development, web development, and cybersecurity. This program directly addresses the widening gap between academic learning and the evolving needs of the labor market. Our sponsorship reflects Boursa Kuwait's commitment to investing in Kuwaiti youth, empowering them with essential technical skills and the exceptional innovation sense and business acumen to build a promising future."



Hashim Behbehani

As part of the sponsorship, Boursa Kuwait will host some of the program's workshops and interactive training sessions, providing an inspirational backdrop for students to engage in real-life practical on-the-job training. Both the exchange and CODED Academy stressed the importance of hosting the program in the iconic Boursa Kuwait building, which will provide an extra impetus for participants and inspire the next generation of market participants and financial sector professionals.

Boursa Kuwait is delighted to welcome participants of the Unicode program to its landmark building. This initiative underscores the company's commitment to fostering young talent and investing in their development. By empowering the next generation of Kuwaiti professionals, Boursa Kuwait



Boursa Kuwait partners with CODED Academy for UniCODE Program

contributes to the nation's progress and the growth of a robust and diversified economy. We are confident this program will serve as a launchpad for their success in their careers, leading to tangible achievements that contribute to the advancement of Kuwaiti society. We sincerely thank CODED Academy for their dedication to cultivating young talent and fostering innovation within our nation. To the students, we wish you a journey filled with success as you embark on this path of learning and development," Al-Sanousi added.

"Markaz is committed to supporting effective initiatives like UniCODE that equip young people with essential technical and digital skills. At Markaz, we recognize the growing importance of these skills for our future workforce. Coding and computer literacy are quickly becoming vital in the financial industry, and the training this program provides will undoubtedly benefit these students in their careers. We applaud CODED Academy for their efforts and wish the students every success in the program," said Mr. Abdullah W. Al-Nusif, Managing Director of Wealth Management and Business Development at the Kuwait Financial Centre (Markaz).

CODED Academy Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer Mr. Hashim Behbehani thanked Boursa Kuwait for sponsoring the program, saying: "We are delighted to launch the fourth edition of this program in collaboration with Boursa Kuwait, marking the beginning of a promising strategic partnership. The UniCODE program has a strong track record of inspiring innovation, and we are excited to see the creative solutions this group of coders will develop. We thank Boursa Kuwait and the Kuwait Financial Centre for their generous support and look forward to further collaboration in the future."

The strategic partnership with CODED Academy and sponsorship of its UniCODE program forms part of Boursa Kuwait's efforts to develop and educate Kuwaiti society and create a lasting meaningful impact on the communi-

ties where it operates. Part of the company's Corporate Sustainability (CS) strategy, the initiative is also in line with Goal 4 – Quality Education – and Goal 17 – Partnership for the Goals - of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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

As part of the strategy, Boursa Kuwait has launched many initiatives in partnership with local and international organizations, focusing on support for non-governmental organizations and charity programs, financial literacy and capital market awareness, the empowerment of women, and environmental protection.

About Boursa Kuwait

The establishment of Boursa Kuwait in 2014 marked the first step in the privatization project of the Kuwait Stock Exchange, which was founded in 1977 as the first exchange in the Gulf Cooperation Council region and was reorganized in 1983 as an independent financial institution. The transitional phase began in 2016, with Boursa Kuwait officially assuming the responsibilities and operations of the Kuwait Stock Exchange, replacing it with an official license in the same year after the successful completion of the transitional phase. This ensured that Boursa Kuwait developed the infrastructure and operated according to best practices and international standards. It commenced the creation of an advanced, reliable trading platform built on efficiency, credibility, and transparency to serve all asset classes with a focus on the interests of traders and the national economy.

Boursa Kuwait has undertaken various market reforms as part of its comprehensive plans to enhance it in several stages. It succeeded in introducing innovative investment tools, enhancing transparency, and restructuring the market to increase its liquidity and competitiveness, based on its mission-focused strategy, which emphasizes developing the market to meet international standards. The company's developmental and improvement efforts have also contributed to the reclassification of the Kuwait market as an «emerging market» among key global index providers, enhancing Kuwait's position as a leading regional financial center.

In a pioneering step in Kuwait's privatization field, the privatization of Boursa Kuwait was successful, conducted in two stages. The first stage was in February 2019 when a consortium of Kuwaiti investment companies and a global exchange operator won the privatization bid, acquiring a 44% stake in the company.

In December 2019, the privatization process was completed through the public offering of a 50% stake owned by the Capital Markets Authority to Kuwaiti citizens, with the offering oversubscribed by more than 850%. Boursa Kuwait is listed on the Premier Market under the name Boursa.

Khalil commends Warba for commitment to innovation in payment ecosystem

Warba Bank wins 'Mastercard' Award for highest growth in credit card activation via digital wallets

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: Warba Bank has received an award from Mastercard for the highest growth in credit card activation on digital wallets in Kuwait for the year 2024, which has led to increased customer confidence.

Shaheen Hamad Al Ghanem, CEO of Warba Bank, received the award in the presence of a Mastercard delegation, consisting of J.K. Khalil, Division President for East Arabia, Erdem Çakar, Country Manager for Kuwait and Qatar, and Ashish Bahl, Director, Account Management. High-level officials from Warba Bank, including Ahmed Faisal Al-Qatami, Chief Retail Banking Officer, Abdullah Nasser Al-Shuail, Senior Director of Branches, and Maher Ali, Senior Manager, also attended the ceremony. The Mastercard award is one of only a handful used to recognize the performance of strategic partners in the market.

Expressing his pride in Warba Bank receiving the award, Al Ghanem said: "This exceptional performance and growth achieved in 2024 reflects the success of the Bank's highly disciplined strategy that constantly focuses on customer service."

He added that Warba Bank achieved record revenues and profitability, maintaining its position as one of the fastest-growing banks in Kuwait.

Al Ghanem explained that this prestigious recognition from the global technology company enhances Warba Bank's position as a leading financial institution in the country's banking sector. It also testifies to the Bank's ability to drive continuous growth.

He added: "The Retail Banking Group continued to achieve dynamic growth with expanding and attracting more clients. The Corporate Banking Group reported excellent performance in 2024, and is



CEO Shaheen Hamad Al Ghanem accepts prestigious award from Mastercard delegation.

Al Ghanem:

- The award reflects the exceptional performance, achieved growth and the success of the Bank's highly disciplined customer service strategy
- The prestigious recognition from Mastercard enhances Warba Bank's position as a leading financial institution in the country's banking sector

now considered the best team serving companies in the local banking industry. Meanwhile, the Treasury Group succeeded in strengthening its leadership in the market in terms of foreign customer exchange and played a significant role in the growth of the Bank's customer deposit base."

Al Ghanem stated that by innovating more banking products and providing an exceptional level of customer service, Warba Bank has

strengthened its competitiveness in Kuwait's banking sector, maintaining its position as the country's most advanced bank in technological applications.

For his part, J.K. Khalil said: "We are pleased to present this award to Warba Bank as a testament to its commitment to developing innovative solutions that meet the evolving needs of its customers. As part of our ongoing partnership, we have made great strides in building a robust,

seamless and secure payment ecosystem and promoting the adoption of digital transactions in Kuwait. We look forward to continuing our strong track record in fostering innovation in this space."

The award was granted by Mastercard based on reports concerning digital wallets at the level of local banks in Kuwait, which reflect the role of Warba Bank in increasing the activation of credit cards on digital wallets.

Warba Bank has achieved great success in a short period of time, having emerged as a leader in providing innovative Sharia-compliant digital banking services to individuals and companies. In addition, it is one of the local banks with the largest number of shareholders. These are among the most prominent elements that make the Bank close to all segments of society.

Bank highlights 'Know Your Customer' data

ABK launches 'Let's Be Aware' campaign for financial literacy

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is committed to enhancing banking awareness within the local community through the 'Let's Be Aware' campaign. In collaboration with the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), ABK aims to promote financial literacy via a series of engaging events, activities, informative videos, and awareness publications.

A key focus of the campaign is encouraging customers to keep their personal banking information up to date. This ensures they can access essential banking services and conduct their financial transactions securely and efficiently, all while adhering to the regulations set forth by CBK.

To reach customers effectively, ABK disseminates informative videos across its social media platforms. These outline the importance of updating customer information and provide straightforward guidance on how to do so through its mobile app or branches. By emphasizing the significance of 'Know Your Customer' (KYC) data, ABK enhances the customer experience and safeguards their banking information.

The Bank stressed the importance of updated the KYC information to ensure the security of their banking data to improve their experience. ABK



ABK logo

consistently works to upgrade its systems and data to deliver the highest levels of security and protection.

The Bank recognizes that keeping customer information current is crucial, not only for compliance with regulatory requirements but also for delivering tailored services that meet individual needs. This practice fosters a secure banking environment and reinforces customers' trust in ABK.

ABK continuously advises customers to remain vigilant against unverified entities and to confirm information accuracy before executing payment transactions online. Leveraging global security standards, the Bank actively combats hacking and fraud while implementing ongoing system enhancements to protect data privacy and security.

Through its comprehensive range of banking solutions, services, and products, ABK aims to empower customers and bolster their confidence in conducting financial transactions safely and conveniently.



ABK logo

Pakistani cultural exhibition held under the patronage of Embassy of Pakistan

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: Under the patronage of the Embassy of Pakistan in Kuwait, DilDil Pakistan (Shades of Pakistan Exhibition) Season-2 was organized by Pakistan Women's Forum, Kuwait (PWF) on Friday, October 11th, 2024 at IBIS Hotel, Salmiya. In the exhibition many brands and exhibitors participated to exhibit Pakistani Clothing, Jewellery, Hand-Painted Footwears, Khussas, Mehndi, Face Painting, Handicrafts, Food Stalls etc.

Mr. Faisal Majeed (Deputy Head of Mission) and Mr. Usman Nawaz (Officer Passport) from the Embassy of Pakistan in Kuwait graced the event as the Chief Guest.

Guests of honor were warmly welcomed by Mrs. Nighat Tariq (President, PWF), Mrs. Sabiha Ubaid (Advisory), Mrs. Shazia Arshad (GS) and Ms. Mahrugh Omer (Media Person).

Mr. Faisal Majeed (Deputy

Head of Mission) praised PWF's efforts for staying at the forefront in promoting a soft image of Pakistan at every platform and assured that the Embassy of Pakistan will always extend its support in their cause.

There was an executive booth of Al Muzaini Exchange who gave free gifts and held a raffle draw for everyone's attraction.

Visitors got an opportunity to explore a variety of Pakistani cultural stalls and were also entertained by

patriotic performances of famous singers in Kuwait. In addition to the cultural stalls, a Rickshaw Art Photo Booth was also set up at the entrance, which was the center of attraction for everyone.

A token of gratitude was presented to the Embassy of Pakistan in Kuwait for its support to PWF in organizing the exhibition. Following which appreciations were awarded to Media and Volunteers for their great coverage and support towards the exhibition.

Concluding the event, PWF's team gave a special vote of thanks to the guests as well as appreciated and thanked all the exhibitors, who brought the essence of the theme of patriotism by exhibiting a variety of cultural products in the exhibition. The event was well received by everyone and ended with their positive feedback.



Photo during the event.

IMA Kuwait hosts free workshop on 'Mastering the Indian Stock Market'

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 20: Looking for ways to navigate the world of finance and investment like a pro? Indian Muslim Association Kuwait (IMA) Kuwait is bringing an incredible opportunity for aspiring and experienced investors alike with its 3-day workshop on 'Mastering the Indian Stock Market'.

In today's fast-paced and increasingly expensive world, learning how to generate a second source of income through smart investing is a game-changer. This workshop is designed & tailored to provide essential financial knowledge to meet the needs of all skill levels whether you're new or experienced to the stock market.

Over three days, expert instructors will guide you through key aspects of stock market investing and financial management:

- Event Highlights:
- Gain deep insights into stock market fundamentals.
 - Learn practical investment strategies.
 - Master money management techniques to enhance your financial stability.
 - Interactive Q&A Session to address participants' queries.

For more information, please contact us at 66090491, 60001424.



Jack Black (left), and Ozzy Osbourne appear during the 39th Annual Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony on Saturday, Oct. 19, at Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse in Cleveland. (AP)



Cher speaks during the 39th Annual Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony on Saturday, Oct. 19, at Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse in Cleveland. (AP)

Hollywood meets rock to celebrate icons

Rock & Roll Hall of Fame turns up starpower to induct Cher, Foreigner, Mary J. Blige, Ozzy and more

CLEVELAND, Oct. 20, (AP) — Hollywood stars Julia Roberts and Zendaya bookended Saturday's inductions into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, giving a little stardust to an eclectic lineup that included pop icon Cher, heavy metal's Ozzy Osbourne, hip-hop soul queen Mary J. Blige, soft rockers Foreigner and 83-year-old soul icon Dionne Warwick.

It was a five-hour-plus show that also honored hip-hop trailblazers A Tribe Called Quest, punk pioneers the MC5, the effortless dance music of Kool & the Gang, the soft rock of Foreigner, the beach bum tunes of Jimmy Buffett and the jam band fusion of Dave Matthews Band.

Dua Lipa opened the show singing Cher's "Believe" before the 78-year-old icon joined her onstage, giving way to Zendaya who noted that Cher is the only woman to have a No. 1 hit on a Billboard chart in each of the past seven decades. "Cher has got the goods," Zendaya said before Cher performed a rocking version of "If I Could Turn Back Time."

In her speech, Cher thanked her mother for instilling in her to always get back up after defeat. "I never give up," she said. "I'm talking to the women - down and out, we keep going."

Roberts helped induct Dave Matthews Band - she's a self-avowed superfan and she appeared in the band's video for the 2005 single, "Dreamgirl." Roberts, wearing a band T-shirt, said the appeal of the group is "spontaneous abandon," adding the first time she danced with her husband was to one of their songs.

Impressive

The jam band, with their mix of funk, folk-rock, jazz, blues and pop, then played "Ants Marching" - asking the crowd to sing the chorus - "Crash" and "So Much to Say." The arena was still full when they hit the stage after midnight, with the crowd singing along and swaying.

Matthews hugged Roberts, handed out the trophies to his bandmates, and called the class of 2024 impressive. "We're swimming in very deep water here," he said. He thanked the current and former band members and the bar owner who gave them a home in Charlottesville, Virginia. When he thanked the fans, they roared back.

Dr Dre inducted Blige, who is credited with creating a completely new category of music - hip-hop soul. The nine-time Grammy-winner's best-known song is "Family Affair" from her triple-platinum 2001 album "No More Drama." "When you listen to Mary, you understand you're not alone in heartbreak," Dre said.

Blige, wearing shiny black hat, a sparkly dress and long black gloves and boots, sang a mix of her hits, including "Love No Limit," "Be Happy" and "Family Affair." At the end of her set, a dancer brought up a cloak to wrap around her, in an echo of James Brown. "Move with grace. Trust the journey," she advised. "You are worthy."

Chuck D inducted Kool & the Gang, saying "This is a long-due celebration." The band had 12 Top 10 hits on the Billboard Hot 100 including the 1980 chart-topper "Celebration" as well as "Cherish," "Get Down On It," "Jungle Boogie," "Ladies Night" and "Joanna." They've been eligible for the hall since 1994.

The Roots helped the band do a medley of hits that got the crowd grooving led by Robert "Kool" Bell - bass guitarist, co-founder and last original member - and longtime singer James "JT" Taylor. Confetti shot into the arena and Taylor asked the crowd to use their cellphone lights as he read off the names of 10 members who were critical to the band's success.

Warwick arrived at the ceremony only a few days after attending a memorial to her longtime friend and col-



Julia Roberts speaks during the 39th Annual Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. (AP)



Mary J. Blige speaks during the 39th Annual Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. (AP)



Kenny Chesney, (from left), James Taylor, and Mac McAnally perform a tribute to Jimmy Buffett. (AP)

laborator, Cissy Houston. Teyana Taylor called her "truly one of a kind" as well as telling off the teleprompter operator for not putting "Ms." before her name. Jennifer Hudson sang "I'll Never Love This Way Again" and was joined by Warwick, who also sang "Walk On By."



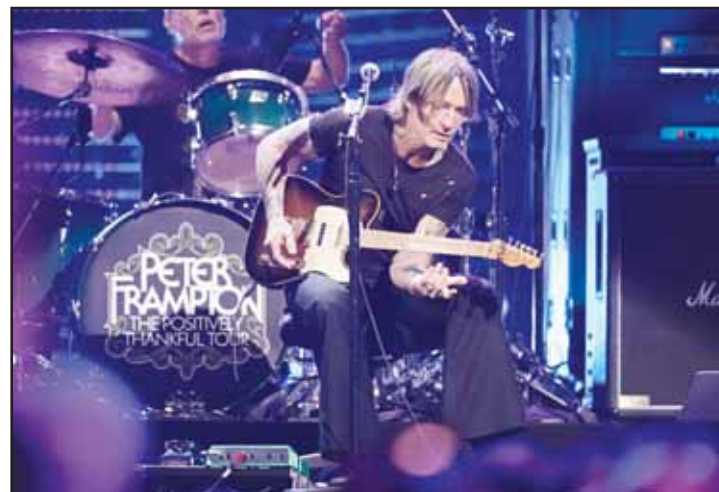
Suzanne de Passe speaks during the 39th Annual Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. (AP)



Billy Idol, (from left), Chad Smith, and Andrew Watt perform. (AP)



Queen Latifah performs during the 39th Annual Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. (AP)



Keith Urban performs during the 39th Annual Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. (AP)

Shaheed Muhammad and the late Phife Dawg - the lone hip-hop group to make the cut this year. Chappelle said the group incorporated "jazz and soul in a way hip-hop had never seen." Queen Latifah, Busta Rhymes, Common, The Roots and De La Soul were on hand to perform a medley of Tribe hits, including "Bonita Applebum," "Scenario" and "Can I Kick It?"

Sammy Hagar introduced Foreigner, and thanked their fans for their tenacity to demand inclusion. The English-American rockers - with hits like "Cold as Ice," 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.

Hagar noted that Foreigner currently tours without any original members. "That's how good the songs are," he said. "Who deserves this more than Foreigner?" Demi Lovato and Slash joined the touring Foreigner for "Feels Like the First Time" and Hagar then took lead for "Hot Blooded." Kelly Clarkson thrilled with a powerful "I Want to Know What Love Is" but the arena erupted when original singer Lou Gramm joined her.

Saturday's induction ceremony was at the Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse in Cleveland, where the Hall has promised to return to every few years. A TV special with performance highlights will air on ABC on Jan. 1.

Career

Roger Daltrey of The Who inducted Frampton. "It's about bloody time!" he said. "Peter has had the most amazing career of all time. It's probably easier to name the people he hasn't worked with than the people he has," Daltrey said.

Frampton earned his way into the Hall in large part on the strength of his 1976 live double album "Frampton Comes Alive!," buoyed by the hit songs "Show Me the Way" and "Baby, I Love Your Way." Daltrey noted Frampton has always played with a wide smile.

A fittingly grinning Frampton - who played at last year's ceremony to honor Sheryl Crow - brought on Keith Urban to trade licks on "Do You Feel Like I Do" and showed why he is considered one of rock's great guitarists. He hooked up his famous talk box effect and the crowd roared.

Dave Matthews - before his band's inducement - helped honor Buffett with an acoustic version of the late singer-songwriter's "A Pirate Looks at Forty." James Taylor then came out to call Buffett - who popularized beach bum soft rock with the escapist song "Margaritaville" - "larger-than-life but at the same time right-sized and always authentic." Taylor, Kenny Chesney and Mac McAnally then performed Buffett's "Come Monday."

Musician-actor Jack Black toasted Osbourne, saying that "heaven opened up above me" when he first listened to the album "Blizzard of Ozz." Black called Osbourne "the Jack Nicholson of rock" and joked that his reality TV show "The Osbournes" was possibly "the most evil thing he ever did."

Osbourne, seated in a throne, credited the late guitarist Randy Rhoads and his wife, Sharon, for his career and life. This is the second time Ozzy has entered the Hall, the first time being in 2006 with the seminal metal band Black Sabbath. A tribute band to the Prince of Darkness - including Jelly Roll, Billy Idol, Maynard James Keenan, Wolfgang Van Halen, Steve Stevens and Robert Trujillo - played "Crazy Train," "Mama, I'm Coming Home" and "No More Tears."

The In Memoriam section included tributes, among others, to Kris Kristofferson, Cissy Houston, David Sanborn and Liam Payne. Dave Matthews Band performed "Burning Down the House" from the Talking Heads as fans filled out.



Lou Gramm, (from left), Rick Wills, Alexandra Dexter-Jones, daughter of Mick Jones, and Al Greenwood of Foreigner speak during the 39th Annual Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. (AP)

'I never give up ... I'm talking to the women - down and out, we keep going.' - Cher

'Move with grace. Trust the journey ... You are worthy.' - Mary J. Blige

Warwick said this year was the third time she was nominated for the Hall. "I am so pleased to be here," she said. "I'm just going to say this and get off the stage: Thank you, thank you, thank you."

Dave Chappelle helped induct A Tribe Called Quest - Q-Tip, Jarobi, Ali



Dionne Warwick speaks during the 39th Annual Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. (AP)



English singer Zayn Malik on Saturday postponed a planned tour to the US following the death of his former One Direction bandmate Liam Payne. (AP)

Zayn postpones US tour after death of his bandmate Payne

LONDON, Oct 20, (AP) — English singer Zayn Malik on Saturday postponed a planned tour to the US following the death of his former One Direction bandmate Liam Payne.

Zayn, as the singer often goes by, said on the social platform X that he made the decision "Given the heart-breaking loss experienced this week."

He said the dates for the US leg of his "Stairway to the Sky" tour would be rescheduled for January and he would post the new dates within the coming days.

Zayn had gigs scheduled next week in San Francisco and Las Vegas, and the following week in Los Angeles, Washington D.C. and New York.

"Your tickets will remain valid for the new dates," Zayn wrote. "Love you

all and thank you for your understanding."

Payne, 31, was found dead Wednesday after falling from a hotel balcony in Buenos Aires. His death prompted an outpouring of shock and sadness from friends, collaborators and fellow musicians.

Payne's sister Ruth Gibbins was the latest to share her thoughts in an Instagram tribute.

"I don't believe this is happening. Many times have I poured my heart out publicly with pride about Liam but never much about life as his sister," she wrote.

She said her brother was "born with music in his veins" and that what she loved most about him was his ability to make her laugh.

Fox News' Bret Baier takes center stage

Baldwin back on 'SNL' for Harris spoof

NEW YORK, Oct 20, (AP) — Alec Baldwin has returned to "Saturday Night Live."

But the actor who won an Emmy for playing former President Donald Trump didn't reprise that role - he returned Saturday night to play Fox News' Bret Baier in an opening skit that spoofed this week's interview with Kamala Harris.

Baldwin received loud cheers from the audience before revealing he was playing Baier, who he joked, "Yes, I do look like someone made a businessman in Minecraft."

Rudolph's Harris nervously laughed after shaking hands with Baldwin's Baier, saying, "The pleasure is neither of ours."

The skit poked fun at Baier's real-



This combination of photos shows Alec Baldwin, (left), and Maya Rudolph, (right). (AP)

life interruptions of Harris, with Baldwin repeatedly interrupting Rudolph in rapid-fire fashion.

Rudolph, after several interruptions to the first question: "May I please finish?"

Baldwin: "I'm asking you to."

Rudolph: "Well, then you have to listen."

Baldwin: "Well I can't because I'm talking."

Rudolph: "Well, When will you stop?"

"Maybe when I go to bed," Baldwin responded, with the audience laughing loudly.

The skit also mocked a moment Baier acknowledged was a mistake by playing the wrong clip of a Trump response.

The clips allowed "SNL" to bring in mini-skits including one with Dana Carvey as President Joe Biden, who has played the role since the beginning of the comedy sketch show's 50th season.

Music

Tribute album

BRELAND's Selma visit inspires 'Project 2024'

LOS ANGELES, Oct 20, (AP) — For BRELAND, the last few years have been a whirlwind.

He released his debut album, 2022's "Cross Country," a fluid approach to country music that now feels prescient - it's the direction the genre continues to move in. He toured endlessly, won awards and collaborated with the biggest names in country. He also realized that he needed to slow down, live a little and do some soul-searching in order to identify what would come next.

So he went to Selma, Alabama - once home to his great grandmother and great-great grandmother - to recharge, something his mom did the year prior. The trip would eventually lead to a new EP, the provocatively titled "Project 2024."

"You think about Selma as this city that, you know, is this kind of vibrant symbol of hope and freedom and the resilience of the American people and the African American community. But unfortunately, it's a town that has been largely forgotten by most of us," he says. Repairs from a tornado that hit last year still haven't been made. Storefronts from the '60s lay vacant.



BRELAND

Community

"I went there and saw, 'Wow, this is a community that I was expecting to be one way and was actually completely different' and realizing that, you know, I'm one or two decisions away from having grown up in this community," BRELAND says. "And in a lot of ways, historically, at a minimum, these are my people." It was an eye-opening experience, one that made him realize that he needed to make work that drew attention to Selma - and to write songs that told real stories.

Those direct throughout "Project 2024," but maybe none as direct as his collaboration with The War & Treaty, "Same Work," the most "straight down the middle, country," track on the EP, as he describes it.

In the lyrics, BRELAND recounts an experience he had at a meet and greet. A fan told the country star his story: He's a veteran, now out of the service and working as a nurse, providing free health care to other veterans in need.

"He's like, 'You and me do the same work.' And I was like, 'We definitely don't. What you do is tactical, like, you are helping people in need.' He was like, 'That's what you do.' He's like, 'We do the same work. We do it in different ways. God's purpose for us is different, but if at the root of what you're doing is wanting to be able to help people, motivate people, encourage people and show them love? Then we absolutely are doing the same work,'" he retells it.

The story struck a chord. It's the emotional heart of the six-track release, arriving at the end as a reminder of people's potential for good.

So, what about that title, "Project 2024"? BRELAND says it has nothing to do with Project 2025, a nearly 1,000-page blueprint for a hard-right turn in American government and society and frequent topic of conversation leading into the presidential election.

"Just having been down to Selma and seeing the experience of those people, you know, I think there are a lot of freedoms that we can't take for granted. And for me, I choose to express that through the music. So, it's more of a creative agenda than a political one," he explains.

Message

"In the most literal sense, this is the only project that I'm putting out in 2024. You can engage with it on that level," he says. "It is a little controversial, the title, sure. But you know, maybe that makes people click on it. Maybe they don't."

He urges listeners not to read any political messaging into it.

"I don't think that any of the songs on this project are political at all. But I do think that my existence in this space as a very vocal young Black man, who has never shied away from having difficult conversations in the past, my experience in this space is political in some ways. But I always want the music to be as accessible as possible."

And he accomplished that, by continuing the country music genre-melding he introduced on "Cross Country." "Motion" weaves in Afrobeats. "Icing" introduces Southern gospel.

"Project 2024" may not be political, but it crosses borders and finds human connection at every turn.

Film

Original story

Laugh at politics with Blanchett in 'Rumours'

NEW YORK, Oct 20, (AP) — You'd be hard pressed to find an upcoming film weirder than "Rumours."

The biting commentary on the emptiness of political statements and the performances politicians put on starts off as a straight political satire focusing on the G7 world leaders, but then slips into a world of slow-yet-terrifying zombies; a mysterious, giant brain found in the middle of a forest with unexplained origins; and an AI chatbot bent on sexual entrapment.

It goes from provocative to absurd within a few short scenes, with the G7 leaders no longer the subject of criticism, but the butt of the joke.

And that's kind of the whole point, according to its star and executive producer, Cate Blanchett.

"We're all in such a state of heightened anxiety and fear with what's going on with climate, what's going on with the global political situation. We feel like we're on the precipice of a world war and there's a lot of people in positions of power who seem to be relishing that moment," Blanchett told The Associated Press.

She plays a fictional chancellor of Germany named Hilda Orlmann, the host of the conference who's more focused on optics than action.

"I think the audience will come to it with a need for some kind of catharsis. And because the film is ridiculous and terrifying ... I think they'll be able to laugh at the absurdity of the situation we found ourselves in. I think it's a very generous film in that way," she said.

The three directors, Guy Maddin and brothers Evan and Galen Johnson, said they wanted the film to feel like it had a "generic wash of political disrespect" and to include some resonant critiques, but they didn't want viewers to feel like they were leaving a lecture hall as they walked out of the theater.

Mystery

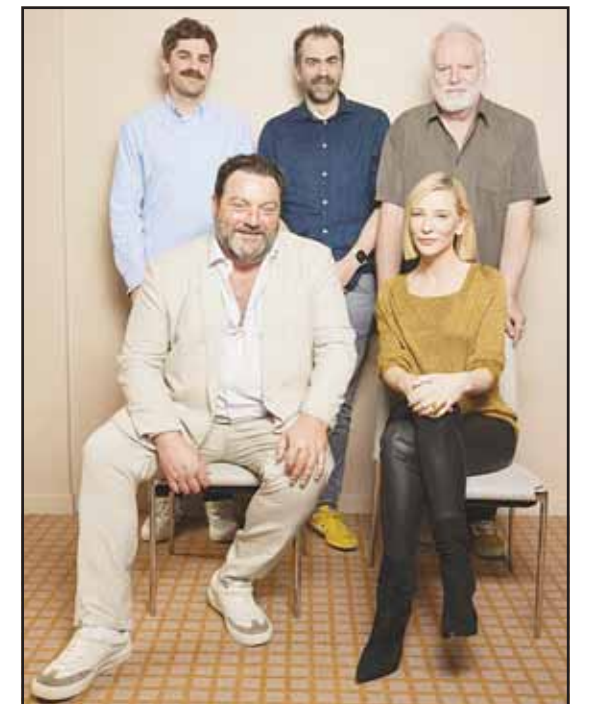
"I'm preachy enough when I talk to people. I don't want to make a movie that's preachy, you know? I just favor movies that aren't that. That just hit me with a little mystery of ... 'What are you doing or seeing? What am I experiencing?'" Evan Johnson, who wrote the script, as well as co-directed, said.

As for the more absurd plotlines, Maddin said he and his collaborators share "a compulsion to come up with an original recipe."

And original it certainly is. In its straightforward opening act, leaders from the Group of 7 meet for their annual summit and try to draft a provisional statement for an unnamed crisis. Then, as the evening goes on and they struggle to string together a couple, meaningful sentences, they find themselves abandoned and subject to attack from "bog people," or well-preserved mummified bodies from thousands of years ago. Hijinks - and hilarity - ensue from there.

Nikki Amuka-Bird, who plays the fictionalized British Prime Minister Cardoso Dewindt, said that while reading the script, she kept asking herself, "What's happening?" But the ridiculous plotline - including the apocalyptic invasion of zombie-like "bog people" - was only part of the reason why she took on the project.

"This kind of total courage to genre splice in this way takes away any kind of apprehension or fear you might have about it because their (the directors') tongues are firmly in their cheeks the whole time," Amuka-Bird said. "It's a really imaginative exercise and it's just fantastic to work with directors who can be that bold and take chances like that."



Evan Johnson, from left, Denis Menochet, Galen Johnson, Cate Blanchett, and Guy Maddin pose for a portrait to promote the film "Rumours" on Sept. 27, 2024, in New York. (AP)

Music

A short EP of indie folk

Bon Iver reflects, reset on 'SABLE'

LOS ANGELES, Oct 20, (AP) — More than five years have passed since Bon Iver's last album, "i," was released, so it's fitting that the opening of this new indie folk EP, "SABLE," arrives like a siren, warning the listener of some intensity ahead.

The pitter-patter of the percussion on the first full track, "Things Behind Things Behind Things" precedes a high-pitched cascade of minor-key finger picking. Then frontman Justin Vernon's natural baritone follows with a restless announcement, "I would like the feeling / I would like the feeling / I would like the feeling / Gone."

Emotions and reflections around nature, nostalgia, relationships and religion have long lived at the heart of Bon Iver - first heard on 2007's debut album, "For Emma Forever Ago," recorded in his father's hunting cabin in the woods of northwestern Wisconsin. Much has changed since then, but for all the Grammy nominations, world tours and features with a wide variety of stars from Bruce Springsteen to Taylor Swift, Vernon has never felt comfortable with his fame or the accompanying pressure to fulfill a certain persona he has experienced.

That's evident on "SABLE," made up of a droning intro and just three complete songs. Vernon has only released a handful of singles and collaborations since his fourth album - the complex and experimental "i," - was

released in 2019. The reason: According to a press release, he had some soul-searching to do about whether he wanted to continue his career and, if so, what it would look like.

"I get caught looking in the mirror on the regular / What I see there resembles some competitor," Vernon laments in the opener, a song written during the pandemic. There's anguish in the crescendo as he sings about a fear of change, then a more hopeful tone as the music softly winds down into the second track, "S P E Y S I D E."

The opening line, "I know now that I can't make good / How I wish I could go back and put me where you stood," sets the stage for a guilt-driven plea for forgiveness. Vernon is briefly joined by violinist Rob Moose, but it is otherwise a back-to-basics man-and-guitar sound that would've fit well on his debut album. There's none of the falsetto that set apart "For Emma Forever Ago," but the music and word mesh well as a chilling expression of an attempt to restore something.

The only problem is it doesn't keep going. The final song, "Awards Season," is more poem than melody. Saxophonist Michael Lewis chimes in, but there's a lack of the sonic richness that has defined Bon Iver's music. For Vernon, the reset is surely complete. For everyone else, hopefully there's more to come. "SABLE" will undoubtedly leave Bon Iver fans wanting more.

Variety

ROCHESTER, N.Y.: An appellate court on Friday denied a request to move the trial of the New Jersey man charged with attacking author Salman Rushdie with a knife in 2022, clearing the way for the trial to move forward in the western New York county where the stabbing occurred.

Hadi Matar's trial was put on hold days before the scheduled Oct. 15 start of jury selection, pending a decision by the Rochester court. A new trial date was not immediately set.

Matar's attorney, Nathaniel Barone, argued that Matar would not receive a fair trial in Chautauque County because of extensive publicity and the lack of an Arab American community in the county whose population is 93% white. Dis-

trict Attorney Jason Schmidt opposed the move. Matar, 26, is accused of running onto the stage at the Chautauque Institution as Rushdie was about to speak and stabbing him more than a dozen times until being subdued by onlookers. The "Satanic Verses" author was severely injured, including being blinded in one eye. The event's moderator, Henry Reese, was also wounded. (AP)

NEW YORK: This year's National Book Awards 75th anniversary ceremony won't only be a tribute to literature. Expect some laughs and some music, too.

The National Book Foundation announced Thursday that **Kate McKinnon** of "Saturday Night Live" fame will host the Nov. 20 event at Cipriani Wall Street in Manhattan, and Os-

car- and Grammy-winning composer-musician Jon Batiste will perform. Awards judges will announce winners in five categories, with finalists including Salman Rushdie and Percival Everett.



McKinnon

car- and Grammy-winning composer-musician Jon Batiste will perform. Awards judges will announce winners in five categories, with finalists including Salman Rushdie and Percival Everett.

today's most brilliant storytellers," McKinnon said in a statement. "I was lucky to grow up surrounded by books, devouring everything from Pippi Longstocking to a comprehensive manual on proper iguana care, and this access to stories and perspectives helped shape my worldview and understanding of what was possible."

Batiste, whose "Beethoven Blues" album comes out just days before the awards ceremony, said in a statement that books are "sacred sources of refuge, insight and humanity, shaping the world as we know it." (AP)

MIAMI: Demetrius "Big Meech" Flenory, who co-founded the notorious drug trafficking organization Black Mafia Family, will serve the remainder of his prison sentence in a residential reentry program in Miami, according to the Fed-

eral Bureau of Prisons.

Flenory, 56, was originally sentenced to 30 years in prison following his 2008 conviction for drug trafficking and money laundering. He was recently transferred to the residential program in Miami.

Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson brought the story of Flenory and his brother Terry Flenory to Starz in an eight episode series "BMF" in 2021. The series delved into the 1980s backstory of the brothers as they emerged from inner-city Detroit to become wealthy drug kingpins embraced by hip-hop culture.

Demetrius Flenory was arrested in 2005. His sentence ends on Jan. 27, 2026, according to the federal prison website. Until then, he will be monitored by the residential reentry center in Miami, which is responsible for providing federal offenders with community-based services to assist with their reentry needs. (AP)

The Conversation

Experts warn on fake drugs

'Off-brand' Ozempic and others pose hidden risks

By C. Michael White

University of Connecticut

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

In just a few years, brand-name injectable drugs such as Ozempic, Wegovy, Mounjaro and Zepbound have rocketed to fame as billion-dollar annual sellers for weight loss as well as to control blood sugar levels and reduce the risk of heart disease.

But the price of these injections is steep: They cost about US\$800-\$1,000 per month, and if used for weight loss alone, they are not covered by most insurance policies. Both drugs mimic the naturally occurring hormone GLP-1 to help regulate blood sugar and reduce cravings. They can be taken only with a prescription.

The Food and Drug Administration announced an official shortage of the active ingredients in these drugs in 2022, but on Oct. 2, 2024, the agency announced that the shortage has been resolved for the medicine tirzepatide, the active ingredient in Mounjaro and Zepbound.

Despite the soaring demand and limited supply of these drugs, there are no generic versions available. This is because the patents for semaglutide - the active ingredient in Ozempic and Wegovy, which is still in shortage - and tirzepatide don't expire until 2033 and 2036, respectively.

As a result, nonbrand alternatives that can be purchased with or without a prescription are flooding the market. Yet these products come with real risks to consumers.

I am a pharmacist who studies weaknesses in federal oversight of prescription and over-the-counter drugs and dietary supplements in the U.S. My research group recently has investigated loopholes that are allowing alternative weight loss products to enter the market.

Supplement

The dietary supplement market has sought to cash in on the GLP-1 demand with pills, teas, extracts and all manner of other products that claim to produce similar effects as the brand names at a much lower price.

Products containing the herb berberine offer only a few pounds of weight loss, while many dietary supplement weight loss products contain stimulants such as sibutramine and laxatives such as phenolphthalein, which increase the risk of heart attacks, strokes and cancer.

Unlike the dietary supplements that are masquerading as GLP-1 weight loss products, compounding pharmacies can create custom versions of products that contain the same active ingredients as the real thing for patients who cannot use either brand or generic products for some reason.

These pharmacies can also produce alternative versions of brand-name drugs when official drug shortages exist.

Since the demand for GLP-1 medications has far outpaced the supply, compounding pharmacies are legally producing a variety of different semaglutide and tirzepatide products.

These products may come in versions that differ from the brand-name companies, such as vials of powder that must be dissolved in liquid, or as tablets or nasal sprays.

Just like the brand-name drugs, you must have a valid prescription to receive them. The prices range from \$250-\$400 a month - still a steep price for many consumers.

Compounding pharmacies must adhere to the FDA's sterility and quality production methods, but these rules are not as rigorous for compounding pharmacies as those for commercial manufacturers of generic drugs.

In addition, the products compounding pharmacies create do not have to be tested in humans for safety or effectiveness like brand-name products do.

Proper dosing can also be challenging with compounded forms of the drugs.

For people who cannot afford a compounding pharmacy product, or cannot get a valid prescription for semaglutide or tirzepatide, opportunistic companies are stepping in to fill the void. These include "peptide companies," manufacturers that create non-FDA approved knockoff versions of the drugs.

Research

From November 2023 to March 2024, my team carried out a study to assess which of these peptide companies are selling semaglutide or tirzepatide products. We scoured the internet looking for these peptide companies and collected information about what they were selling and their sales practices.

We found that peptide sellers use a loophole to sell these drugs. On their websites, the companies state that their drugs are for "research purposes only" or "not for human consumption," but they do nothing to verify that the buyers are researchers or that the product is going to a research facility.

By reading the comments sections of the company websites and the targeted ads on social media, it becomes clear that both buyers and sellers understand the charade. Unlike compounding pharmacies, these peptide sellers do not provide the supplies you need to dissolve and inject the drug, provide no instructions, and will usually not answer questions.

Peptide sellers, since they allegedly are not selling to consumers, do not require a valid prescription and will sell consumers whatever quantity of drug they wish to purchase. Even if a person has an eating disorder such as anorexia nervosa, the companies will happily sell them a semaglutide or tirzepatide product without a prescription. The average prices of these peptide products range from \$181-\$203 per month.

Peptide sellers do not have to adhere to the rules or regulations that drug manufacturers or compounding pharmacies do. Many companies state that their products are 99% pure, but an independent investigation of three companies' products from August 2023 to March 2024 found that the purity of the products were far less than promised.

Little support available as suicidal thoughts surge in people

Congo's war fuels mental health crisis

GOMA, Congo, Oct 20, (AP) - For Nelly Shukuru, there was no way out. The fighting that forced her from her home, the squalid conditions in the displacement camp in eastern Congo, the hunger, all felt inescapable. The 51-year-old planned to hang herself.

She said a neighbor stopped her just in time. "In my mind, the suffering was permanent," said the mother of six, seated in a health clinic. "The people who have died are better off than I am."

Years of conflict in eastern Congo have created a dire mental health crisis. Aid groups say the number of people seeking care has spiked as fighting intensifies. Some of the worst affected struggle to survive in cramped, violent displacement sites that aren't conducive to recovery.

The number of people who received psychosocial support in camps around the main city of Goma increased more than 200% between January and June compared to the same period last year - from 6,600 to more than 20,000 - according to aid group Action Against Hunger.

The number of people reporting suicidal thoughts has jumped from about five a month at the beginning of the year to more than 120, it said.

More than 100 armed groups have been vying for a foothold in mineral-rich eastern Congo near the border with Rwanda. The violence has escalated as the M23 rebel group, backed by Rwanda, has reemerged. The fighting has displaced millions. Over 600,000 shelter in camps near Goma.

More people are experiencing anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder as well as insomnia and excessive alcohol and drug consumption, psychologists say.



Children who suffered from war induced trauma receive counselling in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Thursday, Aug. 29, 2024. (AP)

hometown of Sake but fled in February when it was bombed.

"All around us there is war, and the number of people facing difficulty is increasing daily," said Innocent Ntamuheza, a psychologist with Action Against Hunger.

But little mental health support is available. Less than 30% of the requested \$180 million for protection - which includes mental health services - in the humanitarian response plan has been funded this year, said the United Nations, which calls Congo one of the world's most neglected crises.

Shukuru said she considered killing herself in August after her drunk 21-year-old son struck her head with a rock because of a fight over a radio. Her children's drinking had worsened since arriving in the camp because they were idle, she said. The family used to farm and attend church in their

hometown of Sake but fled in February when it was bombed.

Displaced

Her husband, a construction worker, struggles to find jobs. The aid they receive isn't enough.

Some of the camps for displaced families are less than a day's walk from the front lines. The camp where Shukuru lives was struck by shells in May that killed some 40 people and injured others, locals and aid groups said.

Some armed men live among the camps' population. During a visit in August, The Associated Press saw men carrying guns and a truck of people in military fatigues drive through, chanting war songs. It wasn't clear if the people were with the military or self-defense groups.

In the government's attempt to push

back M23, it's been supporting militia groups under a coalition called the Wazalendo. But the groups, who previously fought government forces and each other, are accused of committing human rights abuses, locals and aid groups said.

Some fighters and members of Congo's army, often stationed nearby, are also accused of sexual assault.

A 38-year-old said she was raped by three armed men in a field while she was looking for food in May. The AP does not name people who have been sexually assaulted. The mother of eight has been seeking help at a clinic run by Doctors Without Borders, also known by its acronym MSF, but said she often can't sleep at night and sees the men in her dreams.

The constant presence of armed men in the camp makes it worse.

"It reminds me of the men who raped me," she said.

People relive traumatic incidents especially when it comes to rape, said Clementine Sifa, the mental health supervisor for MSF.

In September, MSF said it treated an unprecedented number of survivors of sexual violence in Congo last year - more than 25,000 - with the trend continuing this year. The majority of people were treated in displacement camps in Goma.

Lt. Col. Guillaume Ndjike, spokesman for Congo's army in the east, said the army is trying to protect people in the camps by conducting night patrols and setting up mobile police stations. He said armed men aren't allowed in the sites, and people accused of sexual assault or murder are apprehended and held accountable.

NCDs rise in Western Pacific

Research identifies cause of mRNA vaccine side effects

SYDNEY, Oct 20, (Xinhua) - Australian researchers have discovered why mRNA vaccines can cause side effects such as headaches and fevers in a breakthrough that they said could help improve the efficacy of vaccines.

A new study published by Melbourne's Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity and RMIT University on Thursday provided the first detailed analysis of how messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) vaccines circulate and break down in the human bloodstream.

The mRNA vaccines are designed to stay in the lymph nodes to produce antibodies to fight infections but the research, which analyzed 156 blood samples from 19 individuals over 28 days after receiving an mRNA COVID-19 booster immunization, discovered that a tiny amount of the vaccine found its way into the bloodstream.

"The extent to which the vaccine enters the bloodstream varies between individuals, which may explain some of the side effects such as fever, headache, and fatigue, reported after vaccination," Yi Ju, co-author of the research from the School of Science at RMIT University, said.

"This variation in vaccine presence in the blood could trigger inflammatory responses, leading to these side effects in certain individuals."

Noncommunicable diseases: Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer account for nearly 90 percent of deaths in the Western Pacific region, according to a new World Health Organization (WHO) report released Thursday.

"While infectious diseases and injuries were previously major causes

of illness and death in the Western Pacific, the region is undergoing a significant epidemiological shift," said the Health Statistics in the Western Pacific Region 2023: Monitoring Health for the Sustainable Development Goals.

It added that the region is also experiencing rapid population aging, as it is home to more than 245 million people aged 65 and older, many of whom are living with NCDs.

The report said that alcohol and tobacco use remains a major risk factor for NCDs. Consumption of alcohol in the region has risen by 40 percent since 2000. While tobacco use declined from 28 percent of adults smoking in 2000 to 22.5 percent in 2022, this was still above the global average of 20.9 percent.

Bird flu: Wild populations of Australian endangered animals will be vaccinated against a deadly strain of bird flu in an attempt to limit its impact.

Tanya Plibersek, minister for the environment, said on Sunday that environment officers will soon start vaccinating endangered animals against the H5N1 strain of high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI), breeding captive insurance populations of threatened species and picking up carcasses to prevent the spread of the disease.

Australia is the only continent that has not recorded a case of the H5N1 strain, but experts have warned its arrival in the country is inevitable.

The current global outbreak of the strain has caused mass deaths of wild birds and some mammal species.

The federal government earlier in October committed 95 million Australian dollars (63.7 million US dollars) in new funding for biosecurity, environmental and public health measures to protect Australia from the strain.



Romanian Red Cross volunteers perform resuscitation maneuvers during a flash mob to mark the World Restart a Heart Day in central Bucharest, Romania, Oct. 16. World Restart a Heart Day, celebrated on Oct. 16, is aimed at raising awareness of cardiopulmonary resuscitation and defibrillation in saving lives. (Xinhua)

Improve CPR success rate

Scientists unveil new cardiac arrest resuscitation method

GUANGZHOU, Oct 20, (Xinhua) - Researchers have developed a new method for cardiac arrest resuscitation, which is expected to improve the success rate of cardiopulmonary resuscitation and have a profound impact on the development of emergency care systems for critical conditions.

Cardiac arrest patients often experience severe brain damage, which is the primary cause of death. Animal studies have shown that within mere seconds of cardiac arrest, the brain's oxygen supply is depleted, leading to an immediate loss of consciousness.

Previous research suggested that the brain can only tolerate ischemic damage for five to eight minutes, which has contributed to the low resuscitation success rate for cardiac arrest patients.

An international research team led by He Xiaoshun from the first affiliated hospital, Sun Yat-sen University

in south China's Guangdong Province, applied an innovative "ex vivo brain preservation technique" to successfully "revive" an isolated pig brain that had been "dead" for 50 minutes.

In detail, the study used a pig that had already experienced circulatory death as the experimental subject. After separating its brain from its body, the researchers connected the brain to an external life-support system through intubation, creating a system that supports brain resuscitation.

The results showed that the pig's brain was successfully "revived," with brain functions restored and vitality maintained.

This system not only includes components for an artificial heart and artificial lungs but also utilizes normothermic blood perfusion technology to preserve a living pig liver, providing fresh, oxygenated and metabolically stable blood circulation to the isolated pig brain.

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'Six Kings Slam'

Sinner wins Saudi exhibition tourney

RIYADH, Oct 20, (Xinhua): Top ranked Italian tennis star Jannik Sinner claimed victory in the final of the Saudi "Six Kings Slam" exhibition tennis tournament on Sunday, defeating world No. 2 Carlos Alcaraz in a comeback battle to win the championship.

This match marked the second meeting this month between Sinner and Alcaraz, following their encounter in the China Open final earlier in October, where Alcaraz staged a comeback to defeat Sinner in three sets, winning his first China Open title.

In the first set, Sinner achieved the first break, taking a 4-1 lead. However, Alcaraz broke back in the seventh game, and both players held serve to take the match into a tiebreak. Alcaraz secured a crucial mini-break on set point, winning the set

7-6 (5).

In the second set, Sinner once again broke serve early. Although Alcaraz broke back in the sixth game to level the score at 3-3, Sinner won the next three games, taking the set 6-3 and leveling the match.

In the decisive third set, both players held serve until 3-3. Sinner then gained momentum, winning three consecutive games to complete the comeback win with two sets of 6-3, securing the championship.

After the match, Sinner said, "We have been looking forward to coming here. For me, it's the first time and it's truly an amazing experience. Hopefully, I will be back next year." In the earlier third-place playoff, Serbian legend Novak Djokovic faced Spanish legend Rafael Nadal, who

is nearing retirement, in another epic showdown. Djokovic won the first set.

Although Nadal saved a match point and broke Djokovic's serve in the second set, forcing a tiebreak, Djokovic secured a mini-break on match point to win 6-2, 7-6 (5), taking the third place.

Djokovic expressed his respect for Nadal after the match, "I have the utmost respect for you. Incredible athlete and an incredible person. The rivalry has been really incredible and has been very intense." Nadal also paid tribute to Djokovic, saying, "It has been an amazing rivalry. I think in a personal way I have to say that you help me to go over my limits for almost 15 years. Thank you for that. Because without that probably I will not be the player that I am today."



CF Montreal's Jahkeele Marshall-Rutty, left, challenges New York City FC's Kevin O'Toole during first half MLS soccer action in Montreal. (AP)

L AFC takes top spot in West

Atlanta beats Orlando to clinch playoff berth

ORLANDO, Fla., Oct 20, (AP): Saba Lobjanidze and Jamal Thiare each scored a goal Saturday night, Brad Guzan had nine saves and Atlanta United beat Orlando City 2-1 in the regular season finale for both team to clinch a berth in the MLS Cup Playoffs.

No. 9 seed Atlanta (10-14-10) plays No. 8 seed CF Montreal in a single-elimination game and the winner will advance to play No. 1 seed Inter Miami in the best-of-three first round.

Fourth-seeded Orlando City (15-12-7) takes on No. 5 seed Charlotte FC in the first round.

After Guzan made a diving left-hand save in the opening minutes, Lobjanidze rolled a one-touch shot inside the far post to give Atlanta a 1-0 lead in the seventh minute.

Thiare poked in a putback from point-blank range to make it 2-0 in the 12th.

Martin Ojeda flicked a header off an entry played by Rafael Santos inside the back post to trim Orlando City's deficit to 2-1 in the 42nd minute.

Marlon Santos scored his first MLS goal in stoppage time to help Los Angeles FC beat the San Jose Earthquakes 3-1 in the regular season finale for both teams.

L AFC (19-8-7), which is tied with the LA Galaxy atop the Western Conference with 64 points, earned the No. 1 seed in the playoffs based on goal differential - a one-goal difference. L AFC plays a best-of-three first-round series against the winner of one-game wild card between the No. 8 seed Vancouver Whitecaps and the ninth-seeded Portland Timbers.

Eduard Atuesta came on in the 75th minute and scored moments later to give L AFC the lead for good at 2-1.

Jackson Yueell scored in the ninth minute to give San Jose (6-25-3) a 1-0 lead.

L AFC's Denis Bouanga made it 1-1 in the 64th.

Ethan Finlay and defender Brendan Hines-Ike scored two minutes apart during second-half stoppage time and Austin FC stunned the playoff-bound Colorado Rapids 3-2.

Finlay used an assist from defender Zan Kolmanic to score in the first minute of stoppage time. Kolmanic and Sebastian Driussi notched assists on the winner by Hines-Ike.

It was the first goal this season for Finlay and the second for Hines-Ike. Kolmanic finishes with three assists.

Sebastian Driussi gave Austin (11-14-9) the lead on a penalty kick in the 8th minute with his seventh goal of the season. The PK was awarded after Diego Rubio drew a foul on Colorado midfielder Connor Ronan. Diego Luna scored a tying goal in the 73rd minute and Real Salt Lake added another on an own goal for a 2-1 victory over the Vancouver Whitecaps to set a single-season club record for points.

Real Salt Lake (16-7-11) secured the No. 3 spot in the Western Conference and will face Minnesota in the first round of the MLS playoffs. RSL reached 59 points this season, topping the 2012 team with 57.

Vancouver (13-13-8) will play the Portland Timbers in a wild card game for a chance to play top-seeded L AFC.

Luna settled a long cross from Brian Ojeda before taking four touches to slot home a shot inside the far post for his eighth goal of the season.

RSL went ahead in the 83rd when Vancouver goalkeeper Isaac Boehmer misplayed a lofted ball that rolled into the back of the net.

Vancouver midfielder Ryan Gauld opened the scoring in the 58th to become the first player in club history to produce multiple seasons with at least 10 goals and 10 assists.

Barcola scores and assists as PSG returns to top of French league



PSG's Bradley Barcola, center, is challenged by Strasbourg's Mamadou Sarr, right, and Diego Moreira during the French League One soccer match between Paris Saint-Germain and Strasbourg at the Parc des Princes in Paris. (AP)

Lens in 2-0 win at Saint-Etienne

PARIS, Oct 20, (AP): Winger Bradley Barcola scored one goal and set up another for teenager Senny Mayulu as Paris Saint-Germain beat Strasbourg 4-2 to move atop the French league.

The 18-year-old Mayulu was given a rare game as coach Luis Enrique rested players ahead of Tuesday's Champions League game against PSV Eindhoven.

The left midfielder put the defending champion ahead in the 18th minute when he rifled a powerful shot after swapping passes with Bar-

cola down the left flank.

Enrique was without forward Randal Kolo Muani after he hurt his left ankle in training and, with Eindhoven in mind, benched captain Marquinhos and speedy winger Ousmane Dembélé at Parc des Princes.

Former Real Madrid midfielder Marco Asensio made it 2-0 from close range in the 47th and, after striker Sékou Mara pulled one back, Barcola slotted in his league-leading seventh goal in the 65th.

South Korea forward Lee Kang-in added another PSG goal, before sloppy defending allowed the visitors to pull one back in stoppage time through 18-year-old Senegalese midfielder

Pape Daouda Diang.

PSG and Monaco are both unbeaten with 20 points from eight rounds.

Portuguese forward Jota equalized in the 86th from Arnaud Kalimuendo's cross to earn Rennes a 1-1 draw at Brest in the Brittany derby.

Romain Del Castillo's penalty put Brest ahead early in the second half following a handball.

Lens snapped a run of five straight league draws with a 2-0 win at Saint-Etienne to move up to fifth place.

Poland winger Przemyslaw Frankowski netted with a 20-meter strike in the first half and striker Rémy Labeau Lascary grabbed his first senior goal late on. Monaco drew with Lille 0-0.

China win two more golds at Swimming World Cup

SHANGHAI, Oct 20, (Xinhua): The FINA Swimming World Cup in Shanghai concluded on Sunday, with China securing a total of six gold, 11 silver, and seven bronze medals. Tang Qianting and Tang Muhan each claimed a gold medal on the final day of the competition. Chinese swimmers excelled in the women's 800m freestyle, sweeping the podium with gold, silver and bronze medals. Tang Muhan finished first with a time of 8:15.34, followed by Gao Weizhong and Kong Yaqi.

"I am satisfied with the result because this reflects my current performance status. Some things need to be improved because I'm not that used to swimming short course. I need to figure out better ways to turn more quickly in short course competitions," said Tang Muhan.

Tang Qianting won gold in the women's 50m



Tang Qianting of China competes during the women's 50m breaststroke final at the World Aquatics Swimming World Cup 2024 in Shanghai, China. (Xinhua)

breaststroke with a time of 28.76, breaking the Asian record. With two gold medals, she tied with Qin Hai-

yang for the most golds among Chinese swimmers.

World champion Qin Haiyang took silver in the men's 200m breaststroke, finishing the World Cup with a total of two golds and one silver. Yu Yiting earned two silvers in the women's 100m butterfly and 200m individual medley. Additionally, Switzerland's Noe Ponti broke the world record in the men's 50m butterfly during the morning heats with a time of 21.67.

China's men's 100m freestyle Olympic champion Pan Zhanle ranked ninth in the 200m freestyle heats with a time of 1:44.13, just 0.06 seconds away from making the finals.

France's swimming star Leon Marchand maintained his dominance in the men's individual medley by winning the 400m medley on Sunday, adding to his gold medals in the 100m and 200m events.

Skate America

Higuchi wins women's gold

ALLEN, Texas, Oct 20, (AP): Wakaba Higuchi won her first Grand Prix event after more than eight years of trying Saturday night, putting together an error-free program at Skate America to edge Japanese teammate Rinka Watanabe and American star Isabeau Levito.

Higuchi finished with 196.93 points at Credit Union of Texas Event Center in Allen, Texas, while Watanabe took the silver medal with 195.22 points. Levito made a significant mistake, falling on her triple lutz, and was third with 194.83 points.

"I got excited with how well I was getting through the program and I rushed the jump," said Levito, who was the leader after the short program, "and immediately while I was in the air I was like, 'Oh, that's not a good thing to do.'"

In the pairs event, Riku Miura and Ryuichi Kihara began the medal haul for Japan by following a dazzling short program with a winning free skate. They scored 214.33 points to outdistance Ellie Kam and Danny O'Shea, the reigning U.S. champions, who took the silver medal with 201.73 points. American teammates Alisa Efimova and Misha Mitrofanov were third.

"It's great to be back," Kihara said. "It's been a while since we won a competition so we are happy about that as well."

Higuchi was fourth after her short program, but the 23-year-old from

Tokyo was poised and precise in her free skate. And while Watanabe nearly matched her moments later, her level-3 spins and under-rotated jumps left Higuchi clinging to the lead.

Bradie Tennell, who was second to Levito after the short program, also made a bid for the top step of the podium in her return from a broken ankle. But after getting cleanly through her first five jumping passes, the 26-year-old American was forced into a single lutz rather than a planned triple, and the mistake cost her a shot at her first Grand Prix medal in four years.

Tennell finished fourth with 192.04 points, hurting her chances of qualifying for the Grand Prix Final.

Levito was the last to take the ice, and she made an opening triple lutz-triple toe loop look easy. She added a triple flip-half loop-triple salchow later in the program, and was soaring toward gold after finishing second at Skate America a year ago.

Then came her fall on her triple lutz, and the deduction that proved to be the difference between first place and third. "I'm proud of myself for what I did do," Levito said.

In the men's event, which began with Saturday's short program, world champion Ilia Malinin of the U.S. took another step on his path toward the 2026 Winter Olympics by opening the slimmest of leads over Japanese rival Kao Miura.

1st win of any kind since June

Verstappen wins US Grand Prix sprint race

AUSTIN, Texas, Oct 20, (AP): Red Bull's Max Verstappen won the United States Grand Prix sprint race Saturday to earn his first victory of any kind in nearly four months and keep McLaren's Lando Norris from chipping away at his lead in the Formula 1 season championship.

Norris kept Verstappen in sight for 18 of 19 laps at the Circuit of the Americas after he launched from fourth to second out of the race start. But Norris made a costly mistake in the first turn of the final lap that allowed Ferrari's Carlos Sainz to slip into second.

Finishing third instead of second cost Norris a critical point in the title chase. He now trails Verstappen by 54 points with six grand prix and two sprint races left in the season.

Verstappen is chasing his fourth consecutive title. He started Saturday from pole position and was never threatened for the lead. He won with a nearly four-second gap.

"Feels a bit like old times," Verstappen said. Qualifying for Sunday's main event was later Saturday. Verstappen has won the U.S. Grand Prix the last

three years but has not started the race from pole position since 2021.

The sprint victory should renew Red Bull's confidence it has improved a car that Verstappen has alternately called "undrivable" and "a monster" at time this season.

Formula 1 returned from a four-week autumn break this week with Norris steadily chasing down Verstappen in the drivers' championship.

The once-dominant Verstappen had not scored a victory of any kind since the Austrian Grand Prix sprint race back in June, and his last victory in a grand prix came a week earlier in Spain.

Norris has two wins and three other podium finishes in that span to close the gap on Verstappen, and McLaren has overhauled Red Bull in the constructor's championship.

Norris suggested it will be tough for him to race with Verstappen and Ferrari on Sunday.

"I did the best I could," Norris said after the sprint race. "I didn't think we had the pace on Max and the Ferraris."



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen, of the Netherlands, leads the pack into turn one during a sprint race ahead of the Formula One U.S. Grand Prix auto race at Circuit of the Americas in Austin, Texas. (AP)



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Young and Ravindra share a 75-run partnership

New Zealand wins first test in India since 1988

BENGALURU, India, Oct 20, (AP): New Zealand weathered a nervy chase and a superb spell by Indian pacer Jasprit Bumrah to win its first test on Indian soil since 1988.

New Zealand made 110-2 on a rain-affected final day on Sunday to beat India by eight wickets and take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Will Young and Rachin Ravindra shared a 75-run partnership for the third wicket to complete a famous victory after rain had again intervened early in the morning session. It was the first instance since 2000 when a visiting side chased 100-plus in the fourth innings to win in India.

Young finished unbeaten on 48 runs off 76 balls, scoring six fours and a six, while Ravindra was 39 not out off 46 deliveries, hitting six fours.

Bumrah finished with 2-29 after a stunning spell that removed both Black Caps openers and also beat the outside edge of the batters time and again, but couldn't find the luck India desperately

needed to make inroads into the Kiwis batting order.

After the first day was washed out, India was then bowled out for its lowest test score at home in its first innings - 46 runs on day two. It rebounded with 462 runs in the second innings, but New Zealand's first innings' effort of 402 runs - with 134 from Ravindra - had the tourists in the ascendancy throughout.

Ravindra was named player of the match. "It was a nice wicket to bat on, so the odds were in my favour. Preparations help - as long as I have clarity of what needs to be done, it's great. I wasn't trying to attack them (bowlers), but I was taking care of my positions, which is important in this part of the world. Luckily enough it all worked out," he said.

Earlier Sunday, play started an hour late due to a morning shower in Bengaluru.

Bumrah trapped captain Tom Latham lbw for a duck with the second

ball of the morning. Latham reviewed, but the TV umpire's decision went against him.

It was a tough opening spell for the

batters, with Devon Conway never looking comfortable against Bumrah. He was out lbw for 17 runs in the 13th over as New Zealand was reduced to 35-2.



New Zealand's Will Young hits a boundary during the day five of the first cricket test match between India and New Zealand at the M.Chinnaswamy Stadium, in Bengaluru, India. (AP)

But Young and Ravindra calmed the nerves of the tourists' dressing room with their attacking intent and fine stroke play.

Once Bumrah's spell was over, they settled down and attacked the Indian spinners. Kuldeep Yadav went for 8.7 runs per over in his short spell and Ravindra Jadeja didn't fare much better.

The pair put on 50 off 51 balls to lift New Zealand to the target 10 minutes prior to lunch in the extended morning session when Young played a cut shot for four off Jadeja.

It sealed New Zealand's just third win on Indian soil in 73 tests.

"It was a good effort with the bat in the second innings. We didn't bat well in the first, so we knew what was ahead. We knew it would be a challenge but we didn't expect to be out under 50 runs. New Zealand bowled well and challenged every corner of our bat, and we failed to respond to that," said Indian skipper Rohit Sharma after the loss.



India's Jasprit Bumrah appeals for the wicket of New Zealand's Devon Conway before asking for a successful review during the day five of the first cricket test match between India and New Zealand at the M.Chinnaswamy Stadium, in Bengaluru, India. (AP)

Modric makes history as Real holds off Celta

Bilbao rolls past Espanyol

BARCELONA, Spain, Oct 20, (AP): Luka Modric became the oldest player in Real Madrid's history while also delivering the game-winning assist in a 2-1 victory at Celta Vigo in La Liga.

At 39 years, 40 days old, the former Ballon d'Or winner surpassed the milestone held by Ferenc Puskas since 1966 by four days. Modric went on as a second-half substitute after Celta pulled level.

The Croatia midfielder immediately made an impact when he threaded a through-ball forward for Vinicius Junior to score the 66th-minute winner at Balaidos Stadium.

"It was a hard-fought game," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said. "But we knew how to hang in there and got three important points thanks to a great pass by Modric. Luka always gives us something."

Kylian Mbappé put the visitors ahead with a long-range strike in the 20th, only for Williot Swedberg to equalize in the 51st from a cross by Oscar Mingueza.

That set the scene for Ancelotti to look to his bench and call on Modric to set things right for the defending champion.

When asked about Modric's legacy with the club, An-

celotti said: "There is nothing else to say about a fantastic game; he is a great professional and with a character. Real Madrid has been, and is, lucky to have him."

Modric has the most titles in the history of Real Madrid with 27, including six Champions League titles and four Spanish leagues.

This victory was not an easy one, however. Celta took it to the defending champions. Thibaut Courtois had to save shots by Swedberg and Jonathan Bamba, and Celta substitute Anastasios Douvikas went inches from grabbing an extra-time equalizer.

"We leave with a bittersweet feeling," Celta midfielder Fran Beltran said. "We took the game at Real Madrid and were better than them in stretches."

Ancelotti's side stayed unbeaten through 10 rounds in La Liga.

Madrid started a busy week with a home game against Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League on Tuesday before it hosts Barcelona in the first clasico of the season next weekend.

Iñaki Williams scored twice as Athletic Bilbao rolled to a 4-1 win at home over the promoted Espanyol.

Spain striker Mikel Oyarzabal scored with a header for Real Sociedad to beat Girona 1-0, while Real Betis forward Chimy Avila struck to secure a 2-1 win over Osasuna, his previous club.

Best of the Rest

Green wins title: Hannah Green of Australia shot a 1-under 71 on Sunday to win the BMW Ladies Championship in South Korea, her sixth victory on the LPGA Tour and her third this season.

Green finished at 19-under 269 for the tournament and led or shared the lead after all four rounds.

Celine Boutier of France finished one stroke behind Green on Sunday, shooting a 6-under 66. Chanette Wannasaen of Thailand shot 68 and was two shots behind the winner.

Two golfers tied for fourth and finished three strokes behind - Hye-Jin Choi (67) of South Korea and compatriot Yu Jin Sung (72).

The field of the tournament was loaded with eight of the top 10 LPGA players facing off. The main absence was No. 1-ranked Nelly Korda, who withdrew before the event with a neck injury.

The tournament also included 17 of the 18 winners from events this season. (AP)

Strus to miss at least 6 weeks: Cavaliers small forward Max Strus will miss at least six weeks with a right ankle injury sustained during a recent workout, an early blow to a Cleveland team ravaged by injuries last season.

The Cavs said Saturday that Strus, who has been slowed by a hip injury he got in the team's exhibition opener,



Hannah Green of Australia holds the winning trophy during the awards ceremony after winning the LPGA Ladies Championship golf tournament at the Seowon Valley Country Club in Paju, South Korea. (AP)

got hurt during an individual workout on Thursday. He'll be reassessed after six weeks.

Cleveland, which made the Eastern Conference semifinals last season despite a rash of major injuries, opens the season on Wednesday in Toronto. The Cavs play their home opener on Friday against Detroit and former coach J.B. Bickerstaff.

The 28-year-old Strus in his second season with the Cavs, who acquired him in a sign-and-trade deal with Miami last year. Strus made 70 starts for

Cleveland and averaged 12.2 points and 4.8 rebounds in 32 minutes per game.

Strus sustained a hip injury in Cleveland's preseason opener on Oct. 8.

He attempted to draw a charge in the second quarter against Bulls rookie forward Matas Buzelis. Strus absorbed the contact and fell hard to the floor. He remained in the game before limping off and heading to the locker room.

Following the game, the Cavs said Strus had a bruised hip. (AP)



Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappe, left, is held by Celta's Fran Beltran during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Celta and Real Madrid at the Balaidos stadium in Vigo, Spain. (AP)

Kane scores hat trick

Bayern dominates Stuttgart to keep top spot

BERLIN, Oct 20, (Xinhua): Bayern Munich remain top of the table after Harry Kane's second-half hat-trick paved the way for a 4-0 win over Stuttgart in the seventh round of the Bundesliga season.

Bayern took control from the kick-off and pinned the visitors back, but clear-cut chances were hard to come by in the opening 45 minutes.

Bayern came closest on 11 minutes when Serge Gnabry failed to connect with a dangerous square pass from Kane.

The crowd at the Allianz Arena had to wait until the 29th minute to see more half-chances, but Gnabry couldn't convert Michael Olise's good work, while Kane shot wide from a promising position two minutes later.

The German giants should have broken the deadlock six minutes into the second half, but Kane shot wide from Gnabry's cut-back.

Stuttgart almost shocked Bayern, but Ermedin Demirovic and Joshua Vagnoman couldn't beat Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer in the 54th

minute. Kane finally broke the deadlock and ended his three-game goal drought,

hammering the ball into the bottom left-hand corner from 25 meters in 57 minutes.



Munich's Harry Kane, left, plays against Stuttgart's Jeff Chabot during a German Bundesliga soccer match between FC Bayern Munich and VfB Stuttgart, in Munich, Germany. (AP)

Stuttgart goalkeeper Alexander Nudel had his hands full after denying Kane and Joao Palhinha in quick succession on the hour mark.

Kane turned his next chance into a tangible reward moments later when Stuttgart failed to clear the ball out of their area, allowing the England striker to fire home from close range.

The Englishman remained in the thick of things and completed his hat-trick in the 80th minute after collecting a rebound and slotting the ball past Nudel.

Stuttgart couldn't offer any resistance, but Bayern weren't done scoring as Kingsley Coman made the most of Thomas Muller's assist to fire into the right-hand corner in the closing stages.

The result keeps Bayern at the top of the table, while Stuttgart drop to 9th.

"We've played well in the last few games, but we haven't had the results. So, after the break, we had to bring the game to another level and after my goal, the game opened up," said Bayern striker Kane.

Milan holds on with 10 men

Conte's halftime talk works as Napoli improves to beat Empoli

MILAN, Oct 19, (AP): Whatever Antonio Conte told his players at halftime must have worked as Napoli managed to beat Empoli 1-0 in Serie A on Sunday after a much improved second period.

A Khvicha Kvaratskhelia penalty was enough to see Napoli secure the victory and move three points clear in Serie A ahead of Inter Milan's match at Roma later.

That was the first goal the Empoli home fans had seen this season as all three previous league matches at the Stadio Carlo Castellani had ended 0-0.

It was a second straight loss for Empoli, which had been unbeaten until it lost at Lazio before the international break.

And it was a former player who proved to be a thorn in its side as Napoli goalkeeper Elia Caprile, who spent last season on loan at Empoli, pulled off several impressive saves.

Lorenzo Colombo also fired wide in a first half in which Empoli played much better than its opponents.

However, the hosts were to regret their missed opportunities as it was Napoli that took the lead in the 63rd minute after Tino Anjorin fouled Matteo Politano in the area.

Kvaratskhelia kept his cool and took a stuttering run-up, waiting for the goalkeeper to make his move before rolling the ball into the middle of the net.

Napoli has won six of its past seven Serie A matches since an opening day loss to Hellas Verona in Conte's debut. The other was a 0-0 draw at Juventus.

AC Milan rang the changes and was reduced to 10 men and still beat Udinese 1-0 in Serie A.

Theo Hernandez was suspended and Tammy Abraham, Fikayo Tomori and Rafael Leao were dropped by Milan. The Rossoneri's task became harder when midfielder Tijjani Reijnders was shown a straight red card in the 29th minute.

Fortunately for Milan, Samuel Chukwueze earned the lead in the 13th minute following yet another assist by Christian Pulisic. They held on after Udinese had two goals ruled out for offside, including one deep in stoppage time.

The Rossoneri moved level on points with third-placed Inter Milan, which plays at Roma on Sunday. Juventus moved two points above them after managing to scrape a late 1-0 win over 10-man Lazio.

Milan lost at Fiorentina 2-1 before the international break in a match in which Hernandez and Abraham had penalty kicks saved. Hernandez was sent off after the final whistle for insulting the referee and given a two-match ban.

The radically changed Rossoneri started brightly against Udinese and



Empoli's Emmanuel Gyasi fights for the ball with Napoli's David Neres, right, during the Serie A soccer match between Empoli and Napoli at Carlo Catellani Stadium. (AP)

took the lead when Noah Okafor muscled his way down the left flank and rolled it across for Pulisic, who set up Chukwueze to sweep it into the far bottom corner.

Pulisic has been involved in at least one goal in seven straight league matches; producing five goals and three assists.

Milan was dominating until Reijnders was sent off for catching Sandi Lovric's heel and tripping him as the Udinese midfielder ran clear on goal.

Kingsley Ehibuzie thought he headed Udinese level on the stroke of half-time but he was offside by the tightest of margins.

Pulisic came close to doubling Milan's lead in the 75th but his effort was saved by Maduka Okoye. Abraham, who had come on only three minutes earlier, injured his shoulder as he tried to bundle in the rebound and had to be taken off.

Udinese appeared to level again when Christian Kabasele headed in a rebound in the fifth minute of stoppage time. However, VAR ruled another tight offside decision in the chaotic buildup.

Lazio managed to hold out for more than an hour with 10 men before an own goal consigned it to defeat. Defender Alessio Romagnoli was issued a straight red card in the 24th for a tackle on Juve's Pierre Kalulu when he was clear on goal.

Despite the numerical disadvantage, Juventus didn't have a shot on target until the 81st when Lazio goalkeeper Ivan Provedel parried a curled Dusan Vlahovic effort.

The home side was gifted the winning goal four minutes later when Lazio defender Mario Gila tried to intercept a cross from Juan Cabal and succeeded only in turning it into his own net.



Wolverhampton Wanderers' Joao Gomes, center is challenged by Manchester City's Bernardo Silva, left, and Ruben Dias during the English Premier League soccer match between Wolverhampton Wanderers and Manchester City at the Molineux Stadium in Wolverhampton, England. (AP)

Sports

Al-Qadisiya ready for Gulf Champions League

Kuwait club takes winning momentum to AFC Champions League 2

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

DUBAI, Oct 20: Kuwait Club is set to hold its first training session this evening in the UAE in preparation for its upcoming AFC Champions League 2 match against Shabab Al-Ahli Dubai. Kuwait Club enters the match with high morale, having secured a dramatic 4-3 victory over Al-Salmiya just two days ago in the seventh round of the Zain Premier League at Thamer Stadium. This win has solidified Kuwait Club's position at the top of the standings with 21 points and a perfect record, while Al-Salmiya remains in fourth place with 11 points.

Al-Salmiya took an early lead with a goal from Tunisian player Imad Lawati, who finished a pass from Abdul Mohsen Al-Turkmani into the net of goalkeeper Saud Al-Hawshan (11'). However, Kuwait Club quickly responded with two goals from Amr Abdel Fattah (17') and Yahya Jabran (25' via penalty). Al-Salmiya equalized with a penalty by Alex Lima (35'), and just before halftime, Kuwait Club's Lamine Abu Al-Fath was shown a red card for a foul on Al-Salmiya striker Moaz Al-Aseema.

Despite being a man down, Kuwait Club dominated the second half. Mohammed Marhoon scored Kuwait's third goal (62'), but Al-Salmiya equalized again through

Muhannad Al-Muhameed (67'). The decisive moment came in the 90th minute when substitute Yousef Nasser scored the winning goal for Kuwait Club.

Kuwait Club now aims to carry its domestic momentum into the AFC Champions League, where it currently sits in fourth place in Group 4 with one point from two matches. It trails Nasaf Qarshi of Uzbekistan by three points, while Al-Hussein Irbid of Jordan and Shabab Al-Ahli are two points ahead.

Meanwhile, the Al-Qadisiya delegation departs for Doha today in preparation for its match against Al-Arabi of Qatar, scheduled for Wednesday in the first round of Group 2 in the Gulf Champions League, which returns after a nine-year hiatus.

Al-Qadisiya will face Al-Arabi at the Al-Thumama World Cup Stadium. The group also includes Saudi Arabia's Al-Ettifaq and Bahrain's Al-Riffa, who will meet on the same day at Prince Mohammed bin Fahd Stadium.

After their 2-1 victory over Al-Nasr two days ago in the Zain Premier League at Thamer Stadium, Al-Qadisiya's technical staff granted the players a day off. Ismail Khafi (9') and Mohammed Soula (89') scored for Al-Qadisiya, while Rashid Al-Mutairi (90+4') netted for Al-Nasr. With the win, Al-Qadisiya moved to fifth place with 10 points, while Al-Nasr remains on 4 points.



Players challenge for the ball during the Zain Premier League game between Kuwait Club and Al-Salmiya.

Messi & Miami finish with best record in MLS history



Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi, front, center right, celebrates with his teammates Sergio Busquets, front, center left, Luis Suárez, second row, left, and Drake Callender, center in green, after winning the Supporters' Shield, defeating the New England Revolution at Chase Stadium in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (AP)

Inter rolls past New England 6-2

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., Oct 20, (AP): Lionel Messi checked into the match early in the second half, the scored and Inter Miami's chances at breaking a pair of Major League Soccer regular-season records very much uncertain.

In that instant, it all changed. Messi had three goals - his first MLS hat trick - and an assist in the span of about 30 minutes, Luis Suarez scored twice and Inter Miami rolled past New England 6-2 on Saturday night to set MLS records for most points and best winning percentage. Inter Miami finished with 74 points, one more than New England had in its record-setting season in 2021.

Best player ever. Best MLS record ever. A perfect match.

"This night is yours," Inter Miami primary owner Jorge Mas said after the match, as the team celebrated the Supporters' Shield - which it won earlier this month on the road at Columbus - in a ceremony for the home fans. "The best fans on the face of the Earth."

The party was going to happen either way. Messi just made it even more special.

At 22-4-8 in league play, Inter Miami finished the season with a .765 winning percentage for another MLS record. Four teams - D.C. United (24-8) and the LA Galaxy (24-8) in 1998, LAFC (21-4-9) in 2019 and New England (22-5-7) in 2021 - had finished an MLS season with a .750 winning

percentage, which was the best until Saturday night.

Now, the top spot is Inter Miami's by any measure, both in terms of points and best won-lost-tied mark. Inter Miami also became the eighth team in MLS history to get through a regular season with only four losses, tying another record.

"Our players are what has made this season successful," Inter Miami co-owner David Beckham said. "Our captain has led us. Our players have led us in times where it was difficult. But now, tonight we celebrate. Tomorrow, we prepare for Friday, the playoffs."

Suarez and Messi finished with 20

goals apiece, the first MLS teammates to reach that milestone in the same season. It was Messi's first hat trick for Inter Miami, the team the Argentine superstar joined midway through the 2023 season in a huge victory for MLS.

If all that wasn't enough, FIFA President Gianni Infantino said after the match that Inter Miami - as has been generally expected - would be in the Club World Cup next summer as the host country representative. The tournament starts June 15, 2025 in Miami Gardens, and Inter Miami will play the first match.

Messi finished the regular season with 20 goals and 16 assists in 19



Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi (10) kicks the ball to score a goal as New England Revolution defender Xavier Arreaga, left, defends during the second half of an MLS soccer match in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (AP)

matches. Suarez got to 20 goals in his first MLS season, his two goals Saturday - coming about three minutes apart - helping Inter Miami erase an early 2-0 deficit.

Luca Langoni and Dylan Borrero had the goals for New England. The rest of the match was all Miami.

Suarez's brace pulled the hosts into a tie by halftime and Benja Cremaschi scored the go-ahead goal in the 58th minute. Messi had an assist on Cremaschi's goal, one that came just seconds after the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner subbed into the match.

There had been some question about whether Messi would play at all, especially since Inter Miami had already wrapped up the Supporters' Shield and No. 1 seed in the MLS Cup playoffs. All that was at stake for Inter Miami on Saturday was the record.

And there was a scare in the 74th minute when Messi was fouled, yelled in pain and grabbed at his right ankle as he was on the ground. He's missed 15 of Inter Miami's MLS matches in 2024, either because of commitments to Argentina's national team or the two-month absence that he needed to recover from a badly injured ankle - an injury that happened during his nation's run to the Copa America title in July.

It was just a scare. Messi scored about two minutes apart in the second half, turning a 3-2 lead into a 5-2 rout and it was only a matter of time before the record would belong to Inter Miami. And the caper came in the 89th minute, Suarez flipping the ball to Messi for an easy score to complete the hat trick.

Kuwaiti ice skating team wins six medals at Dubai Freestyle Skiing Championship

DUBAI, Oct 20: The Kuwaiti ice skating team secured six medals at the Dubai International Freestyle Skiing Championship, which concluded two days ago. The standout performances of sisters Salil and Safaa Al-Abdullah in the women's category helped propel the team to success in the three-day event.

Salil clinched one gold and two silver medals, while Safaa took home a gold, a silver, and a bronze. In the men's category, Salman Al-Kandari finished in tenth place.

Salil said "KUNA" after the competition that the medals were earned in the freestyle slope skiing and freestyle rail skiing events for both individuals and teams. She highlighted the strong competition from Emirati athletes, who displayed high technical skill, and expressed her delight with the results she and her sister Safaa achieved following thorough preparation for the championship.

She also expressed gratitude to the Kuwait Winter Games Club, which oversees ice skating in Kuwait, for its support. She emphasized that this



Salil and Safaa Al-Abdullah

success will motivate them to strive for even better results in future competitions.

The championship, which began last Thursday, featured teams from the UAE, Bahrain, Macedonia, Belgium, Latvia, Greece, Estonia, Poland, Thailand, and Kuwait.

Arsenal stunned by Bournemouth

Stones scores injury-time winner, Man City beats struggling Wolves

WOLVERHAMPTON, England, Oct 20, (AP): John Stones came up with an injury-time goal again as Manchester City narrowly avoided a major setback by beating last-place Wolves 2-1 in the Premier League on Sunday.

Stones headed home a corner in the fifth minute of second-half injury time and the goal stood after referee Chris Kavanagh was called to the sideline monitor to review whether Bernardo Silva was interfering with goalkeeper Jose Sa from an offside position.

Kavanagh's decision denied Wolves just a second point of the season and enraged manager Gary O'Neil on the sidelines, while the win put City two points above Liverpool ahead of its home game against Chelsea later Sunday.

"We are not used to winning games at the end," said Man City manager Pep Guardiola, whose team has won four straight league titles by regularly overwhelming most opponents. "It is a good flavor for us."

It also extended City's unbeaten streak to a club-record 31 league games, beating a mark Pep Guardiola's team had set in 2018.

With prolific striker Erling Haaland held scoreless for a third straight league game, City's defenders provided the goals instead after Jorgen Strand Larsen had given the hosts a surprising early lead in the seventh minute.

Josko Gvardiol curled in a superb right-foot shot from outside the area to equalize in the 33rd minute but Wolves then repelled wave after wave of City attacks before the late intervention from Stones, who also netted a last-gasp equalizer against Arsenal in the eighth minute of injury time last month.

"These moments don't come often for us," Stones said. "We've come up with a few over the years and today was one of them."

Wolves' compact defense mostly limited City to long-range efforts as they searched for a second-half winner, with Sa stopping shots from outside the area by Ruben Dias and Jack Grealish after earlier making two great one-handed saves in the first half.

But the goalkeeper couldn't react



Bournemouth's Evanilson, left, challenges for the ball with Arsenal's goalkeeper David Raya during the English Premier League soccer match between Bournemouth and Arsenal at the Vitality Stadium in Bournemouth, England. (AP)

quickly enough to keep out Stones' header from Phil Foden's corner. The goal was initially ruled out after the linesman raised his offside flag because Silva had been positioned in front of Sa, but the VAR asked Kavanagh to review it after judging that the Portugal midfielder had not impacted the goalkeeper.

"I am trying to remain calm," O'Neil said. "I have been involved in a few of those and not had many go in our favor so was expecting that outcome. There is some gray area that can go either way and once it was like that I wasn't confident it would go our way."

Arsenal blew the chance to go top of the English Premier League after a shock 2-0 loss to Bournemouth.

In one of the biggest upsets of the burgeoning season, 10-man Arsenal lost for the first time.

But Arsenal's chances were hit after William Saliba was sent off in the first half at Vitality Stadium. Bournemouth took full advantage with Ryan Christie scoring in the 70th minute and Justin Kluivert converting a penalty nine minutes later.

"It's hard enough to play here 11 against 11, we made life very difficult for ourselves again," Arteta said. Arsenal's third red card of the season, he added, was "an accident waiting to happen."