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baseball

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soccer

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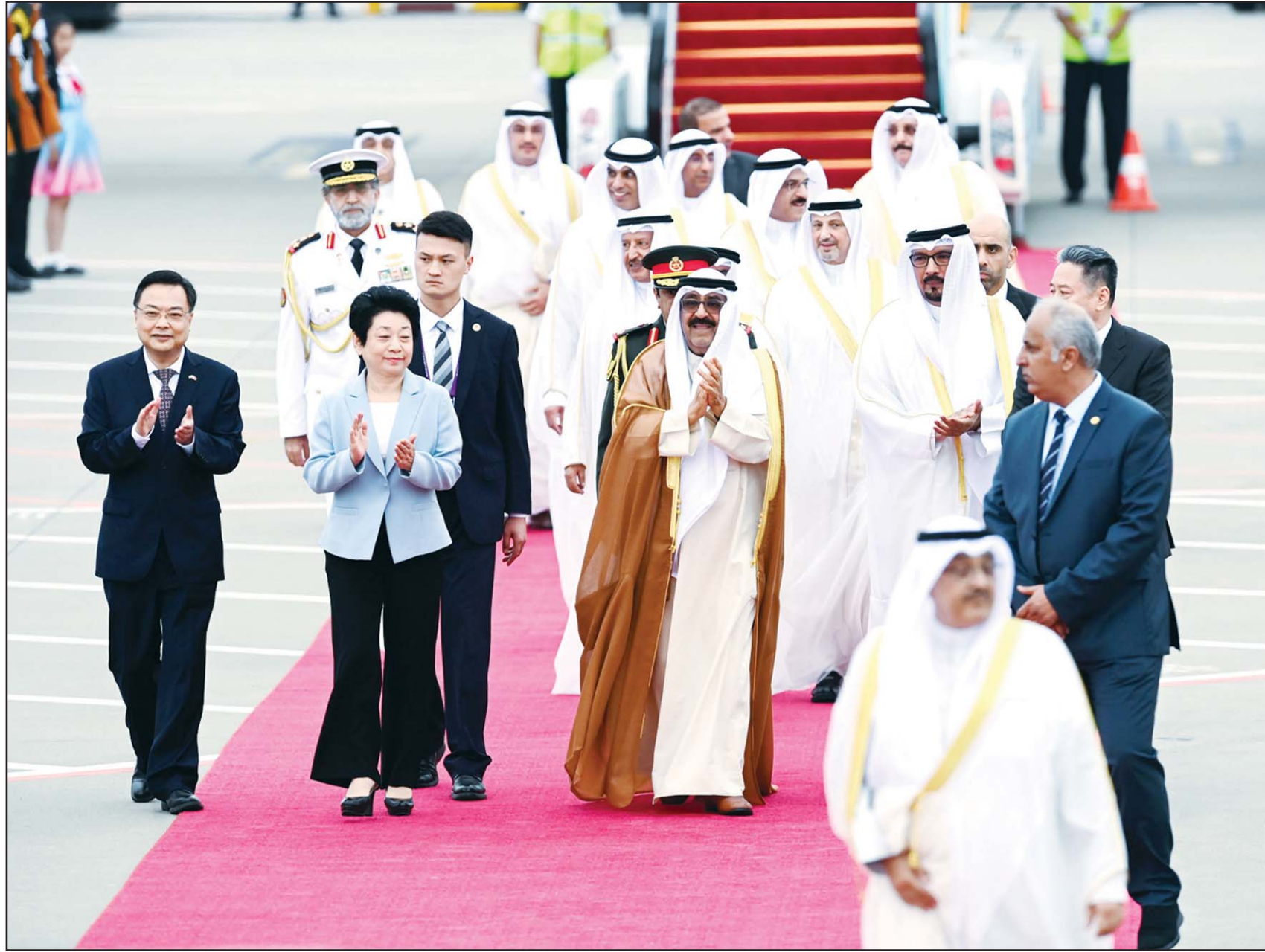
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16 PAGES

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# Belt ... Vision encapsulate growing ties



Crown Prince Diwan photo

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah arrives in China to attend the opening ceremony of the 19th Asian Olympic Games at the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Kuwait, China in parallel plans

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21, (KUNA):** His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah arrived at Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport in Hangzhou city, Zhejiang province, east China, to attend the opening ceremony of the 19th Asian Olympic Games at the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping.

His Highness the Crown Prince was welcomed by Chinese Minister of Transportation Li Xiaopeng, Chairwoman of Zhejiang Provincial Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) Huang Lixin, head of the accompanying honorary mission and Ambassador to Kuwait Zhang Jianwei, and, from the Kuwaiti side, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asia Affairs Sameeh Jowhar Hayat, Ambassador to China Jassem Ibrahim Al-Najem, Consul General in Shanghai Mishal Mutafa Al-Shimali, Consul General in Guangzhou Abdullah Al-Turki, and Consul General in Hong Kong Nasser Saqr, as well as heads of the offices of the Embassy in Beijing.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Vision 2035 economic diversification plan and China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) infrastructure project are intertwined in the sense that the strategies reflect deepening bilateral relations, besides common ambitions for national prosperity.

Given its strategic location in the Gulf Arab region, Kuwait has long shared a historic relationship with the world's second most populous nation, having been the first Gulf Arab country to establish diplomatic relations with Beijing, which commenced in earnest back in March of 1971.

Kuwait has always given the lion's share of precedence to China in terms of its diplomatic relations with Eastern Asia, as evidenced by the increasing exchange of high-profile visits between both sides that has given impetus to an improvement in relations, mainly in economic cooperation.

Trade ties between Kuwait and China have been on an upward trajectory since 1982, while no Arab nation has given more soft loans to Beijing more than Kuwait, in addition to a pivotal memorandum of understanding in 2014 that aimed to pave the way for Kuwaiti ambitions to morph into a global financial and trade hub.

China's BRI infrastructure plan and Kuwait's 2035 economic diversification plan draw parallels in their common aim to form a vibrant global trade zone that will bode well for the global economy, while Kuwaiti-Sino cooperation to tame the COVID pandemic is one of many instances of solidarity between the two countries.

In July of 2018, Kuwait's late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah visited Beijing in an event that was a catalyst for greater bilateral relations, one which yielded a number of significant bilateral deals, the bulk of which revolved around economic cooperation.

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## Opinion

### 0 leadership ...

## 'Whenever he pronounces it, he pronounces it crookedly'

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

THERE is a Kuwaiti proverb "Whenever he pronounces it, he pronounces it crookedly", which means that all moves that are taken are wrong, and they can safely be applied to the executive authority of Kuwait, where its worseness manifests itself in politics and economy.

There is not a single problem that the country faces that is not addressed poorly, either in terms of the relationship between the two authorities - the legislative and the executive - or in the administrative decisions that caused an increase in inflation and confusion in institutions, in addition to the frustrations in the management of major projects, and many other things that the country suffers from.

In fact, Kuwaitis do not know who is making these decisions that worsen the financial and economic situation, as well as the social situation, which is in turn reflected in the political situation.

This has clearly manifested itself that it is managed by some parliamentarians, parliamentary committees, influential people, and stakeholders who put their interests ahead of the country's supreme interest.

On the other hand, you hear nothing but sayings that indicate failure, including "all is well" or "we are different". Whoever seeks to advise officials will find someone telling them, "Don't worry about it... This is a joke", while people's complaints about the poor living and economic situation increase daily, but on deaf ears.

Today, those owning a plot are screaming about the high wages of workers, which has increased from KD 7 to KD 30.

This is the tip of the iceberg of problems facing small or large projects, because there is an employee who issued a decision according to which he prevented residents who have reached the age of sixty from renewing their residency.

When the Public Authority for Manpower came out to sugarcoat that decision, it issued a worst one, as it imposed annual fees of about KD 900 on those who wish to renew their residency.

New conditions were placed on workers coming from abroad. This will undoubtedly add to the cost of urban projects or other craft work, to the point that Kuwaitis have to now wait more than two months for a dishdasha to be stitched and so on, from the simplest to the biggest problems.

When we say that expatriate workers are an added value to the national prod-

uct, we are not exaggerating. For instance, the United Arab Emirates has about two million citizens, and more than nine million residents, who are the ones who build major projects, roads, bridges, and infrastructure. They are the ones who occupy the markets and increase consumption.

This also applies to Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Bahrain. None of them announced that anyone who wants to visit them must have a university degree, and meet other conditions that do not exist in any country in the world except Kuwait.

Capricious decisions continue to harm Kuwait in light of the lack of awareness of what could serve the country, the latest of which was caused by mismanagement of the university, and the creation of a crisis, protests and sit-ins. This was also seen in the Directorate General for Civil Aviation, and by workers of cleaning companies, employees of the Ministry of Electricity and Water, and many other protests.

It is true that there is a deep state that controls the institution. Because there is no one to thwart its actions, it continues to mess around. Because nature does not accept a vacuum, and as long as there is an absence of administration, there will be those who benefit from that, use the institutions for their benefit, and tamper with the social, economic and even political and security aspects of the country.

A few days ago, the Minister of Finance announced more than once his intention to increase the fees for some services. This is good. However, he must first consider imposing taxes on those with high incomes, and not spread this increase to all people, as those with low salaries are groaning from the poor living conditions, loans are inflaming the backs of citizens, and inflation is crushing everyone.

All of this is due to the absence of an executive administration that serves the interests of the state, because the matter has been left to the profiteers. Therefore, the state's institutions are worn out, and they are on the verge of becoming a place where everyone does whatever they want.

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## Palestine key to ties with Israel: MbS

# We'll get nukes as soon as Iran does, says Saudi Crown Prince

WASHINGTON, Sept 21, (Agencies): Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman stated that should Iran ever obtain a nuclear weapon, Saudi Arabia would "have to get one, for security reasons, for balancing power."

"We are concerned if any country getting a nuclear weapon; that's a bad, that's a bad move. They don't need to get nuclear weapon because you cannot use it," he said in an exclusive interview with the US Fox News network on Wednesday.

"Any country use a nuclear weapon that means they are having a war with the rest of the world," he said, noting that the world cannot see another Hiroshima.

"If the world sees 100,000 people dead that means you are in a war with the rest of the world."

"So to use this effort to reach a nuclear weapon because you cannot use it if you use it, you got to have a big fight with the rest of the world," the Crown Prince argued.

Regarding the normalization of Saudi-Iranian relations, he said there are some obstacles and both sides are working to resolve them.

"We do our utmost (to normalize relations) and we see that the Iranians take the matter seriously. They do their best and that is why we continue the march," he explained.

In last March, Saudi Arabia and Iran reached a deal on restoring their diplomatic relations and reopening of their embassies in one another within two-month time.

On Israel, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman affirmed that his country is getting closer to normalization of relations with Israel.

In an exclusive interview with the US Fox News network on Wednesday, he refuted reports that Saudi Arabia had paused negotiations.

"Every day we get closer, it seems it's for the first time real one serious. We get to see how it goes," he stated.

The Crown Prince insisted that his country could work with Israel, no matter who is in charge, calling the deal "the biggest historical deal since the end of the Cold War," which he stated would rest upon agreements

related to the treatment of the Palestinians.

"If we have a breakthrough of reaching a deal that give the Palestinians their needs and make the region calm, we're going to work with whoever is there," he said.

Reiterating that he could not go into greater detail, he said that he wanted to see "a good life for the Palestinians."

The interview aired shortly after US

President Joe Biden met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu while both were in New York for the meeting of the U.N. General Assembly. Biden raised concerns about the far-right Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinians and urged Netanyahu to

take steps to improve conditions in the West Bank at a time of heightened violence in the occupied territory.

Netanyahu's office said the meeting "mostly dealt with ways to establish an historic peace agreement between Israel and Saudi Arabia, which could greatly advance an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict and facilitate the establishment of an economic corridor to link Asia, the Middle East and Europe."

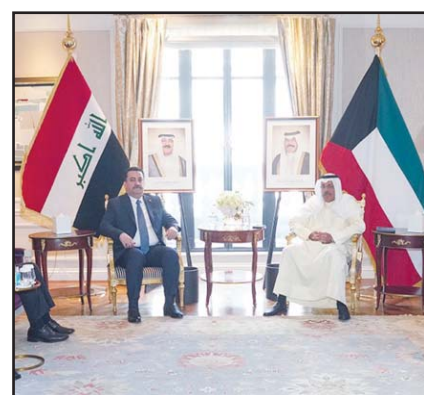
Asked during the interview about working with someone as conservative as Netanyahu, the Crown Prince said: "If we have a breakthrough, reaching a deal that gives the Palestinians their needs and (making) the region calm, we've got to work with whoever's there."

National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told reporters before the interview was shown that it was best for the leaders of Israel and Saudi Arabia "to speak to how close they think they are, and where they think they are" in the process.

"Obviously, we encourage normalization. We think it's good not just for Israel and Saudi Arabia, we think it's good for the whole region," Kirby said.



Prince Salman



PM Diwan photo  
Kuwait Amir's Representative meets Iraqi PM in New York.

## Sovereignty affirmed

NEW YORK, Sept 21, (KUNA): Kuwait Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has affirmed states' sovereignty, independence and territorial sanctity.

He has also asserted non-intervention in states' domestic affairs, resolving conflicts peacefully and abstaining from usage of force, peoples' right to self determination, bolstering and encouraging respect for human rights.

The Kuwaiti deputy foreign minister was speaking during the UN Security Council session on safeguarding global peace, held on margins of the 78th UN General Assembly session in New York.

Continued on Page 4

## Newswatch

**RABAT:** Morocco announced Wednesday a USD 11.7 billion-worth project to restore and rebuild buildings and infrastructure damaged by the recent powerful earthquake that jolted the North African country.

In a statement, the Moroccan Royal Court stated that the project was approved today in a meeting headed by King Mohammed VI and attended by Prime Minister Aziz Akhannouch and several state civilian and military officials.

It pointed out that 4.2 million people would benefit from the project which covers five affected provinces.

The statement expected that the project would be executed in five years. (KUNA)

**DUBAI:** Iran's parliament on Wednesday approved a bill to impose heavier penalties on women who refuse to wear the mandatory Islamic headscarf in public and those who support them.

The move came just days after the anniversary of the death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old woman who had been detained by the morality police for violating the country's dress code. Her death in custody ignited months of protests in which many called for the overthrow of Iran's theocracy.

The bill also extends punishments to business owners who serve women not wearing the mandatory headscarf, known as hijab, and activists who organize against it. Violators could face up to 10 years in prison if the offense occurs in an organized way. (AP)

**BEIJING:** Syrian President Bashar Assad arrived in China on Thursday on his first visit to the country since the start of Syria's 12-year conflict, one in which Beijing has been one of his main backers.

China's Foreign Ministry said Assad would join other foreign leaders attending the opening ceremony of the Asian Games, an international sports event beginning Saturday in the eastern city of Hangzhou.

China has been expanding its reach in the Middle East after mediating a deal in March between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and it continues to support Assad in the Syrian conflict, which has killed half a million people and left large parts of the nation in ruins. (AP)

**RABAT:** The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) on Wednesday called for greater efforts to protect youngsters from extremism, drawing a link between such measures and sustainable development plans.

At a time where the world is plagued by a multitude of conflicts, effort to ensure "peaceful co-existence" have become a dire necessity on individual and collective levels, according to an ICESCO statement.

The success of such measures largely hinges on "novel initiatives and diligence," added the statement, underlining the significance of these efforts in ensuring a brighter and more prosperous future. (KUNA)

## Day by Day

The con artist, who deceived people by stealing the airplane, apartments, homes and the trust of those who believed in him, is inching closer to justice. People are now familiar of how he lied to them and forged their signatures.

He and his partners in crime will soon face legal consequences for their breach of trust, theft, embezzlement, and manipulation of unsuspecting victims. It's a difficult situation for this criminal and his family as they confront the impending prison sentences; his attempts to escape will prove futile.

Indeed, he manipulated and tricked people, but the truth came to light. It is said the law does not favor deceit, no matter how crafty the deceivers may be. The law, regardless of their cunning, remains more powerful than those who attempt to exploit it.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

## Prayer Timings

Fajr .....	04:16	Asr .....	15:08
Sunrise ..	05:35	Maghrib ..	17:47
Zohr .....	11:41	Isha .....	19:03

# Local

## Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

**By Day:** Hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind with speeds of 08-35 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

## Weather

**By Night:** Rather hot to mild with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind with speeds of 06-28 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

Kuwait Airport	44	24
Abdaly	44	25
Jahra	44	27
Salmiyah	41	32
Ahmadi	39	33
Nuwaisib	41	26
Wafra	44	25

BIOMETRIC/FINGERPRINT APPOINTMENT: <https://meta.e.gov.kw/En/>

## Kuwait leadership congratulates as Armenia, Malta, Belize mark National Day

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21. (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable of congratulations to the President of Armenia Vahagn Khachatryan on his country's national day.

His Highness the Amir wished him everlasting health and wellness, and further progress and prosperity to his country and people.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable of congratulations to the President of Armenia Vahagn Khachatryan on his country's national day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished him and his people everlasting health and further progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable of congratulations to the President of Armenia Vahagn Khachatryan on his country's national day.

National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Sa'adoun on Thursday addressed a cable of congratulations to his Armenian counterpart Alen Simonyan on

his country's national day.

## Malta Nat'l Day

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable to the President of Malta Dr. George Vella, congratulating him on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished him everlasting health and wellness, and further progress and prosperity to his country and people.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Thursday to the President of Malta Dr. George Vella, congratulating him on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished him and his people everlasting health and further progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable to the President of Malta Dr. George

Vella, congratulating him on his country's National Day.

## Belize National Day

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable of congratulations to Belize's Governor General Froyla Tzalam on her country's national day.

His Highness the Amir wished everlasting health and wellness, and further progress and prosperity to her country and people.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable to Belize's Governor General Froyla Tzalam on her country's national day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished her and her people everlasting health and further progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable to Belize's Governor General Froyla Tzalam on her country's national day.

## MPs up in arms against 'Jazeera'

### Minister queried on oversight capacity of KAC

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh  
Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: MP Fares Al-Otaibi asked Minister of Public Works Amani Bugamaz about the plan to repair the roads in Yarmouk, including the dates of starting and completing the repair works.

He wants to know the budget allocated for paving roads in Yarmouk and Kuwait City, percentage of the budget that has been spent so far, and date of the last road maintenance works in Yarmouk.

MP Marzouq Al-Ghanim asked Minister of Commerce and Industry and State Minister for Youth Affairs Muhammad Al-Aiban if the Public Authority for Sports (PAS) director general interfered in the election of the Asian Olympic Committee (AOC) to support a certain candidate. He requested for verification of information he obtained that the director general met with the chairman of Kuwait Olympic Committee to vote for a certain candidate at the AOC election. If this is true, he wants to know the name of the candidate.

He also requested for verification of information that the director general met with the chairpersons and senior officials of some sports clubs

concerning the General Assembly of Kuwait Olympic Committee in order to switch the support of the committee from the candidate of Kuwait Olympic Committee to the candidate of Iraqi Olympic Committee. He inquired if the director general interfered in the election of the chairpersons of sport associations in violation of the relevant regulations, number of consultants at the authority including their qualifications, if they met the conditions, if any of them has been exempted from some conditions, and if any of the consultants has directly addressed some public institutions as a representative of PAS. If yes, he wants to know the legal basis.

He asked about the procedures followed in the appointment of the current director general of PAS and if he was exempted from any condition.

MP Majed Al-Mutairi forwarded queries to Minister of Public Works Amani Bugamaz about the oversight capacity of Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC) over the low-cost carriers like Jazeera Airways and if KAC takes decisions regarding the tickets. He obtained information that Jazeera Airways is renting Terminal Five (T5) at a very low price compared to the volume of its business. He asked about the rental amount that Jazeera Airways pays, if some of the due amount has not been collected, and if the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) contacted the Legal Advice and Legislation Department to request for approval on reducing the rent of Jazeera Airways. He added a court decision was issued against Jazeera Airways for hitting a blimp that belonged to the Ministry of Defense a few years ago. He asked if DGCA recorded a violation against Jazeera Airways due to that incident, if it reported the incident to the concerned minister, and number of Jazeera Airways employees who previously worked at DGCA including their jobs at DGCA and their current jobs.

## Shortage

Al-Mutairi asked the health minister about the causes of the shortage of equipment at the Orthotics and Prosthetics Center since 2020 till date and the strategy of the ministry to develop the center.

The lawmaker asked Minister of Finance Fahd Al-Jarallah if it is true that the Enterprises Resource Planning (ERP) software provided by Kuwait Aviation Services Company (KASCO) in 2020 did not work and if the cost is KD1 million. He wants to know the reasons for providing another ERP software in 2022 at a cost of KD92,000; that is, less than two years after the one provided in 2020. He inquired if the second contract is aimed at covering the problems found in the previous system.

MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri asked the oil minister if Jazeera Airways enjoys 10 percent discount in fuel prices just like the subsidy specified in Council of Ministers decision number 129, stipulating that the discount is only for the national carrier — KAC. He wants to know if this decision was amended to include Jazeera Airways.

Al-Muwaizri asked Minister of Finance Fahd Al-Jarallah about the reasons for reducing the destinations of KAC before and during the term of incumbent Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Ma' al-Rezouqi. He requested for a copy of the decision to appoint Al-Rezouqi as CEO including the latter's experience and qualifications. He pointed out that Jazeera Airways launched flights to the destinations cancelled by KAC, so he inquired if the corporation conducted feasibility studies that led to the cancellation of certain destinations.

MP Abdulaziz Al-Saqaabi forwarded queries to Minister of Finance Fahd Al-Jarallah about KAC. He demanded for copies of the decisions on forming the former and current Boards of Directors of KAC, and curriculum vitae of the board members and current CEO. He wants to know the number of executives who resigned since the appointment of the current board till date, detailed report on the revenues of KAC in the last five years, financial progress since 2014 till date, report on the development of employees in the last five years comparing the nationals and expatriates, report on the rating of KAC in SKYTRAX in the last 10 years, and report on the development of its destinations, fleet and number of passengers in the last 10 years.

Meanwhile, National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Sa'adoun sent a cable to Speaker of Armenian National Assembly Alen Simonyan to greet him on the National Day of his country.

## Amiri Diwan mourns

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21, (KUNA): The Amiri Diwan on Wednesday announced the passing away of Naeima Khalaf A-Dousary, widow of Sheikh Oqab Al-Malek Al-Salman Al-Sabah, at the age of 74.

The funeral service is scheduled to take place at 4:00 p.m. tomorrow, Thursday, the Diwan said in a statement, praying for the Almighty Allah to lodge the soul of the deceased in Paradise.

Contacts for male mourners at cemetery: 66689914 - 66058856.

Female mourners at building 11, St. 12, block 6, South Surra area. Phone No.: 99833109 - 97873131.



KUNA photo  
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, during his meeting with the US President's coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa, Brett McGurk.

### Deputy FM meets top WH official

Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met on Wednesday on the sidelines of the 78th UN General Assembly in New York with White House Coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa Brett McGurk.

The Kuwait Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the meeting focused on regional and international issues, in addition to the recent verdict of the Iraqi federal court, rescinding the agreement

with Kuwaiti on maritime navigation in Khor Abdullah.

Meanwhile, Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah directed Thursday to work on taking the necessary measures to award 8,686 soldiers the National Defense Medal and 1,690 soldiers the Military Duty Medal of various grades, in accordance with the regulations and systems. (KUNA)

### Article 297 cited

## Court nullifies travel ban order

By Jaber Al-Hamoud  
Al-Seyassah

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Court of Appeal has nullified a travel ban order, deeming it inappropriate due to the absence of conditions outlined in Article '297' of the Civil and Commercial Procedure Code.

This article states that the "creditor has a right of existence in the event of payment, even before filing." In substantive cases, the director of the Execution Department or their authorized representative from the court's agents should be consulted to issue an order preventing the debtor from traveling and to temporarily estimate the debt if it is not of a specific amount.

The order is granted upon a petition submitted by the concerned parties to the Execution Department if valid reasons exist. It should reflect a serious concern that the debtor might escape from paying the debt despite demonstrating the ability to do so. The officer may conduct a brief investigation if the supporting documents for the request are inadequate.

Lawyer Omar Al-Hammadi emphasized during his plea that citizens should not be restrained from traveling in accordance with the constitution, and freedom of movement should not be curtailed.

Several months ago, the Court of Cassation rendered a ruling canceling the decision to confiscate a citizen's passport. The court affirmed that "restricting freedoms in general and freedom of travel in particular is impermissible. The relevant state authorities do not possess the right to prolong depriving a citizen of their right to movement and travel."

This underscored that "the right to move-

ment is one of the fundamental rights stipulated in the Constitution and guaranteed to citizens." It emphasized that "freedoms are a cornerstone of the country's stability and must be upheld and not infringed upon in any manner or extent. Violating the freedom of citizens is a breach of the Constitution."

Nearly a year ago, the Court (Civil Circuit) affirmed in a lawsuit seeking to lift a travel ban that "the substantial amount of debt is not, in itself, a substantial reason to evade debt." The Court stated, "Assessing the reasons for issuing a travel ban on the debtor and the grievances against them is within the judge's discretion and, subsequently, the court's discretion."

However, it is imperative that the conditions for the travel ban order are substantiated with justifiable reasons proven in the documents and sufficient to support the ruling. The travel ban order is not punitive; it does not coerce the debtor into addressing procrastination.

The legislator's necessity to estimate that exception is limited to its extent, without broadening its interpretation or analogy. This understanding prompted the legislator, being aware of the seriousness of this procedure and to prevent it from becoming a tool against the debtor, to enclose it with a framework of rules and provisions that obligate those seeking it to abide by specific conditions that warrant its issuance."



Al-Hammadi

### Constitution Day, National Day marked

## 'Nepal-Kuwait relations strong'

By Mohammad Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of Nepal in Kuwait Sujani Rana affirmed that the relations with Kuwait have expanded significantly for the mutual benefit of the two countries.

In a statement issued during the embassy's celebration of the 9th Constitution Day and National Day of Nepal in the presence of Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocol Affairs Nabil Al-Dakhil, she said, "Last year, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of our relations. Throughout these years, this relationship developed on the basis of friendship, cooperation and mutual respect. The exchange of visits at various levels contributed to strengthening bilateral relations."

"Nepal has always supported Kuwait's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and Kuwait supports Nepal by providing technical, financial and humanitarian assistance at various levels."

"Nepal and Kuwait are working closely in various regional and international forums, such as the United Nations and the Asian Cooperation Dialogue, on issues of common interest."

"Relations have strengthened between the two countries with the operation of direct flights between Kuwait and the two main cities in Nepal - Kathmandu and Bhairahawa." She expressed her sincere appreciation and gratitude to the State of Kuwait for hosting more than 96,000 Nepalis, affirming that Nepali citizens who work in Kuwait help strengthen relations at the people-to-people level.

Rana said, "Nepal and Kuwait have tremendous potential to expand our relations in areas such as trade, tourism, investment and employment."

"The government of Nepal is implementing some major projects with the assistance of Kuwait, specifically through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. We expect more areas of cooperation in the coming days."

"Nepal is a land of opportunities for investors. It pursues a liberal foreign investment policy and strives to create an investment-friendly environment to attract foreign investments. Our tax bracket is one among the lowest and our position is fairly good in ease of doing business."

## Copper goes out Fiber-optics eyed

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The official spokesman for the Ministry of Communications Dr. Ahmad Al-Husseini says the ministry will cancel the telephone services provided on the copper network in Adan, Qusour and Fintas areas and replace them with more advanced services provided via the fiber-optic network.

In a statement issued yesterday, Al-Husseini explained that the ministry will work from Sunday for a period of two months to cancel the services it provides via the traditional copper network and offer more advanced services via fiber-optic technology in the three areas.

This step comes within the ministry's efforts to develop its telephone services by transforming its telephone networks from copper to fiber optics.

This measure came as a result of some residents of those areas not taking the initiative to request replacing the old telephone network with the new fiber-optic network by installing a fiber-optic device (ONT).

There are still subscribers receiving the services provided on the copper network, which falls within the second phase of the fiber optic project in the aforementioned areas.

Regarding the celebration of the 9th Constitution Day and National Day of Nepal, Rana affirmed that the issuance of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal on this day eight years ago was the culmination of decades of struggle and sacrifices made by the Nepalese people.

She said, "The constitution represents the historic fulfillment of the long-awaited aspirations of the Nepalese people to have a constitution written by their elected representatives."

"Our Constitution entrusted the people with the powers to protect freedom, sovereignty, territorial integrity, national unity and independence of our nation, and institutionalized democratic gains through proportional representation and social integration."

"Constitutional sovereignty, the rule of law, periodic elections, respect for basic human rights, an independent and impartial judiciary, the abolition of gender-based violence and ethnic discrimination, and respect for human rights remain our top national priorities."



Sujani Rana

# diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## Why didn't VPC act on instilling noble moral values in society?

"IMMEDIATELY after the conclusion of the Values Promotion Committee (VPC) meeting with the Minister of Higher Education and Kuwait University leaders, Committee Chairman Representative Muhammad Hayef announced a decision to abolish mixed-gender classes in the Faculty of Law and other colleges. However, they would be reintroduced following the regulations outlined in Law 24 of 1996, which prohibits the mingling of students," columnist **Dr. Abdul Latif bin Nakhi** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"This decision stirred significant controversy among students and citizens, sparking misinformation and misunderstandings due to insufficient knowledge about the decision's context and the committee's motivations. In this article, we aim to shed light on three aspects based on the perspectives of political observers.



Dr bin Nakhi

"Firstly, the present National Assembly seems to be employing past successful tactics and strategies, often in collaboration with the government. For instance, the current Assembly mirrored a tactic used by the first National Assembly after liberation in 1992. Both councils, brimming with popular expectations at the beginning of their terms, diverted public attention to controversial moral issues to conceal their failures in fulfilling electoral promises. The 1992 Council enacted the law prohibiting mixing, and the current Council resurrected it after its suspension in 2015 by the Constitutional Court. Abolishing mixed-gender divisions appears to be a result of the government reestablishing its alliance with the committee and aligned parliamentary movements.

"Secondly, the Values Promotion Committee enjoys extensive support, not only from the government but also from representatives representing various orientations and sects. Similar to the situation in the 2008 Council when it was named the "Negative Phenomena Alien to Kuwaiti Society" Committee, this committee remains sovereign with decisions protected from cancellation by student or activist protests or low- and moderate-level parliamentary motions, such as proposing amendments to the law restricting student mingling.

"Lastly, the committee's recent interview with the "Pulse of Committees" program on Majlis TV revealed the committee's dissatisfaction with the conduct of certain university professors and their expressions that contradict Kuwaiti societal values, Sharia, and even violate laws.

"However, restricting the committee's actions to merely segregating male and female students contradicts this statement and the committee's prior efforts in previous councils. This narrow interpretation might be intentional, possibly to alleviate the discomfort of representatives who failed to address this sovereign committee's initiatives.

Advocating for decency among students and society at large is a shared goal.

"Separating male and female students doesn't substitute a comprehensive civilizational plan to instill noble moral values in society, especially in the age of smartphones allowing bilateral and group video communication. Hence, questions arise regarding why the Values Promotion Committee, in both the current and previous councils, did not urge the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs and the General Secretariat of Endowments to revise their activities and events to contribute to instilling noble moral values in society.

"Additionally, why did the committee not call for an evaluation of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs' supervision of public benefit associations focused on social reform to further instill noble moral values in society? May we seek and follow the truth?"

**Also:**

"Now that the academic year has started, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education is organizing the morning shift with a difference of a quarter of an hour for each academic stage based on the 'flexible working hours' system for employees who were given two-hour grace period in the morning and in the evening, one of my dear brothers asked me: Did you send your children to school on time?" columnist **Tariq Boursly** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"So, I asked him: What time did your arrive at your office? The coincidence in our answers was that my children were late for school and the questioner arrived late at his workplace. This indicates that the flexible working hours system did not achieve the desired goal.

"I appreciate the efforts of the ministries of Interior and Education as a Kuwaiti citizen and a parent who drives his children to school every day, but the knot is still in the saw, so how is that?"

"In several articles, I referred to proposals regarding working hours, including the article entitled, 'The Half-Hour Difference,' and in another article, 'The Hour Difference.' Actually, I wanted the last proposal to be a way out of some crises whose tributaries extend to serious problems that should have been solved decades ago.

"All thanks to the efforts and solutions announced by the Ministry of Interior at the beginning of the school year, such as implementing the flexible working hours by allowing the two-hour period. However, with the Ministry of Education making the difference of a quarter of an hour for each stage, this puts us in front of a crowded scene from 7:00 am to 9:00 am, as

well as in the afternoon – from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm.

"Therefore, in this article, I propose to the Ministry of Education to announce the 'flexible school time' plan and upload a survey on its official website for parents to participate in determining the important aspect of the school period.

"In addition, I propose amending school hours for the kindergarten and primary levels to be from 7:30 am to 1:30 pm, the middle and secondary levels from 8:30 am to 2:30 pm, and university and applied education from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm. In this manner, we will solve a large part of the traffic problem, which has repercussions and negative impact on the guardian, employee and student.

"In my humble opinion, the solution is the 'flexible school hours' plan or to modify the time of starting and ending classes in different academic levels using the 'hour difference' proposal."



"The most important requirements of the current stage are embodied in the urgent need to bring about an administrative revolution in all State agencies. This necessitates the implementation of a clearly defined strategy by these agencies," columnist **Dr Saad Al-Jadaan** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Every new era focuses on restructuring State institutions to achieve their objectives. They must prioritize public good, look into the State's strength and size, its position among other countries throughout the world, its values, stature and orientation.

"All of these require an action map through which the State determines its priorities based on building people, investing in their capabilities, identifying strengths and addressing weaknesses.

"The action plan must include responses to many questions, on top of which is: How to develop the citizen, so he can assume his responsibility in building the nation?"

"This question must be raised as well: Are the existing administrative bodies capable of implementing the contents of the road map to realize the country's general goals, directions, entity and future?"

"Everyone believes that the State's administrative system is the artery through which the administrative decisions flow and it is the only base for building a modern State capable of joining the ranks of major countries and facing all challenges presented to it.

"Nations can only be built on the strength of their children, no matter how many alternatives are available. Unless the State's administrative system is reformed, it is difficult to implement the strategy of the State.

"Our most important need in the current stage is the intellectual reserve, which is the largest factor in determining our destination – the paths we take and the speed we need to accomplish tasks. We have to evaluate the steps we are taking based on transparency, integrity, knowledge and prioritizing the interests of the nation over that of individuals.

"We cannot talk about new steps unless there are radical reforms in the educational system, because it is the only one capable of putting the country on the right path. Our educational institutions are still unable to provide intellectual capital and build an intellectual reserve worthy of the stature it occupies among countries throughout the world."



"Bullying is not a modern phenomenon, as it is rather ancient. The Holy Qur'an contains more than one story about the behavioral bullying of humanity. The danger lies in the generational inheritance of behaviors and cultural variables that play a major role in the severity and spread of the phenomenon in a social and psychological manner, resulting in violence and other crimes like murder, all forms of addiction, assault, theft and vandalism," columnist **Sheikha Al-Asfour** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"The family and the school are two collaborative destinations for building the psychological and social strength of students, while combating negative phenomena that result in anxiety of the entire community. Studies have shown that bullying and violence in schools have been increasing over the years at the global level, not just in Kuwait.

"In my viewpoint, bullying and violence spread among children due to the inappropriate use of modern technology (smart devices) and the concepts it has instilled that hurt moral values and religion. It has become out of control and out of the constant monitoring of parents. The issue did not stop there as technology also contributed to materialism dominating social behavior among humans. It has become a major goal in all relationships and social transactions – before values, family building and the basic goal of building a strong society.

"Accordingly, efforts must be intensified to combat this phenomenon because of its dire social consequences, the worst of which is the loss of societal security, as suspicion of anyone's behavior has become an imperative to avoid shocks associated with moral decline.

"The Ministry of Education must intensify efforts to change the educational system through various activities like sports, recycling, agriculture, proper use of technology, etc. These activities promote many values, instead of traditional education that focuses on randomness, memorization, and writing. The current and future generations need more development activities and lessons that are far from memorization and studying. The purpose should be promotion of moral values, not only among students, but also the teachers and those in charge of school administration."

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary



KUNA photo

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with the Under-Secretary-General of the UN Counter-Terrorism Office Vladimir Voronkov.

### Deputy FM meets UN counter-terrorism official

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met on Wednesday with the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office Vladimir Voronkov on the sidelines of the 78th UN General Assembly in New

York.

The foreign ministry said in a statement that the meeting discussed cooperation with the UN counter-terrorism office and its role in strengthening the abilities of specialized authorities in Kuwait. (KUNA)

## 1.5m citizens, expats complete biometric fingerprints – report

'Yes I killed my child', expat woman tells court

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: About one and a half million Kuwaitis and residents have completed the biometric fingerprint, since it was implemented last May 12 until the end of last week, reports Al-Qabas daily.**

The daily pointing out that according to expectations in May next year everyone living in Kuwait will have completed the biometric fingerprint.

The sources stressed that the company implementing the project continues to update the system in accordance with the security requirements of the General Department of Forensic Evidence, in order to bring the system to the maximum level of improving the fingerprint efficiency.

The sources pointed out that the new system works smoothly and efforts are continuing to facilitate its work at all border crossings, noting that this new system aims to build a security database for citizens and residents.

Meanwhile, the sources confirmed the continuation of fingerprinting for citizens, residents, and citizens of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, in the designated centers from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. These efforts come within the framework of the Interior Ministry's strategy to develop and automate the services provided to the public -- citizens, residents and GCC citizens to save time and effort, and raise the level of performance and achievement.

The Interior Ministry added the biometric fingerprint project will provide database for everyone living in Kuwait who is 18 years old or older.



**'I killed my child':** In an unprecedented case, the Criminal Court after hearing the confession of an expatriate woman formally charged her with premeditated murder, adultery, and engaging in an incestuous pregnancy and sent her back to the Central Prison to await her fate, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

During the initial trial proceedings involving the accused and her partner, she openly and unreservedly

### 2 officials submit their resignations

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21:** Director General of the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA) Dr Bibi Al-Amiri and Deputy Director General for Educational and Rehabilitation Services Dr Nahed Al-Ateeqi have submitted their resignation to the Office of Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Sheikh Firas Al-Sabah, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily quoting sources.

Sources hinted that "a decision will be made on the resignation upon the minister's return from Amman, Jordan; where he is currently attending the ninth meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Social Affairs in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries."

### Other Voices

#### Al-Kufaishi & parliamentarians

By Ahmed alsarraf

Iraqi Engineer Faraed Al Kufaishi raised a poignant question on his Facebook account from Canada, asking, "Are our politicians the only ones corrupt, or are we all corrupt?"

He continued, sharing his disillusionment after a recent visit to his homeland, stating, "My entire belief system crumbled during my visit."



alsarraf

Needing medical treatment, I visited a hospital only to discover that health practitioners were no less corrupt than the politicians. Purchasing a piece of land, I encountered corruption in various official institutions during transactions.

From customs and traffic to education, corruption was rampant. Even at the mechanic's workshop, I found corruption comparable to that of politicians. I was advised that everyone involved in construction, from laborers to contractors, was equally corrupt.

Seeking services from technicians, service providers, or public sector officials meant falling prey

to corruption. People complain about corrupt politicians while engaging in corrupt practices themselves. If given the chance, they would indulge in corruption just like politicians do. We, as a nation, are self-destructing due to ignorance and foolishness.

The only exception may be retirees, simply because they are not engaged in active employment."

The pain runs deep because no one seems concerned about effecting change, or about the region's bleak future in terms of safety and environment. Everyone is complicit in corruption and seems to protect it, believing they benefit from it in some way and may lose those advantages if they oppose it. Although Kuwait's conditions may not be as dire, they are not drastically different.

He criticized the electoral process, emphasizing that despite being aware of the backgrounds of most elected officials, people voted for them multiple times. He highlighted the disconnect between their public stances and the privileges they secured for their families, all the while being incapable of effective legislations or government oversight. Yet, they were re-elected, leading to a cycle of corruption perpetuated by the populace.

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edly admitted to throwing her child from the sixth floor of a residential apartment.

To a question from the judge she said, "Yes, the child was conceived from an illicit relationship so I threw her out of the window from a great height to get rid myself of her. Subsequently, the police arrived, apprehended me, and I led them to my accomplice."



**Doctors suspended:** The Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi, has referred a number of doctors to investigation and suspended them from work until the completion of the investigations, following their refusal

to return money they had received as advance for the cost of performing operations, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

The daily added, the doctors should have returned the money when the patients refused to go along with the surgeries.

The sources explained that the minister's move came in response to complaints filed by patients and after verifying their authenticity found out that the doctors had refused to pay back the money.

The sources stressed that this contradicts professional ethics and respect for the will of patients, which prompted the minister to take measures against them.

## '9 Arab countries owe Kuwait KD 2.25b'

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21:** Osama Al-Shaheen has called for governance, rationalization, good management and direction of foreign grants, loans and deposits, announcing that he will submit a query to the Minister of Finance, Fahd Al-Jarallah, about the reasons for not recovering money granted in loans and grants to other countries, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

Al-Shaheen said, in a statement at the media center in the National Assembly yesterday, that he received an answer from the Minister of Finance to a previous question, which revealed that the value of Kuwaiti money in Arab countries is more than 2.257 billion dinars in 9 Arab countries, including five which have faltered in their payments.

He added, "According to the minister's answer, the total current Kuwaiti government money in Iraq alone, despite the precedent of the Iraqi invasion, the continued infringements and threats, and the violation of the recent agreement, is \$815 million, due for payment in December 2023."

He stated that the total current Kuwaiti government money in the sisterly Republic of Egypt is about \$4 billion, half of which is due to be paid this September.

He said he is surprised by the Minister of Finance's request not to disclose this data, stressing that "the general principle is transparency and publicity to achieve oversight by public opinion and the nation's elected representatives over mat-

ters. The government's procedures and decisions and everything related to the state's public treasury."

He indicated that he would ask a parliamentary question in light of this answer, from which it appears that the state has not succeeded in recovering any of the proceeds from those billion government deposits in Arab countries.

He praised the Parliamentary Finance Committee's promptness in discussing the proposals for laws that he submitted with other representatives regarding the Kuwait Development Fund and social insurance related to the replacement system and others, indicating that he received an invitation from the committee to attend its meeting next Tuesday.

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University awarded 7 merit scholarships to new students

# AUK sets stage for a transformative 2023/2024 academic year

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The American University of Kuwait (AUK) has launched the 2023/2024 academic year with a resounding commitment to academic excellence and personal growth for both new and returning students. The University's orientation and welcome week activities have set the stage for an inspiring and transformative educational journey.

In recognition of academic excellence, AUK awarded 7 merit scholarships to new students and an additional 8 to those already enrolled. This underscores the University's commitment to acknowledging and rewarding the diligent efforts of its student body, motivating them to strive for continued excellence.

AUK president, Dr. Rawda Awwad, encouraged students to embrace the spirit of exploration during her welcome address by challenging them to consider their university experience as a voyage of discovery, saying, "Your university journey is your own extraordinary expedition. It's a journey filled with wonder, enlightenment, and transformation." Dr. Awwad's speech emphasized AUK's dedication to offering a diverse and enriching educational environment that encourages students to explore a wide range of academic opportunities.

Complementing students' academic endeavors, the University's Office of Student Life, Division of Student Affairs, placed a strong emphasis on fostering connections among students through networking and team-building activities. This initiative aimed to create a sense of community and inclusivity, enriching the AUK campus environment, and contributing to the holistic development of students.

Newcomers were also taken on guided tours that introduced the University's state-of-the-art facilities and essential services. These tours ensured that students are well-informed and equipped to utilize the resources available to



Group photo of new students.



General photos of students during the campus tour.

them, providing a strong foundation for a successful academic journey.

AUK's efforts to welcome and support students reflect its unwavering commitment to providing an exceptional educational experience. The University remains dedicated to cultivating an all-inclusive campus community that values diversity in backgrounds and perspectives.

## Kuwait ranks '63rd' in world in digital quality of life index

Kuwait's internet quality 21% higher than global average

AMSTERDAM, Sept 21: Surfshark's 5th annual Digital Quality of Life Index (DQL) ranks Kuwait 63rd in the world. Out of the Index's 5 pillars, Kuwait performed best in internet quality, claiming 26th place, while facing

challenges in e-security, ranking 104th. The nation ranks 35th in internet affordability, 45th in e-infrastructure, and 66th in e-government. In the overall Index, Kuwait lags behind Saudi Arabia (45th) and Qatar (48th). In Asia, Kuwait takes 19th place, with Singapore the leader in the region.

"In many nations, 'digital quality of life' has merged into the broader concept of overall 'quality of life'. There's no other way to look at it now that so many daily activities, including work, education, and leisure, are done online. That's why it's crucial to pinpoint the areas in which a nation's digital quality of life thrives and where attention is needed, which is the precise purpose of the DQL Index", says Gabriele Racaiyte-Krasauske, Surfshark's spokeswoman.

Kuwait's internet quality is 21% higher than the global average.

■ Fixed internet averages 179 Mbps in Kuwait. To put that into perspective, the world's fastest fixed internet - Singapore's - is 300 Mbps. Meanwhile, the slowest fixed internet in the world - Yemen's - is 11 Mbps.

■ Mobile internet averages 210 Mbps. The fastest mobile internet - the UAE's - is 310 Mbps, while the world's slowest mobile internet - Venezuela's - is 10 Mbps. Compared to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait's mobile internet is 15% faster, while fixed broadband is 63% faster.

The internet is affordable in Kuwait compared to other countries.

■ Kuwaitis have to work 59 minutes a month

to afford fixed broadband internet. While this is less than average, it is 3 times more than in Romania, which has the world's most affordable fixed internet (Romanians have to work 18 minutes a month to afford it).

■ Kuwaitis have to work 1 hour 22 minutes 36 seconds a month to afford mobile internet. This is 5 times more than in Luxembourg, which has the world's most affordable mobile internet (Luxembourgers have to work 16 minutes a month to afford it).

Kuwait is 104th in the world in e-security.

The e-security pillar measures how well a country is prepared to counter cybercrime, as well as how advanced a country's data protection laws are. In this pillar, Kuwait lags behind Saudi Arabia (42nd) and Qatar (67th). Kuwait is unprepared to fight against cybercrime, the country has no data protection laws.

Kuwait is 45th in e-infrastructure and 66th in e-government.

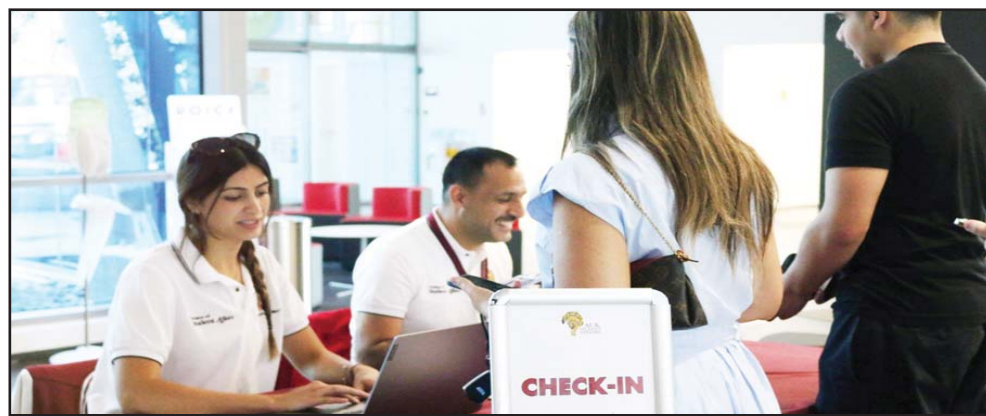
Advanced e-infrastructure makes it easy for people to use the internet for various daily activities, such as working, studying, shopping, etc. This pillar evaluates how high internet penetration is in a given country, as well as its network readiness (readiness to take advantage of Information and Communication Technologies). Kuwait's internet penetration is high (99% - 6th in the world), and the country ranks 61st in network readiness.

The e-government pillar shows how advanced a government's digital services are and the level of Artificial Intelligence (AI) readiness a country demonstrates. Kuwait's e-government is similar to the global average.

Globally, the internet is more affordable than last year.

■ Fixed internet is 11% more affordable than last year - on average, people have to work 42 minutes less a month to afford it.

■ Mobile internet is 26% more affordable than last year - people have to work 41 minutes less to afford it.



Students checking in for orientation.



# September

## Room Promotion







Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
<b>NOW</b>	<b>NOW</b>
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Weekends (Thursday & Friday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
<b>NOW</b>	<b>NOW</b>
<b>BHD 65.000/-net</b>	<b>BHD 145.000/-net</b>

Promo period from 1<sup>st</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Terms & conditions apply\*



Participants in the training program titled 'news monitoring on the internet'.

### KUNA concludes internet news monitoring program

KUNA media training center concluded Thursday its five-day program titled "news monitoring on the internet."

The program, presented by member of the Media council at the British Association of Journalists Ahmad Al-Sheikh, focused on the latest tools to monitor news on the internet and identifying reliable sources. The program also focused

on cross checking news, analyzing the audience and platforms, developing news photos and videos, as well as developing and broadcasting news.

One of the main topics the program focused on is identifying fake news and the presentation of news items through the use of artificial intelligence. (KUNA)

### Belt ... Vision

Continued from Page 1

The deals run the gamut from cooperation on e-commerce and energy to infrastructure and the establishment of smart cities, while the two countries' respective leaders have always given their backing to any initiative aiming to propel ties to greater levels.

More than 40 Chinese-based firms are currently operating in Kuwait as part of Beijing's contributions towards national development projects in a testament to the meteoric rise in bilateral relations.

In related news, Kuwaiti sport officials hoisted Thursday Kuwait's flag in the sport city in the Chinese city of Hangzhou, which would be hosting the 19th Asian Games between September 23 and October 8.

Hoisting the flag marks the participation of the Gulf country in the Asian games, Sheikh Jaber Thamer Al-Sabah, member of Kuwait National Olympic Committee Board, said in a statement.

He said the Kuwaiti players would do their utmost to represent their country in the best way possible.

The flag hoisting ceremony was also at-

tended by NOC member Fatma Hayat and Assistant Secretary General Ali Al-Marri.

### Sovereignty affirmed

Continued from Page 1

He underlined significance of the UN charter's goals and UN principles' "role in defending small countries."

Meanwhile, Representative of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia' Al-Sudani at his residence in New York on Wednesday.

The meeting, held on the sidelines of the 78th UN General Assembly session, dealt with the impacts of the recent verdict of the Iraqi federal court, rescinding the agreement on maritime navigation in Khor Abdullah.

The agreement that was signed by both countries in 2012, was endorsed lodged to the United Nations in the following year.

# What's On



Photos from the event.



## Event presents rich and diverse heritage of India

# UP NRI Forum marks Indian Independence Day with cultural fiesta

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: India got Independence on 15th August; this day is celebrated in India as a national festival dotted with cultural program, competitions, flag-hoisting ceremonies, and parades. The day holds great significance in the heart of every Indian citizen living in India and abroad. As India ceased to be a colonial nation and secured full autonomy from the British that ruled over it for around 200 years.

To mark this day, on Friday, Aug 25, The UPNRI Forum, in its unwavering commitment to preserving cultural heritage and fostering unity, successfully organized a spectacular Indian Independence Day celebration. The event took place at the Indian Community School Salmiya, senior branch, and was attended by over 300 esteemed guests and dignitaries.

Dr. Mohan Ram, President UP NRI Forum Kuwait led the grand celebration. He addressed the audience and welcomed the chief guest and other dignitaries. The occasion was graced by the presence of the Chief Guest Muzammil Mallik, whose inspiring words ignited the spirit of patriotism and unity among all attendees. The event was further honored by the esteemed presence of Guest of Honors: Dr. Dheeraj Bhardwaj, Dr. Anis Ahmad, and Dr. Diwakara Chaluvaiah. Their valuable insights and contributions added a scholarly touch to the celebration, emphasizing the significance of India's journey towards freedom and progress.

The program was an embodiment of cultural vibrancy, comprising captivating performances that showcased the rich and diverse heritage of India. The pro-

gram was impeccably hosted by Masood Hassas and Mohamad Shahid, with the seamless flow skillfully supported by Noorul Hasan, Habib Alvi, Mahboob Abdullah, Kaleem Ansari, Gaurav Bhatnagar, and the rest of the dedicated UP NRI Forum team members.

Attendees were treated to mesmerizing dance routines by UPNRI Forum Kids, soul-stirring musical performances, informative documentary on Uttar Pradesh "One District One Product" produced by Mujeeb Akhter, Patriotic Song by Dr. Madhu Gupta and thought-provoking speeches by the dignitaries.

This event was a true reflection of the UPNRI Forum's dedication to promoting unity among the Indian diaspora and fostering a strong sense of community. Through their tireless ef-



Children present patriotic program.

orts, the forum has once again proven its ability to bring people together and create cherished memories. Jitendra Kuntal was honored with the Volunteer of the Year Award in recognition of his exceptional dedication and service to the UPNRI Forum.

Last but not the least, Shafaq Mumtaz, Treasurer of the UPNRI Forum Kuwait gave vote of thanks. On behalf of the UPNRI Forum, he expressed his gratitude to all the dignitaries, guests, performers, Sponsors specially City Group, Kuwait Maritime & Mercantile Co., Al Kulaib International Co, Have- li Punjabi Restaurant and attendees who contributed to making this celebration a resounding success. Their presence and enthusiasm added to the grandeur of the occasion, making it a truly un-forgotten experience.



Kuwait Badshah Cricket Club team pose with champions trophy

## Kuwait Badshah defeat host Nepal by 27 runs

# KBCC win Int'l Veterans T20 bilateral series

By M. Irfan Shafiq

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Kuwait Badshah Cricket Club (KBCC) won their first ever International Veterans T20 Cricket Bilateral Series in Nepal at TU Stadium, Kathmandu Nepal.

The visitors defeated the Nepali veterans' team by 27 runs in the third and final match of the series. Batting first, the KBCC posted 201-9 in their allotted 20 overs, while Nepal managed 174-7 in reply. Khurram Shahzad scored 109 for KBCC, while Adith Kumara contributed 37.

Vikash Singh and Kiran Rana took three wickets each for the Nepali team. In reply, Krithartha Shakya scored 63 and Dipendra Chaudhary scored 55 runs for the home side but didn't impress the visitors. Jamshaid Azmat and Naeem Shahid grabbed two wickets each for KBCC.

Khurram Shahzad of KBCC was declared the player of the series, while his teammate Jamshaid Azmat was named the best bowler. Krithartha Shakya was adjudged the best batter.

President of the Veteran Cricket Association of Nepal Bijay Sharma and other dignitaries handed over prizes to the winners of the series.

Captain of Kuwait Badshah Cricket Club, Mohammad Hafeez, expresses his gratitude after winning the series. He thanked all the Players, Management and media Personals to make this happen and in future, looking forward for more Bilateral Series to enhance and develop the cooperation between two sides. Furthermore, he mentioned that his team enjoyed the hospitality throughout the tournament and they are taking good memories back to Kuwait.

## Over 500 contestants

# KTMCC to hold Talent Test 2023 on Sept 28

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Kuwait Town Malayalee Christian Congregation (KTMCC) will hold the Talent Test 2023 on Sept 28. Various churches from the congregations of Mar Thoma, CSI, Evangelical, Brethren, Pentacostal churches, from both, NECK and Ahmadi St. Pauls, will take part in the Talent Test. The test showcases different competitions which will start at the NECK premises from 8 AM. Around 500 contestants from over 30 churches are getting prepared for the grand event.

The various events of the Talent Test are Solo Song, Group Song, Elocution, Short Story, Instrumental Music, Essay Writing, Quiz, Drawing and Photography. A video News Bulletin Contest, based on the day of the program will also be there. The categories of the program have been divided into three, on the basis of age. The program will also be telecasted live on the Harvest Television.

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For more details please contact your school Authority

A flyer of the Bengali Cultural Society's 27th KITCO inter-school quiz contest on Sept 22.

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A flyer of the event.

## Indian artists to mesmerize Kuwait with live concert

# ICS presents 'Afsana & Saajz - Titliaan'

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: The Indian Cultural Society (ICS) is all set to enthrall music enthusiasts in Kuwait with a spellbinding live concert titled 'Titliaan', featuring the renowned playback singer and actress, Afsana Khan, and the multi-talented music director and singer, Saajz. This captivating musical extravaganza is scheduled to take place on Friday, October 6, 2023, at 7:00 PM in the Dr. Kamil Al Rayyes Auditorium, AIS, situated near the Maidan Hawally Police Station in Kuwait.

Afsana Khan and Saajz, both accomplished artists, bring a rich background in traditional Sufi music, as well as Punjabi and Hindi folk music. Afsana Khan has garnered fame through hit tracks like 'Titliaan' and 'Jatta Saream Ve Tu Dhakka Kardae,' in collaboration with Sidhu Moose Wala. Her musical journey began with her debut single, 'Jhanjar,' released in September 2019, and she has since delighted audiences with chart-toppers such as 'Laddu,' 'Majhe di Jatti,' and 'Sui,' which have gained immense popularity on platforms like YouTube and TikTok.

### Talents

Notably, Afsana Khan has also showcased her talents on television reality shows such as Bigg Boss in 2021, The Voice of Punjab, The Rising Star, and Awaaz Punjab Di, solidifying her status as a pivotal figure in the music industry.

The power of a singer's voice is often the driving force behind a song's success, and Afsana Khan's mesmerizing vocals have left an indelible mark on music lovers worldwide. Her exceptional talents have earned her international recognition, with performances in countries like the USA, Canada, UK, UAE, Korea, and New Zealand, where expatriate Indians relish music deeply rooted in their cultural heritage.

Afsana Khan's impressive repertoire includes hit songs and music albums like 'Saazish,' 'Raat Gayi Baat Gayi,' 'Lala Lori,' 'Jaani Ve Jaani,' 'Dhakka,' 'Naina De Thekay,' 'Dila Himmat Kar,' 'Gutt Utte,' 'Chandigarh Shehr,' 'Black Night,' 'Maarna A Menu,' 'Nakhre Jatti De Tera Pyaar,' 'Jine Dukh, Badmashi,' 'Na Maar Vailpuna,' 'Hawa Karda,' 'Tootera,' 'Mere Kol,' 'Mahi Mileya,' 'Bechari Chalikyan,' 'Koi Si,' 'Bazaar,' 'Taveez,' 'Newspaper,' 'Chandi Di Dabbi,' 'Zakham,' 'Zindagi,' 'Dil Di Property,' 'Diljale,' 'Kithe Bach De,' 'Kaala Jadu,' 'Kamal Karte Ho,' 'Nafra,' 'Pyaar Jatt Da,' 'Nain Matakka' and many more.

Furthermore, she has collaborated with esteemed artists such as Gurlaz Akhtar, Dilpreet Dhillon, Ammy Virk, Armaan Bedil, and Salim-Suleiman, expanding her artistic horizons.

Adding to the musical brilliance of the evening is Saajz, Afsana Khan's spouse, who is a singer, actor, and music director in the Punjabi music industry. Saajz's musical journey started under the guidance of the legendary Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, and his debut single, 'Yaari Anthem,' met with resounding success. He has further delighted listeners with hits like 'Qafira,' 'Ohh Meri Jaan,' 'Nawwab,' and many more.

The Indian Cultural Society (ICS) has a reputation for hosting high-quality events featuring legendary and top-ranked artists. As a social non-profit organization, their mission is to provide the audience in Kuwait with top-notch entertainment, creating a sense of a "home away from home" through captivating performances.

The ICS team's dedication and ability to deliver exceptional entertainment have established them as a model for live events in Kuwait. Music enthusiasts and culture aficionados are invited to join this unforgettable evening of entertainment on Friday, October 6th, at 7:00 PM at the American International School Auditorium, located near the Maidan Hawally

Indian Cultural Society  
Presents  
**TITLIAAN**  
Combo of Bollywood & Punjabi & Sufi  
Anchor  
A.A. KHAN  
AFSANA KHAN  
SAAJZ  
On Friday  
06th  
October  
2023  
at  
7:00 PM  
American International School Auditorium, Maidan Hawally, Kuwait  
ics.kuwait@gmail.com | www.icskuwait.org  
RSVP: 99709495, 97653441, 66550065, 97690035, 97984603

A flyer of the 'Afsana Khan & Saajz - Titliaan' live concert.

**YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM**  
Where Youth Power Meets Leadership Excellence!  
Batch Starting in September 2023!  
Join us for the Youth Leadership Program in Toastmasters, where you will acquire the skills and confidence to become a dynamic and influential leader. This program is designed for young individuals like you, who aspire to make a positive impact in their lives and communities.  
FOR YOUTH AGES 10-17  
Why Join the Youth Leadership Program?  
• Gain invaluable leadership skills for personal and professional growth.  
• Enhance your public speaking abilities and conquer your fear of public speaking.  
• Connect with like-minded young leaders and expand your network.  
• Receive guidance and mentorship from experienced Toastmasters.  
Scan to register!  
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A flyer of the event.

## DTC to hold Youth Leadership Program

Durrar Toastmasters Club (DTC), Riggae, Kuwait is organizing a Youth Leadership Program from Sept 29 to Oct 27, 2023, with one session per week. Calling all young leaders ready to make a difference! We invite you to be a part of our transformative Youth Leadership Program comprising 5 dynamic sessions. If you are in the age group 10-17 years and wish to develop your communication skills to be better able to make an impact in your environment, this program is for you.  
We focus on:  
■ The Power of Communication  
■ Building Stronger Relationships  
■ Goal Setting and Time Management

ment  
■ Leading with Confidence  
■ Making a Positive Impact  
This program is your gateway to:  
■ Unlocking Leadership Skills: Develop critical leadership abilities that will serve you for a lifetime.  
■ Mastering Public Speaking: Overcome your fear of public speaking and express yourself confidently.  
■ Building Connections: Connect with other ambitious young leaders and expand your network.  
■ Mentorship: Benefit from guidance by experienced Toastmasters.  
Phone: +965 9898 9697  
Registration Link: <https://forms.gle/XgFtFXPP08risGHA>

Police Station in Kuwait.

For seat reservations and further details, please contact ICS via email at [ics.kuwait@gmail.com](mailto:ics.kuwait@gmail.com) or through WhatsApp at 60045296, 99709495, 97653441, 97690035, and 97984603.

Additional information can be found at [www.icskuwait.org](http://www.icskuwait.org). Don't miss the chance to witness the magic of Afsana Khan and Saajz in this spectacular live concert presented by the Indian Cultural Society.

This March 2, 2023 file photo, shows Cisco logo in the Mobile World Congress 2023 in Barcelona, Spain. Silicon Valley tech giant Cisco is buying cybersecurity firm Splunk, Thursday, Sept. 21, in a \$28 billion deal as it looks to keep up with potential security threats that could be brought about by the increasing use of artificial intelligence. (AP)



### Cisco buying cybersecurity firm Splunk

Cisco is buying the cybersecurity firm Splunk in a \$28 billion deal as it bolsters its defenses against potential security threats that may be heightened by the widening use of artificial intelligence.

The Silicon Valley networking tech giant will pay \$157 per Splunk Inc. share.

"Our combined capabilities will drive the next generation of AI-enabled security and observability," Cisco Chair and CEO Chuck Robbins said in a prepared statement. "From threat detection and response to threat prediction and prevention, we will help make organizations of all sizes more secure and resilient."

Dan Ives of Wedbush sees the transaction as a smart move for Cisco.

"Cisco is focused on the next generation of AI-enabled security and observability and Splunk's well regarded unique platform makes this the right move at the right time for Cisco in our view and an aggressive strategic play in cybersecurity," he wrote in a note to clients. "For Cisco this is a shot across the bow at Palo Alto, Checkpoint, CrowdStrike, Microsoft, Zscaler and others that the tech stalwart is not sitting idle in this market and now is making an aggressive play to gain market share in the coming years." (AP)

### USD stable

The US dollar remained stable on Thursday vis a vis the Kuwaiti Dinar at KD 0.308 and the euro went down by 0.37 percent settling at KD 0.328 compared to yesterday's exchange rates.

The Central Bank of Kuwait said in its daily bulletin that the sterling pound fell to KD 0.380, the Swiss franc remained stable at KD 0.343, and the Japanese yen firmed at KD 0.002.

Exchange rates declared by the CBK reflect average prices and not rates of actual transactions. (KUNA)

### Market Movements

21-09-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
UAE - DFM	+41.28	4,179.68	SAUDI - Tadawul	-112.08	10,949.42
PHILIPPINES - PSEI	+53.67	6,094.71	JAPAN - Nikkei	-452.75	32,571.03
EGYPT - EGX 30	+283.34	20,080.57			
PAKISTAN - KSE 100	+372.21	46,304.73			

# Business

## Australian media magnate vows to remain engaged

# Rupert Murdoch stepping down as head of News Corp and Fox Corp

NEW YORK, Sept 21, (AP) — Rupert Murdoch, the 92-year-old Australian media magnate whose creation of Fox News made him a force in American politics, is stepping down as leader of both Fox's parent company and his News Corp. media holdings.



Rupert Murdoch introduces Secretary of State Mike Pompeo during the Herman Kahn Award Gala, in New York, Oct 30, 2018. (AP)

the New York Post. Fox News Channel has profoundly influenced televi-

sion and the nation's politics since its start in 1996, making Murdoch a hero to some and pariah to others. The 24-hour network converted the power and energy of political talk radio to television. Within six years, it outrated CNN and MSNBC.

But it has been a rough year for Fox, which was forced to pay \$787 million to settle a defamation lawsuit related to its coverage of false claims following the 2020 presidential election. Shortly after, Fox fired its most popular personality, Tucker Carlson.

Murdoch vowed in a letter to employees that he would remain engaged at Fox.

"In my new role, I can guarantee you that I will be involved every day in the contest of ideas, Murdoch wrote. "Our companies are communities, and I will be an active member of our community. I will be watching our broadcasts with a critical eye, reading our newspapers and websites and books with much

interest."

There was no immediate word on why Murdoch's announcement came now. Ironically, it is the week author and Murdoch biographer Michael Wolff is publishing a book, "The End of Fox News," speculating on what will happen to the network when the patriarch is gone.

Murdoch and his family, particularly children James, Lachlan, Elisabeth and Prudence, were said to be the model of the HBO show "Succession."

He built his empire from a single newspaper in Adelaide, Australia, inherited from his father and became a multi-billionaire. Forbes estimated the Murdoch family's net worth at roughly \$19 billion in 2020.

While Murdoch never ran for political office, politicians in the United States and Britain anxiously sought his approval.

# Stocks 'slump' worldwide as allure grows to buy Treasury bill and chill

Fed says rates may stay high in '24

NEW YORK, Sept 21, (AP) — Wall Street is slumping again Thursday as stock prices drop worldwide on expectations that U.S. interest rates will stay high well into next year.

The S&P 500 was 1.1% lower in midday trading. That follows a similar drop from Wednesday after the Federal Reserve indicated it may cut interest rates next year by just half what it earlier predicted. The Fed has already hiked its main interest rate to levels unseen since 2001, which helps slow inflation but at the cost of hurting investment prices.

Big Tech stocks again took the brunt of the pain because they're typically among the biggest victims of high rates. The Nasdaq composite was 1.3% lower, as of 11:30 a.m. Eastern time, as Amazon fell 3.2% and Nvidia dropped 1.9%. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 178 points, or 0.5%.

Stock prices tend to fall when rates rise because stocks are historically risky investments. Why stomach the chance of their big swings when Treasuries are paying more in interest than before? And they're paying much more.

A 10-year Treasury yield is offering a yield of 4.48%, up from 4.40% late Wednesday and from only 0.50% three years ago. It's near its highest level since 2007.

The two-year Treasury yield, meanwhile, was wavering following mixed reports on the economy. It slipped to 5.12% from 5.17% late Wednesday after climbing earlier in the morning.

On the winning side of Wall Street, FedEx rose 3.9% after it reported stronger profit for the latest quarter than analysts expected.

London's FTSE 100 slipped 0.6% after the Bank of England left interest rates steady. The expectation had been for another rate hike, but a surprising report this week showed a drop in U.K. inflation.

Stock markets elsewhere around the world were much weaker.

Japan's Nikkei 225 fell 1.4%, South Korea's Kospi dropped 1.7% and France's CAC 40 lost 1.6%.

### Europe

Germany's DAX declined 1.1%, the CAC 40 in Paris retreated 1.4% while Britain's FTSE 100 gained 0.5%.

### Asia

Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 1.3% to 17,665.41 and the Shanghai Composite index gave up 0.8%, to 3,084.70.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 was off 1.4% at 32,571.03, while in Seoul the Kospi shed 1.6% to 2,514.97. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 slipped 1.4% to 7,065.20.

### Oil

U.S. benchmark crude oil lost 60 cents to \$89.06 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It gained 82 cents on Wednesday. Brent crude, the pricing basis for international trading, declined 68 cents to \$92.85 a barrel.

### Currencies

The U.S. dollar slipped to 147.90 Japanese yen from 148.35 yen. Traders are watching to see what the Bank of Japan does when it wraps up a monetary policy meeting on Friday. The euro weakened to \$1.0641 from \$1.0661.



A notice indicating that a home has been sold appears on a sign in residential section of San Francisco, Friday, April 21, 2023. (AP)

## Homebuyers grapple with rising mortgage rates

# Home sales dip again in August

LOS ANGELES, Sept 21, (AP) — Sales of previously occupied U.S. homes fell for the third month in a row in August, as higher mortgage rates, rising prices and a dearth of properties on the market discouraged many would-be homebuyers.

Existing home sales fell 0.7% last month from July to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.04 million, the National Association of Realtors said Thursday. That's below the 4.10 million pace that economists were expecting, according to FactSet.

Sales slumped 15.3% compared with the same month last year.

The national median sales price rose 3.9% from August last year to \$407,100, marking the third month in a row that the median price remained above \$400,000.

"Home prices continue to march higher despite lower home sales," said Lawrence Yun, the NAR's chief economist. "Supply needs to essentially double to moderate home price gains."

The shortage of homes for sale has kept the market competitive, driving bidding wars in many places, especially for the most affordable homes. About 31% of

homes purchased last month sold for more than their list price, Yun said.

All told, there were 1.1 million homes on the market by the end of last month, down 0.9% from July and 14.1% from August last year, the NAR said.

The latest housing market figures are more evidence that many house hunters are being held back by a persistently low inventory of homes for sale and rising mortgage rates.

Because home sales typically take about a month to be finalized once a contract is signed, transactions in August happened as the rate for a 30-year mortgage averaged just under 7%.

The weekly average rate on a 30-year home loan climbed jumped hit 7.23% last month, the highest level in more than 22 years, and has held above 7% since August, according to mortgage buyer Freddie Mac.

High rates can add hundreds of dollars a month in costs for borrowers, limiting how much they can afford in a market already unaffordable to many Americans. They also discourage homeowners who locked in those low rates two years ago from selling.

# Small venture capital player becomes symbol in fight over corporate diversity policies

NEW YORK, Sept 21, (AP) — A venture capital firm that has backed buzzy new companies like restaurant chain Slutty Vegan and beauty brand Live Tinted has become symbolic of the fight over corporate diversity policies since becoming a target of a lawsuit over a grant program for Black women.

But the Fearless Fund is a tiny player in the approximately \$200 billion global venture capital market.

The Atlanta-based firm has invested nearly \$27 million in some 40 businesses led by women of color since launching in 2019, and awarded another \$3.7 million in grants. Collectively, those businesses employ about 540 people, up from 250 at the time of investment, according to the Fearless Fund's "impact report," released Wednesday.

While the money has made a big difference to

those businesses, Fearless Fund co-founder Arian Simone said it's a drop in the bucket compared to systemic changes needed to close the racial and gender gap in venture capital funding.

Less than 1% of venture capital funding goes to businesses owned by Black and Hispanic women, according to the nonprofit advocacy group Digitalundivided. Just to get that number over 2% would take billions of dollars, Simone said.

"It takes trillions of dollars to really move the needle," Simone said in an interview with The Associated Press, "which is why I think that policy changes need to take place in order to collectively get us up to speed."

Simone said she would like to see pension funds and other institutional investors, for example, enact mandates for venture capital firms to

fund a certain number of minority-owned companies.

It's those sort of intentional policies that are under attack from conservative activist groups waging a legal battle against corporate diversity initiatives, an effort that has intensified since the Supreme Court struck down affirmative action in college admissions.

The lawsuit against the Fearless Fund was filed by Edward Blum, the conservative activist who filed the affirmative action cases before the Supreme Court. It targets the fund's Strivers Grant Contest, which awards \$20,000 to Black women who run businesses, arguing it violates a section of the Civil Rights Act of 1866 prohibiting racial discrimination in contracts.

Blum's organization, American Alliance For Equal Rights, has also filed lawsuits against two

law firms in Texas and Florida over fellowship programs for diverse candidates, accusing them of being discriminatory.

In an interview with The AP, Blum said his organization brought the case against the Fearless Fund after another woman-owned business brought the grant contest to their attention.

"A useful way of determining the fairness and ultimately the legality of a policy is to apply the shoe on the other foot test," Blum said, asking whether "a different venture capital fund's requirement that only white men are eligible for its funding and support" would be considered legal.

The Fearless Fund enlisted prominent civil rights lawyers, including Ben Crump, to defend against the lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Atlanta.

## Labor market still strong

# US applications for jobless benefits fall to lowest level

NEW YORK, Sept 21, (AP) — U.S. applications for unemployment benefits fell to their lowest level in eight months last week as the labor market continues to show strength in the face of elevated interest rates.

U.S. applications for jobless claims fell by 20,000 to 201,000 for the week ending Sept. 16, the Labor Department reported Thursday. That's the lowest figure since the last week of January.

Jobless claim applications are seen as representative of the number of layoffs in a given week.

The four-week moving average of claims, a less volatile measure, fell by 7,750 to 217,000.

### Benchmark

Though the Federal Reserve opted to leave its benchmark borrowing rate alone this week, it is well into the second year of its battle to stamp out four-decade high inflation. The whopping 11 interest rate hikes since March of last year have helped to curb price growth, but the U.S. economy and labor market have held up better than most expected.

Earlier this month, the government reported that U.S. employers added a healthy 187,000 jobs

in August. Though the unemployment rate ticked up to 3.8%, it's still low by historical measures.

U.S. businesses have been adding an average of about 236,000 jobs per month this year, down from the pandemic surge of the previous two years, but still a strong number.

Recent government data also showed that job openings dropped to 8.8 million in July, the fewest since March 2021 and down from 9.2 million in June. However, those numbers remain unusually robust considering monthly job openings never topped 8 million before 2021.

Besides some layoffs early this year - mostly in the technology sector - companies have been trying to hold on to their employees.

Many businesses struggled to replenish their workforces after cutting jobs during the pandemic, and a sizable amount of the ongoing hiring likely reflects efforts by firms to catch up to elevated levels of consumer demand that emerged since the pandemic recession.

Overall, 1.66 million people were collecting unemployment benefits the week that ended Sept. 9, about 21,000 fewer than the previous week.



A sign advertising jobs for bus drivers is posted in Palatine, Ill., Wednesday, Sept. 13, 2023. On Thursday, the Labor Department reports on the number of people who applied for unemployment benefits last week. (AP)

## BUSINESS

## Hedonova launches unique short-only fund in ADGM

Hedonova is delighted to announce the launch of an exclusive short-only fund, set to debut in the prestigious Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM). This distinctive initiative marks Hedonova as one of the few investment companies in the world to introduce a specialized investment strategy centered around short-selling securities on such a scale.

The short-only fund, a testament

to Hedonova's innovative spirit, presents a unique opportunity for investors to hedge themselves from market fluctuations and reap potential benefits from downward trends. By concentrating solely on short-selling securities, Hedonova aims to distinguish itself by offering investors a pathway to diversify their portfolios and potentially achieve favorable returns, irrespective of market direction.

It is scheduled to commence operations in the second quarter of 2024 pending licensure. The Hedonova short-only fund will empower investors to capitalise on market drawdowns, potentially yielding gains during downward trends and catastrophic market events.

The company has secured a substantial anchor investment of \$150 million from a sovereign

wealth fund, underscoring a resounding vote of confidence in the investment strategy. This resolute backing further solidifies Hedonova's commitment to delivering exceptional results, with the company anticipating a total capitalization of \$400 million.

"Our expansion into the vibrant investment landscape of the UAE reflects a substantial transformation," remarked Alexander Caven-

dish, CEO at Hedonova. "Numerous investment companies are recognizing the promising opportunities within this dynamic region."

Hedonova's ADGM expansion reaffirms its commitment to innovation in investments. Through the introduction of the short-only fund, Hedonova is poised to provide investors with access to the potential benefits of short selling, contributing to the growth and di-

versification of their investment portfolios. As part of its commitment to transparency and ethical investing, Hedonova will prioritize rigorous risk management for stability and investor protection.

The company's mission is to create a more diversified and resilient investment landscape for its clients, and the short-only fund represents a significant step in achieving this vision. (Business Wire)

## BoE joins US Fed in keeping interest rates unchanged

Decline in inflation cited

**LONDON, Sept 21, (AP): The Bank of England on Thursday joined the U.S. Federal Reserve in pausing interest rate increases after a surprising fall in U.K. inflation eased concerns about the pace of price rises.**

In a development that few predicted just two days ago, the central bank kept its main interest rate unchanged at a 15-year high of 5.25%. It comes to the relief of millions of homeowners who are facing higher mortgage rates after nearly two years of hikes.

Central banks worldwide appear to be near the end of an aggressive rate-hike cycle meant to curb an outburst of inflation triggered by the bounce-back from the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war in Ukraine. The Fed also left rates unchanged Wednesday.

Clearly influencing the U.K. bank's decision was news Wednesday that inflation unexpectedly fell to 6.7% in August, its lowest level since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. But it is still way above the bank's target rate of 2% and higher than in any other Group of Seven major economy.

Bank Gov. Andrew Bailey said the decline in inflation was "welcome" but that the bank stood ready to raise rates again if it didn't continue to fall as an-

tipated.

"We'll be watching closely to see if further increases are needed, and we will need to keep interest rates high enough for long enough to ensure that we get the job done," he said in a statement.

Four of the nine members of the Monetary Policy Committee voted for a hike. The five who voted to keep rates on hold said inflation had been "lower than had been expected" but that the decision was "finely balanced," according to minutes from the meeting.

Those who backed a quarter-point hike said the surprise drop in inflation was due to one-off factors and judged that overall there was evidence of more "persistent inflationary pressures."

Higher interest rates, which cool the economy by making it more expensive to borrow and bearing down on spending, have contributed to bringing down inflation worldwide. Though most economies have avoided falling into recession, economic growth is subdued in many parts of the world and fears remain that the British economy could start to see output shrinking in coming months.

"While the bank has suggested it could hike again if inflation proves to be more than expected, it is likely that interest rates have now peaked," said Luke Bartholomew, senior economist at asset management firm abrdn. "The economy is deteriorating rapidly, and we expect a recession later this year."

While the decision to leave rates un-

changed is a welcome development, it doesn't mean that Britain's cost-of-living crisis has ended. Inflation, though lower than expected, remains relatively high, as do food and energy costs.

And because there is a lag between actual rate hikes and mortgage rates, lots of homeowners and renters have yet to see increases in their housing costs.

Unlike in the U.S., for example, most homeowners in Britain lock in mortgage rates for only a few years, so those whose deals expire soon know that they face much higher borrowing costs in light of the sharp rise in interest rates over the past couple of years.

Lewis Shaw, founder of mortgage adviser Shaw Financial Services, said the decision will be greeted with "a collective sigh of relief" across the country.

"Let's hope they've not gone too far already, as over 2 million households are set to renew their mortgages at higher rates between now and the end of 2024," he said.

The Bank of England, like other central banks, has raised interest rates aggressively from near zero as it sought to counter price rises first stoked by supply chain issues during the coronavirus pandemic and then Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which pushed up food and energy costs. U.K. inflation hit a peak of 11.1% in October 2022.

As inflation has eased, the hiking cycle looks to be nearing an end.



A man walks past the Bank of England, at the financial district in London, on May 11, 2023. Homeowners across the U.K. are hoping that the Bank of England will decide to avoid raising interest rates for the first time in nearly two years. Following news that inflation fell unexpectedly in August to its lowest level since Russia invaded Ukraine, expectations have grown that the central bank will opt Thursday, Sept 21, 2023, to keep its main interest rate unchanged. (AP)

The Swiss National Bank also kept rates unchanged Thursday, but in a busy day for central bank action in Europe, Sweden's and Norway's central

banks pushed ahead with quarter-point hikes and Turkey made another large increase.

The European Central Bank, which

sets interest rates for the 20 European Union countries that use the euro currency, last week hinted that its 10th straight hike could be its last.

Line to link Miami, Orlando at high speed

## 1st private US passenger rail line in 100 years is about to take off

**MIAMI, Sept 21, (AP):** The first big test of whether privately owned high-speed passenger train service can prosper in the United States will launch Friday when Florida's Brightline begins running trains between Miami and Orlando, reaching speeds of 125 mph (200 kph).

It's a \$5 billion bet Brightline's owner, Fortress Investment Group, is making, believing that eventually 8 million people annually will take the 3.5-hour, 235-mile (378-kilometer) trip between the state's biggest tourist hubs - about 30 minutes less than the average drive between the two cities. The company is charging single riders \$158 round-trip for business class and \$298 for first-class, with families and groups able to buy four round-trip tickets for \$398. Thirty-two trains will run daily.

Brightline, which began running its neon-yellow trains the 70 miles (112 kilometers) between Miami and West Palm Beach in 2018, is the first private intercity passenger service to begin U.S. operations in a century. It's also building a line connecting Southern California and Las Vegas that it hopes to open in 2027 with trains that will reach 190 mph (305 kph). The only other U.S. high-speed line is Amtrak's Acela service between Boston and Washington, D.C., which began in 2000. Amtrak is owned by the federal government.

"This is a pretty important moment, whether you're thinking about it in the context of the state of Florida or what it might mean for these kinds of products as they develop elsewhere in the United States," Brightline CEO Mike Reiningger said in a recent interview. "The idea that my car is the only way for me to get where I need to go is being challenged by a new product. A new product that's safer, that's greener, that is a great value proposition (and) it's fun."

The Florida trains, which run on biodiesel, will travel up to 79 mph (127 kph) in urban areas, 110 mph (177 kph) in less-populated regions and 125 mph (200 kph) through central Florida's farmland. Brightline plans possible extensions to Tampa and Jacksonville.

John Renne, director of Florida Atlantic University's Center for Urban and Environmental Solutions, said the Miami-Orlando corridor is a perfect spot for high-speed rail - about 40 million Floridians and visitors make the trip annually, with more than 90% of them driving.

If Brightline succeeds that could lead to more high-speed lines between major cities 200 to 300 miles (320 to

480 kilometers) apart, both by Brightline and competitors, he said.

"It is quite exciting for South Florida to kind of be a test bed for what could be seen as a new paradigm for transportation, particularly high-speed rail transportation, in the United States," Renne said.

Because Brightline is privately owned and seeking a profit, it was more sensitive to getting the project completed quickly to save money. On the government side, Renne pointed to California's effort to build a high-speed rail system. Approved by voters in 2008, it isn't near fruition, has already cost billions more than expected and its prospects for completion are uncertain as finding a route through mountains is proving difficult and politicians added dubious side projects. Brightline began planning in 2012.

Brightline's development has suffered setbacks, though. COVID-19 shut down the Miami-West Palm Beach line for 17 months. A 2018 partnership with Richard Branson's Virgin Group to rebrand Brightline as Virgin Trains USA quickly soured. Brightline terminated the partnership in 2020 and Virgin sued in London. According to the lawsuit, Brightline says Virgin "ceased to constitute a brand of international high repute, largely because of matters related to the pandemic." That case is pending.

Then there is the question of safety for residents near the tracks.

Brightline trains have the highest death rate in the U.S., fatally striking 98 people since Miami-West Palm operations began - about one death for every 32,000 miles (51,500 kilometers) its trains travel, according to an ongoing Associated Press analysis of federal data that began in 2019. The next-worst major railroad has a fatality every 130,000 miles (209,200 kilometers).

None of the deaths have been found to be Brightline's fault - most have been suicides, drivers who go around crossing gates or pedestrians running across tracks. The company hasn't had a fatality since June, its longest stretch except during the pandemic shutdown.

Still, the company's fatality rate concerns officials in the extension area.

Indian River County Sheriff Eric Flowers said a Brightline official seemed callous during a recent meeting, saying he seemed more worried about explaining Brightline's procedure for getting passengers to their destination after an accident than how it deals with deaths.

## Huawei's David Wang: Accelerate intel with 'custom-built' AI models for all industries

**SHANGHAI, Sept. 21, (PR Newswire):** During HUAWEI CONNECT 2023, David Wang, Huawei's Executive Director of the Board, Chairman of ICT Infrastructure Managing Board, and President of the Enterprise BG, delivered a keynote speech titled "Accelerate Intelligence". Wang shared Huawei's views on and experience in helping industries make the most of intelligence. He also announced the launch of Huawei's new Atlas 900 SuperCluster. This new AI computing cluster, the latest offering in Huawei's Ascend series of computing products, makes use of a brand-new architecture. In addition, Wang announced nine new intelligent industry solutions based on Huawei's Intelligent Transformation reference architecture. These solutions are designed to meet the specific needs of different industries, including finance, government, manufacturing, electric power, and railway.

"A new chapter of intelligent transformation is unfolding," David Wang said. "We now stand at the threshold of a new and intelligent world, with vast opportunities and challenges ahead of us. We need to work together, dig deep into industry-specific scenarios, and build a solid computing backbone to power countless new AI models and applications. Together, we can help all industries go intelligent, and help them do it faster."

The challenges keeping industries from going intelligent

With many recent breakthroughs in foundation models, a vast range of new AI models and applications are emerging. AI is also being deeply integrated into industries, serving more and more industry scenarios. However, data, computing power, algorithms, and application deployment are struggling to keep up and will be critical to enable the intelligent transformation of



David Wang delivering the keynote address. (PR Newswire/Huawei)

industries.

To address these challenges, Wang called for joint efforts to support intelligent connectivity, intelligent computing, and intelligent industries, which will be key to addressing the ongoing problems with AI implementation and scenario-specific models. He explained that this is how different industries can make most of intelligence.

The Ascend Atlas 900 SuperCluster

More and more foundation models trained with trillions of parameters are emerging, and so Huawei launched their newest Atlas 900 SuperCluster, specifically designed for training massive AI foundation models.

Working with customers and partners to launch nine intelligent industry solutions

Over the past three years, Huawei has established a flock of integrated teams. They dive deep into industries and scenarios, bringing specialized groups of experts closer to customer challenges and more tightly incorporating horizontal R&D resources to help industries go intelligent. This operational model has already helped Huawei more closely work with partners to create over 200 dedicated intelligent transformation solutions for more than 20 industries, including urban governance, finance, transportation, and manufacturing. These solutions have already been implemented

in many real-world projects.

Huawei plans to continue working with partners on solutions like this to promote the in-depth integration of AI and industry scenarios and enable the intelligent transformation of ever more industries.

Accelerating Intelligent Transformation White Paper release

Wang also announced the release of a new white paper, Accelerating Intelligent Transformation. It's a collection of case studies and best practices from Huawei, its customers and partners, aimed at helping all industries hit the ground running as they move to embrace new forms of intelligence.

The white paper finds that AI is driving industry upgrade by serving more and more industry scenarios and has become a major engine of growth for social advances. Notably, it also asserts the collaboration between different roles of the business world, academia, and research circles will be important for new AI applications and the development of the entire AI industry. Specifically, these ecosystem stakeholders will need to work together to ensure AI is designed to benefit all by quickly identifying emerging trends, continuously pursuing technological innovation, and rapidly improving both engineering practices. To broaden and deepen AI application across industries, they will need to enable a wide array of models and applications.

The white paper has already received endorsements from several academicians. It reviews both the latest trends and developments in the field of AI, and explores 63 scenario-specific AI applications from 16 different industries. Additionally, it presents a number of innovative best practices in intelligent transformation from 18 different industries.

## OAPEC: Arab countries to maintain global energy resources, developing industry

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21, (KUNA):** Arab countries' global crude reserves is at 54.3 percent and the region is eager to boost world supplies by 38.1 percent by 2050, said Jamal Al-Loughani, Secretary General of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) on Thursday.

Speaking during his participation at the Seventh China-Arab Energy Cooperation Conference, held in Haikou, China, Al-Loughani said that Arab countries contributed around 29.3 percent of global production and also had a 30.2 percent share of the world export of oil.

He indicated that OAPEC

was keen on participating in the China-Arab Energy Cooperation Conference, which is held this year slogan of "Entering the Golden Era of China-Arab Energy Cooperation of Quality and Sustainability."

By 2050, Arab countries would be eager to contribute to the world energy supplies, es-

pecially with the region having around 26.3 percent of certified natural gas reserves and an intention to boost supplies by 19.8 percent in the same year, said Al-Loughani.

The OAPEC chief indicated that China's growing demand for oil imports might reach 76.5 percent by 2045.

He added that the Asian giant demand for natural gas had been growing, revealing that it reached 41 percent by 2022 despite China being the fourth global supplier of gas.

Al-Loughani said that fossil fuel could contribute to a balanced shift in diversifying energy resources that would be

environment-friendly as well as compatible with efforts to counter climate change.

The energy industry also has a challenge in the form of securing resources of oil and natural gas, which are the main drivers' of global development by 53 percent until 2045, revealed the OAPEC chief.



A flyer of Alfouz weekly draw.

**ABK announces Hebah Barrak Al Tukhaim as winner of Alfouz draw prize**

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced Hebah Barrak Al Tukhaim as the KD10,000 Alfouz weekly draw winner on Monday, 18 September, 2023, held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Since its launch, the Alfouz account continues to offer an impressive weekly draw of KD10,000. The Bank has recently expanded its offering by adding a new alluring monthly draw of

KD20,000, and an exceptional quarterly draw of KD100,000. The account also retains its hallmark mega annual draw of a KD5,000 monthly salary for ten years. Furthermore, the Bank now offers customers an increased opportunity to win for every KD10 as opposed to KD100 previously. ABK encourages everyone to open an Alfouz draw account and/or in-

crease their balances to have more chances in winning in the upcoming annual draw winner announcement, which will take place on Friday, 6 October, 2023. The higher the deposits are, the higher the chances to win. For more information about ABK, please follow the Bank's Instagram account @abk\_kuwait, visit eahli.com, contact Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit one of the Bank's branches across Kuwait.

**Event held at Ooredoo HQ**

**KIB promotes financial literacy and banking awareness**

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21: For the third year in a row, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced its continuous support of the 'Let's Be Aware' (Diraya) financial awareness campaign, which was launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) in cooperation with local banks. The Bank's steady support stems from its constant keenness to develop the financial culture of its customers and spread banking awareness among all targeted segments of society.

the various aspects related to financial affairs and how to manage them in light of the developments in banking services. In addition, they raised awareness around the risks and challenges involved, the most important being the various forms of electronic fraud.

Commenting on the occasion, Yacoub Ashkanani, Area Manager at KIB, said: "Commitment to effective communication with customers across various sectors and spreading financial literacy among company employees like Ooredoo comes at the top of our priorities. We also believe in the importance of promoting financial culture and building strong customer relationships, which serve as pillars of success in the banking sector. This practice is a fundamental step towards building a society that is more aware

of digital banking developments, and more capable of understanding their influences."

Ashkanani expressed his admiration for how the Bank's employees connected with their peers at Ooredoo, as they provided comprehensive information about KIB's financial and banking services. They also put special focus on the specific products and promotions suiting each individual and explained all the associated benefits, including digital solutions, promotional offers, and campaigns. Moreover, KIB representatives made sure to enhance the understanding of Ooredoo employees on the basic standards for the safe use of banking cards, applications, and digital channels.

It is worth noting that KIB is committed to maintaining constant communication with all segments of society to boost banking awareness and enhance the level of financial culture. This falls in line



KIB Diraya Booth at Ooredoo.



Yacoub Ashkanani, Area Manager at KIB.

KIB recently set up a booth at the headquarters of Ooredoo Kuwait to introduce the company's employees to the various banking products and services it can provide based on their personal needs and lifestyles. Representatives at the KIB booth also helped them understand

with the goals of its leading social responsibility program and is rooted in its role as one of the leading

Kuwaiti banks participating in the 'Let's Be Aware' national awareness campaign.

**Fed keeps rates unchanged**

Move signals optimism about a potential 'soft landing'

WASHINGTON, Sept 21, (AP): The Federal Reserve left its benchmark interest rate unchanged Wednesday for the second time in its past three meetings, a sign that it's moderating its fight against inflation as price pressures have eased.

The Fed's policymakers also signaled that they expect to raise rates once more this year and envision their key rate staying higher in 2024 than most analysts had expected.

But as their latest policy meeting ended Wednesday, the 19 members of the Fed's rate-setting committee conveyed growing optimism that they will manage to slow inflation to their 2% target without causing the deep recession that many economists had feared earlier this year. It's a hopeful scenario that economists call a "soft landing."

In a set of new quarterly projections, the policymakers showed that they expect faster economic growth and lower unemployment this year and next year than they had foreseen just three months ago. Even with solid economic growth in sight, they also expect inflation to continue to cool.



Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell speaks during a news conference following the Federal Open Market Committee meeting, Wednesday, Sept. 20, 2023, in Washington. (AP)

**Expectations**

Those expectations suggest that Fed officials believe "they're going to be able to do what it takes to achieve gradual disinflation without disruption to the labor market, or without triggering a meaningful recession," said Subadra Rajappa, head of rates strategy at Societe Generale.

Since peaking at a year-over-year peak of 9.1% in June 2022, consumer inflation in the United States has dropped to 3.7%. Speaking at a news conference Wednesday, Chair Jerome Powell cautioned that the Fed is still seeking further assurance from forthcoming economic data that inflation is on a sustainable path back to its target level. But he said the Fed is getting closer to the end of its rate-hiking cycle and that a soft landing seems "plausible."

"We're fairly close, we think, to where we need to get," the Fed chair said. "A soft landing is a primary objective. ... That's what we've been trying to achieve all this time."

The Fed's latest decision kept its benchmark rate at about 5.4%, the result of 11 rate hikes it unleashed beginning in March 2022. Those rapid hikes, Powell said, now allow the central bank to take a more measured approach to its rate policy.

"We're taking advantage of the fact that we moved quickly in the past," he said, to manage rates "a little more carefully now as we sort of find our way to the right level of restriction that we need to get inflation back down to 2%."

Fed officials expect to cut interest rates just twice next year, fewer than the four rate cuts they had forecast in June. They predict that their key short-term rate will still be 5.1% at the end of 2024 - higher than it was from the 2008-2009 Great Recession until May of this year.

Yet one reason they likely have reduced the number of expected cuts is also a positive one: They think a recession, which would require multiple rate cuts to aid the economy, is less likely to occur.

"What we have right now is what's still a very strong labor market that's coming back into balance," Powell said. "We're making progress on inflation. Growth is strong."

**Further shift in economic policies**

**Turkey's cbank hikes interest rates again**

ISTANBUL, Sept 21, (AP): Turkey's central bank raised its key interest rate by 5 percentage points Thursday, another large but expected hike that signals a continued push toward more traditional economic policies under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The bank hiked its policy rate to 30%, saying it has kept up the "monetary tightening process" to combat rampant inflation and control price instability. Its statement said inflation in July and August was "above expectations," hitting 58.94% last month.

It takes Turkey into a more typical economic approach after critics blamed a series of rate cuts set by Erdogan for making a cost-of-living crisis worse. Turkish households were left struggling to afford rent and basic goods as inflation surged.

Erdogan has long argued that lowering interest rates helps fight inflation, a theory that runs contrary to traditional economic thinking. The Turkish

central bank started cutting rates in late 2021 under pressure from Erdogan. Central banks around the world, meanwhile, have been hiking rates to bring consumer price rises under control following the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war in Ukraine. Now, banks from the U.S. Federal Reserve to Bank of England are hitting pause as they near the end of their aggressive increases.

Turkey has worked to do to catch up in its fight against inflation. After winning reelection in May, Erdogan appointed a new economic team, signaling a return to more conventional policies.

The team includes former Merrill Lynch banker Mehmet Simsek, who returned as finance minister, a post he held until 2018, and Hafize Gaye Erkan who took over as central bank governor. Before their appointments, the cen-

tral bank had cut its key interest rate from around 19% in 2021 to 8.5% earlier this year. Erdogan has fired three central bank governors who resisted pressure to cut rates before appointing Erkan's predecessor in 2021.

Economists say Erdogan's unorthodox policies exacerbated economic turmoil, leading to currency and cost-of-living crises that have brought hardship to households. Erdogan insists his economic model stimulates growth, exports and employment. Following Erkan's appointment, the bank has raised its key rate a series of times: by an aggressive 7.5 percentage points in August, 2.5 percentage points in July and 6.5 percentage points in June. The Turkish lira - which has lost some 30% of its value against the U.S. dollar since the start of the year - dropped slightly against the greenback Thursday.

While overall inflation has declined, the costs of some services - from auto insurance and car repairs to veterinary services and hair salons - are still climbing faster than they were before the pandemic. Still, most recent data is pointing in the direction the Fed wants to see: Inflation in June and July, excluding volatile food and energy prices, posted its two lowest monthly readings in nearly two years.

And signs have grown that the job market isn't as robust as it had been, which helps keep a check on inflation. The pace of hiring has moderated. The number of unfilled openings fell sharply in June and July. And the number of Americans who have started seeking work has jumped. This has brought labor demand and supply into better balance and eased pressure on employers to raise pay to attract and keep workers - a trend that can lead them to raise prices to offset higher labor costs.

Some factors are threatening to reignite inflation, weaken the economy, or both. Rising oil prices, for example, are making gasoline steadily more expensive.

Though clear progress on inflation has been achieved, gas prices have lurched higher again, reaching a national average of \$3.88 a gallon as of Tuesday. Oil prices have surged more than 12% in just the past month. And the economy is still expanding at a solid pace as Americans, buoyed by steady job growth and pay raises, have kept spending. Both trends could keep inflation and the Fed's interest rates high enough and long enough to weaken household and corporate spending and the economy as a whole.

4.2%. The policymakers expect it to drop to 2.6%, near their target, by the end of next year.

The approach to rate increases the Fed is now taking reflects an awareness that the risks to the economy of raising rates too high is growing. Previously, the officials had focused more on the risks of not doing enough to slow inflation.

In generating sharply higher interest rates throughout the economy, the Fed has sought to slow borrowing - for houses, cars, home renovations, business investment and the like - to help ease spending, moderate the pace of growth and curb inflation.

Though clear progress on inflation has been achieved, gas prices have lurched higher again, reaching a national average of \$3.88 a gallon as of Tuesday. Oil prices have surged more than 12% in just the past month. And the economy is still expanding at a solid pace as Americans, buoyed by steady job growth and pay raises, have kept spending. Both trends could keep inflation and the Fed's interest rates high enough and long enough to weaken household and corporate spending and the economy as a whole.

**59,000 of them removed this year**

**Airbnb says it's cracking down on fake 'listings'**

WASHINGTON, Sept 21, (AP): Fake listings have emerged as a major problem for Airbnb, threatening to scare off consumers and prompting the short-term rental service to use AI in an effort to crack down on fraudsters.

Airbnb says it has removed 59,000 fake listings and prevented another 157,000 from joining the platform this year.

Fake listings and high cleaning fees are among several issues that Airbnb said Wednesday that its users highlighted in a company survey. Others included high cleaning fees and a desire for lower prices.

The San Francisco company said more than 260,000 listings have lowered or removed cleaning fees this year, since it gave consumers the means to sort listings in order of all-in pricing.

Airbnb says the change in how prices are displayed discourages hosts from touting low prices but piling on extra fees. However, only about one-third of Airbnb renters are using it.

"We got a lot of feedback that Airbnb is not as affordable as it used to be," CEO Brian Chesky said in an interview. The pricing changes are starting work, he said, and more measures are in the works.

One of those is "seasonal

dynamic pricing" - technology that would help hosts adjust prices more often, like airlines and hotels do. Chesky said that will prod hosts into cutting prices during the off-season, but it could also help them raise peak prices.

Airbnb also said that later this year it will begin verifying all listings in its top five markets including the United States and the United Kingdom to combat an outbreak of fakes.

Fraudulent listings create refunds and rebooking costs for Airbnb, "but the biggest risk is to our reputation," Chesky said. "If you can't trust when you book an Airbnb that it's real and you're going to like it, then you're going to stay in a hotel."

The company plans to use AI to help it verify listings in those top five countries.

It will have hosts go inside the property and open the Airbnb app. GPS will verify they are at the correct address, and AI will be used to compare live photos with pictures that the host uses on the listing.

Properties in the U.S., U.K., Canada, France and Australia that pass the test will get a "verified" icon on their listings starting in February. The company said it will verify listings in 30 more countries starting late next year.

**Google sued for negligence after a man drove off collapsed bridge**

RALEIGH, N.C., Sept 21, (AP): The family of a North Carolina man who died after driving his car off a collapsed bridge while following Google Maps directions is suing the technology giant for negligence, claiming it had been informed of the collapse but failed to update its navigation system.

Philip Paxson, a medical device salesman and father of two, drowned Sept. 30, 2022, after his Jeep Gladiator plunged into Snow Creek in Hickory, according to a lawsuit filed Tuesday in Wake County Superior Court. Paxson was driving home from his daughter's ninth birthday party through an unfamiliar neighborhood when Google Maps allegedly directed him to cross a bridge that had collapsed nine years prior and was never repaired.

"Our girls ask how and why their daddy died, and I'm at a loss for words they can understand because, as an adult, I still can't understand how those responsible for the GPS directions and the bridge could have acted with so little regard for human life," his wife, Alicia Paxson, said in a news release.

State troopers who found Paxton's body in his overturned and partially submerged truck had said there were no barriers or warning signs along the washed-

out roadway. He had driven off an unguarded edge and crashed about 20 feet below, according to the lawsuit.

The North Carolina State Patrol had said the bridge was not maintained by local or state officials, and the original developer's company had dissolved. The lawsuit names several private property management companies that it claims are responsible for the bridge and the adjoining land.

Multiple people had notified Google Maps about the collapse in the years leading up to Paxson's death and had urged the company to update its route information, according to the lawsuit.

The Tuesday court filing includes email records from another Hickory resident who had used the map's "suggest and edit" feature in September 2020 to alert the company that it was directing drivers over the collapsed bridge. A November 2020 email confirmation from Google confirms the company received her report and was reviewing the suggested change, but the lawsuit claims Google took no further actions.

A spokesperson for Google, which is headquartered in California but maintains a registered office in Raleigh, did not immediately provide comment on the lawsuit.



## NerdWallet

## Expert tips to tackle credit card debt smartly

## Student loans back ... is it time to consolidate credit card debt?

By Jackie Veling  
NerdWallet

The federal student loan payment pause that began in March 2020 is ending. Loans began accruing interest on Sept. 1, and borrowers will start making payments in October.

But the restart comes at a tricky time for Americans' finances. Credit card debt is at a record high - \$1 trillion, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York - and student loan borrowers may struggle to prioritize different types of debt.

Credit card debt is especially damaging to your finances because of its high, compounding interest. As money gets tighter, consolidating your credit card debt under a zero- or low-interest product may be a smart move.

**Budget**

With no student loan bills for the past three-plus years, borrowers may have used the space in their budget to take on other types of debt.

More than half of all federal student loan borrowers took out a new bank-issued credit card during the pandemic, while 36% got an auto loan and 31% signed up for a retail credit card, according to a July TransUnion study.

Liz Pagel, senior vice president of consumer lending for TransUnion, says that while some debt acquisition was a natural result of young consumers aging into new credit obligations - like their first credit card - the issuing of new credit also jumped to levels not seen even before the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Lenders made up for lost time, and then some," Pagel says. "There was just a lot of adding to credit, and consumers that had student loans in forbearance were not immune from that."

It's not only new types of debt, but more of it. Borrowers with student loans face 24% higher median payments on other debt obligations than they did before the pandemic, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau re-

## 5 options if you're crushed by student loan, credit card debt

By Melissa Lambarena  
NerdWallet

The return of federal student loan payments in October has the potential to derail your finances, especially if you're already struggling with credit card payments.

One in five student loan borrowers have risk factors that suggest they could struggle with student loan payments when they resume, according to a June blog post at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

The impact won't be as significant during the initial 12-month student loan on-ramp period from Oct. 1 to Sept. 30, 2024. You won't default on student loans or see credit scores plummet after missing payments during that time. But interest will continue to accrue, making the growing debt more difficult to manage. Use the next 12 months to make progress with consistent payments. You'll save more money over time and pay down debt faster.

Here are some strategies to consider as you're getting started.

**1. Revamp your budget**

ported in June. For younger borrowers ages 18 to 29, median payments have soared 252%.

The Biden administration announced a 12-month "on-ramp" to ease the transition, during which missed federal student loan payments won't be reported to the credit bureaus, and you won't default. But loans will still accrue interest, so you should pay if you can.

Protect (cross head)  
Though you want to make progress paying down all your debts, credit card repayment should be a top priority, says Rosario Chacon, a certified financial planner and certified student loan

An updated budget clarifies how much money is available to pay down debts. Review your debit and credit card statements for opportunities to cut back or find cheaper alternatives.

Start by writing down where your money is going, says Kristen Holt, CEO at GreenPath, a nonprofit credit counseling agency.

Prioritize essentials like rent, utilities, transportation and others, she says. And, if possible, work toward building an emergency fund of at least \$500 to prevent more debt.

"Anything is better than nothing," Holt says. "Even if you're putting \$10 a paycheck into a savings account, it takes a while, but it's still going to be better than zero."

Next, determine whether you'll be laser focused on student loan or credit card debt. Keep up with all payments, but put more money toward the high interest debt to make more progress. Credit cards typically have higher interest rates unless new terms are applied through an agreement or promotional offer.

**2. Seek lower interest rates**

A good credit score of 690 or higher

professional in Oakland, California.

"If worse comes to worst with the federal system, you can ask for forbearance," Chacon says. "But with credit cards, there's no forbearance to protect you."

"Credit cards are so much less flexible than the federal student loan system," agrees Tricia Kollath, certified financial planner and certified student loan professional in Gulfport, Mississippi. "You can't call your credit card company and say, 'Oh, I can't make my payment this month.' They'll take you to court."

Both Chacon and Kollath suggest

evaluating your budget as soon as possible to figure out how to keep paying down credit card debt as student loan payments restart.

One option may be consolidating your credit cards under a 0% balance-transfer card or a debt consolidation loan, which saves money on interest and frees up additional cash.

With a 0% balance-transfer card, you transfer your credit card balances to the new card and pay off the debt at zero interest during the promotional period, sometimes 18 months or more. But these cards are available only to borrowers with good or excellent cred-

it, generally scores above 689.

Fixed-rate debt consolidation loans are available to borrowers across the credit spectrum at banks, credit unions and online lenders. As long as you qualify for a rate lower than the rate on your credit cards, you'll save money on interest.

If consolidating isn't an option, you can use popular DIY strategies, like the snowball or avalanche methods.

With the snowball strategy, you pay off your smallest debt first, then work your way up, applying newly freed-up funds to each new debt. This can help you build momentum as the amount

When you can't envision making progress on debt, a nonprofit credit

counseling agency may help. A credit counselor can review your finances, create a budget and determine eligibility for a debt management plan. This option consolidates credit card balances into a single payment with a lower interest rate, for a fee. If the credit counselor is also a certified student loan expert, they can help narrow down the ideal student loan repayment plan.

"We're going to look at the person's whole situation," Holt says. "We do a soft pull of their credit report - it does not affect their credit score in any way - but we get that picture of everything."

**5. Take a break**  
After lowering the costs of your debts, avoid adding new purchases on your credit cards. A temporary switch to a debit card or cash can keep financial goals on track.

Your credit card won't be closed by the issuer due to inactivity, since there is a balance on it and you're making payments. Once the balance is paid off, keep the card open and active with small recurring purchases. (AP)

you're paying on each debt grows.

With the avalanche strategy, you pay off the debt with the highest interest rate first, then work your way down, applying your increased savings in interest to each new debt.

Either is a great option for tackling credit card debt, because you'll have a clear strategy you can follow, says Kollath.

"Whenever I work with people who are in debt, they don't even want to talk about it, they're so stressed," she says. "But working towards a goal and seeing things get paid off is really good for your mental health." (AP)

## Phishing scams No. 1 threat

## McAfee's new AI-driven product to spot, block scams in real-time

SAN JOSE, Calif., Sept 21: McAfee Corp., a global leader in online protection, has announced the launch of AI-powered, McAfee Scam ProtectionTM. The latest feature in McAfee's product suite draws on patented artificial intelligence (AI) technology to turn the tables on cybercriminals using AI to turbocharge scams and deceive people out of thousands of dollars.

With the help of AI, cybercriminals are creating more convincing, personalized scams, at scale. Phishing scams are the number one cybersecurity threat worldwide, with a new phishing site created every 11 seconds. Last year Americans lost \$330 million to text scams alone, more than double the previous year, with an average reported loss of \$1,000. The deluge of these new sophisticated AI-generated scams is making it harder than ever to tell real from fake with half (52%) of Americans concerned that AI has made online scams more accurate and believable. Which is where McAfee comes in.

**Message**

McAfee Scam Protection will proactively spot and block the scam for you. No more wondering if a delivery message or bank notification text is real or not, as McAfee's patented AI technology instantaneously detects malicious links to stop you before you click by sending an alert message. Even if a person accidentally clicks on a malicious link, McAfee Scam Protection proactively blocks the site from loading.

"AI has changed the game for cybercriminals. Gone are the days of obvious typos, poor graphics, or other telltale signs in phishing emails or scam texts. Today, cybercriminals are using artificial intelligence to dramatically improve the accuracy, sophistication, and speed of an attack, making it harder than ever to tell real from fake. It's why we all need the most advanced, innovative AI working in our favor, to proactively protect us, in real-time, before we even know we've been targeted," said Greg Johnson, McAfee Chief Executive Officer.

"McAfee Scam Protection combines advanced AI with the very best in human threat intelligence to spot and block fake emails, texts, and social media links proactively, so you can go about your day worry-free. Our new scam protection technology is revolutionary, and we are excited to equip families and individuals with the most advanced AI technology that helps keep online scams and cyber threats at bay, so people can live their lives online with confidence," said Johnson.

McAfee Scam Protection's AI technology detects and protects against dangerous links, works across Android, iOS, Chrome, Safari, Microsoft Edge and Firefox. Text alert functionality is currently

## Copyright breach

## GoT creator &amp; other authors sue OpenAI

NEW YORK, Sept 21, (AP) - John Grisham, Jodi Picoult and George R.R. Martin are among 17 authors suing OpenAI for "systematic theft on a mass scale," the latest in a wave of legal action by writers concerned that artificial intelligence programs are using their copyrighted works without permission.

In papers filed Tuesday in federal court in New York, the authors alleged "flagrant and harmful infringements of plaintiffs' registered copyrights" and called the ChatGPT program a "massive commercial enterprise" that is reliant upon "systematic theft on a mass scale."

The suit was organized by the Authors Guild and also includes David Baldacci, Sylvia Day, Jonathan Franzen and Elin Hilderbrand among others.

"It is imperative that we stop this theft in its tracks or we will destroy our incredible literary culture, which feeds many other creative industries in the US," Authors Guild CEO Mary Rasenberger said in a statement. "Great books are generally written by those who spend their careers and, indeed, their lives, learning and perfecting their crafts. To preserve our literature, authors must have the ability to control if and how their works are used by generative AI."

**Benefit**

The lawsuit cites specific ChatGPT searches for each author, such as one for Martin that alleges the program generated "an infringing, unauthorized, and detailed outline for a prequel" to "A Game of Thrones" that was titled "A Dawn of Direwolves" and used "the same characters from Martin's existing books in the series 'A Song of Ice and Fire.'"

In a statement Wednesday, an OpenAI spokesperson said that the company respects "the rights of writers and authors, and believe they should benefit from AI technology."

only available for all Android users with enhancements coming to iOS in October. Today, customers across any platform can benefit from McAfee's risky link identification which blocks a dangerous link should you accidentally click on it, whether that's through text messages, social media, or your browser.

McAfee Corp. is a global leader in online protection for consumers. Focused on protecting people, not just devices, McAfee's consumer solutions adapt to users' needs in an always online world, empowering them to live securely through integrated, intuitive solutions that protect their families, communities, and businesses with the right security at the right moment.

## Tech giant to try boost its value

## Toshiba set to delist after takeover by Japanese consortium succeeds

TOKYO, Sept 21, (AP) - A 2 trillion yen (\$14 billion) tender offer for troubled electronics and energy giant Toshiba by a Japanese consortium has been completed, clearing the way for it to be delisted, the company said Thursday.

In the tender offer, announced last month and ended Wednesday, the number of shares purchased exceeded the minimum needed, at 78.65%, it said.

The switch to Toshiba's new parent company and largest shareholder, called TBH Inc. will take place on Sept. 27. The move still needs shareholders' approval, and a meeting has been set for November, according to Toshiba.

Toshiba will then delist from the Tokyo Stock Exchange within about a month. That will end its more than seven-decade history as a listed company. The purchase price was at 4,620 yen (\$31).

"Toshiba Group will now take a major step toward a new future with a new shareholder," said its chief executive, Taro Shimada.

Even after privatization, the company will "do the right thing" to try boost its value, he added.

A sprawling accounting scandal, which surfaced in 2015 and involved books being doctored for years added to woes related to Toshiba's nuclear energy business. It faces the daunting and costly task of decommissioning the nuclear power plant in Fukushima, northern Japan, where a tsunami set off three meltdowns in 2011.

A leading brand behind rice cookers, TVs, laptops and other products once symbolic of Japan's technological prowess, Toshiba had billed the takeover led by the consortium of Japanese banks and major companies, known as Japan Industrial Partners, as its last chance for a turnaround. Toshiba's board accepted the deal in March.

Toshiba has spun off parts of its operations, including its prized flash-memory business, now known as Kioxia. Toshiba is a major stakeholder in Kioxia.

Overseas activist investors, who own a significant number of Toshiba's shares, had initially expressed some dissatisfaction about the bid.

Analysts say its unclear whether Toshiba can return to profitability, even with the delisting.

Toshiba's shares were up 0.2% at 4,604 yen (\$31) Thursday in Tokyo.

The company racked up 25 billion yen (\$169 million) of red ink for the April-June quarter on 704 billion yen (\$5 billion) in sales, down nearly 5% from the year before.

The decommissioning effort at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant is expected to take decades.

Toshiba's US nuclear arm Westinghouse filed for bankruptcy in 2017 after years of deep losses as



The logo of Toshiba Corp. is seen at a company's building in Kawasaki near Tokyo, on Feb. 19, 2022. A 2 trillion yen (\$14 billion) tender offer for troubled electronics and energy giant Toshiba by a Japanese consortium has been completed, clearing the way for it to be delisted, the company said Thursday, Sept. 21. (AP)

## 'Smarter and human-like'

## Amazon unveils more conversational Alexa amid AI race among tech firms

NEW YORK, Sept 21, (AP) - Amazon has unveiled a slew of gadgets and an update to its popular voice assistant Alexa, infusing it with more generative AI features to better compete with other tech companies who've rolled out flashy chatbots.

During a demonstration at the company's second headquarters in Arlington, Virginia on Wednesday, Amazon's devices chief Dave Limp said the latest language model will allow consumers to have more human-like conversations with a "smarter and more conversational" Alexa.

The company showed different interactions through a pre-recorded video and a live demo where Alexa responds to prompts to write a poem, give ideas for a date night and provide a breakdown of a football game. Limp also

safety costs soared.

**Also:**

**LAS VEGAS:** During his company's LEAD Beyond event last week, Toshiba America Business Solutions President and Chief Executive Officer Larry White spoke of Toshiba's recent financial success and market share records.

He additionally touched on his vi-

demonstrated a capability where the voice assistant can prep a text message, though his exchange with Alexa included some awkward pauses where he had to repeat some prompts twice before getting an answer.

The company says it's also working on a "speech-to-speech" model that will, for example, allow Alexa to exhibit human-like attributes, such as laughter and phrases like "uh-huh" during conversations.

Amazon holds the annual gadget event to exhibit new devices in front of journalists and industry insiders before they officially hit the market. Among other things, the tech giant also showcased a fee-based emergency service for Alexa that allows users to call for help without using the phone, new Echo smart speakers as well as Ama-

zation Fire tablets for kids.  
In August, Amazon CEO Andy Jassy announced Limp would retire after almost 14 years with the company, where he's overseen innovations in Kindle readers, Amazon's Fire TV and Echo devices. Although the devices unit has rolled out a large number of gadgets over the years, not all of them have caught on. Think the Alexa-enabled microwave or the roaming Astro robot, which Amazon unveiled in 2021 at an introductory price of \$1,000 but has had a limited rollout.  
The devices unit was hit by Amazon's company-wide layoffs several months ago. The company's hasn't announced Limp's replacement.  
Amazon is a leader in the US smart speaker market, commanding nearly 64 million monthly users of its Echo devices, according to Insider Intelligence.

Amazon is a leader in the US smart speaker market, commanding nearly 64 million monthly users of its Echo devices, according to Insider Intelligence.

keting and Strategic Business Development **Bill Melo** followed White onstage while further articulating how organizations of all sizes may operate more efficiently and securely via Elevate Sky enhancements. Melo stated Toshiba's main objective "is to make operating in the cloud as easy and natural as every other part of your business."

## BUSINESS



Junior doctors and medical consultants stand on the picket line outside University College Hospital in London, amid their dispute with the government over pay, on Sept 20. (AP)

## NHS operates on holiday-level staffing as docs strike escalates

Britain's state-owned health service is operating on holiday-level staffing in England on Wednesday as doctors in the early stages of their careers joined their more senior colleagues in their first-ever joint strike action.

Tens of thousands of so-called junior doctors walked off the job for the sixth time since last December in an escalation of their increasingly bitter pay dispute with the British government. The walkout comes a day after their more senior colleagues, commonly known as consultants

in Britain, began their third walkout.

While on strike, hospitals will provide minimal care similar to Christmas Day, when only emergency procedures are available and routine appointments or procedures are postponed or canceled.

National Health Service figures indicate that the strikes have so far affected about 1 million appointments and procedures at a cost of more than 1 billion pounds (\$1.2 billion).

Consultants are to return to work on Thursday, while junior doctors are to stay

until Saturday.

It is the first time in the 75-year history of the NHS that both consultants and junior doctors have walked off at the same time. They are due to do so again on Oct. 2-4, which would mark another major escalation in the pay dispute.

The British Medical Association, which represents the approximately 75,000 junior doctors, has been asking for a 35% pay increase to return to 2008 levels after inflation is taken into account. Consultants have been vaguer in their demand. (AP)

## The Conversation

## Histocompatibility complex plays large role in scent production

## Unique body odor could provide insights into your health

By Chantrell Frazier, Framingham State University; Kenneth G. Furton, Florida International University, and Vidia A. Gokool, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory

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

From the aroma of fresh-cut grass to the smell of a loved one, you encounter scents in every part of your life. Not only are you constantly surrounded by odor, you're also producing it. And it is so distinctive that it can be used to tell you apart from everyone around you.

Your scent is a complex product influenced by many factors, including your genetics. Researchers believe that a particular group of genes, the major histocompatibility complex, play a large role in scent production. These genes are involved in the body's immune response and are believed to influence body odor by encoding the production of specific proteins and chemicals.

But your scent isn't fixed once your body produces it. As sweat, oils and other secretions make it to the surface of your skin, microbes break down and transform these compounds, changing and adding to the odors that make up your scent. This scent medley emanates from your body and settles into the environments around you. And it can be used to track, locate or identify a particular person, as well as distinguish between healthy and unhealthy people.

## Information

We are researchers who specialize in studying human scent through the detection and characterization of gaseous chemicals called volatile organic compounds. These gases can relay an abundance of information for both forensic researchers and health care providers.

When you are near another person, you can feel their body heat without touching them. You may even be able to smell them without getting very close. The natural warmth of the human body creates a temperature differential with the air around it. You warm up the air nearest to you, while air that's farther away remains cool, creating warm currents of air that surround your body.

Researchers believe that this plume of air helps disperse your scent by pushing the millions of skin cells you shed over the course of a day off your body and into the environment. These skin cells act as boats or rafts carrying glandular secretions and your resident microbes - a combination of ingredients that emit your scent - and depositing them in your surroundings.

Your scent is composed of the volatile organic compounds present in the gases emitted from your skin. These gases are the combination of sweat, oils and trace elements exuded from the glands in your skin. The primary components of your odor depend on internal factors such as your race, ethnicity, biological sex and other traits. Secondary components waver based on factors like stress, diet and illness. And tertiary components from external sources like perfumes and soaps build on top of your distinguishable odor profile.

With so many factors influencing the scent of any given person, your body odor can be used as an identifying feature. Scent detection canines searching for a suspect can look past all the other odors they encounter to follow

a scent trail left behind by the person they are pursuing. This practice relies on the assumption that each person's scent is distinct enough that it can be distinguished from other people's.

Researchers have been studying the discriminating potential of human scent for over three decades. A 1988 experiment demonstrated that a dog could distinguish identical twins living apart and exposed to different environmental conditions by their scent alone. This is a feat that could not be accomplished using DNA evidence, as identical twins share the same genetic code.

## Evidence

The field of human scent analysis has expanded over the years to further study the composition of human scent and how it can be used as a form of forensic evidence. Researchers have seen differences in human odor composition that can be classified based on sex, gender, race and ethnicity. Our research team's 2017 study of 105 participants found that specific combinations of 15 volatile organic compounds collected from people's hands could distinguish between race and ethnicity with an accuracy of 72% for whites, 82% for East Asians and 67% for Hispanics. Based on a combination of 13 compounds, participants could be distinguished as male or female with an overall 80% accuracy.

Researchers are also producing models to predict the characteristics of a person based on their scent. From a sample pool of 30 women and 30 men, our team built a machine learning model that could predict a person's biological sex with 96% accuracy based on hand odor.

Odor research continues to provide insights into illnesses. Well-known examples of using scent in medical assessments include seizure and diabetic alert canines. These dogs can give their handlers time to prepare for an impending seizure or notify them when they need to adjust their blood glucose levels.

While these canines often work with a single patient known to have a condition that requires close monitoring, medical detection dogs can also indicate whether someone is ill. For example, researchers have shown that dogs can be trained to detect cancer in people. Canines have also been trained to detect COVID-19 infections at a 90% accuracy rate.

Similarly, our research team found that a laboratory analysis of hand odor samples could discriminate between people who are COVID-19 positive or negative with 75% accuracy.

Human scent offers a noninvasive method to collect samples. While direct contact with a surface like touching a doorknob or wearing a sweater provides a clear route for your scent to transfer to that surface, simply standing still will also transfer your odor into the surrounding area.

Although human scent has the potential to be a critical form of forensic evidence, it is still a developing field. Imagine a law enforcement officer collecting a scent sample from a crime scene in hopes that it may match with a suspect.

Further research into human scent analysis can help fill the gaps in our understanding of the individuality of human scent and how to apply this information in forensic and biomedical labs. (AP)

## Riverside implements tool

## FloPatch revolutionizes precision fluid management in sepsis care

## First cases performed

## Orthofix launches new fixation system for fracture treatment

RIVERSIDE, Calif., Sept. 21: Riverside University Health System has announced the implementation of FloPatch by Flosionics Medical. As a pioneer in adopting new, groundbreaking medical technology, Riverside is making a significant leap forward in healthcare innovation, particularly in the life-saving area of sepsis management.

FloPatch is a revolutionary tool that facilitates real-time precision in IV fluid management in sepsis. This FDA-cleared, wireless, wearable, point-of-care, Doppler ultrasound system empowers clinicians to accurately assess a patient and determine the most appropriate therapeutic intervention.

## Invasive

"FloPatch rapidly provides non-invasive hemodynamic data that help guide the clinician's management of complex patients. I'm excited to have this tool to incorporate into our sepsis program as well as use it to manage other critically ill patients," said Dr. Korbin Haycock, Co-Sepsis Chair, Ultrasound Director, and Emergency Medicine Physician at Riverside University Health System.

Specifically engineered for quick, reliable assessments, FloPatch adheres to a patient's neck over the carotid artery. It immediately starts capturing real-time blood flow data for each heartbeat. This data is then wirelessly sent to a secure iOS app

for healthcare providers, which not only displays real-time Doppler data but also uses advanced analytics to break down each heartbeat into key metrics. Such data enables informed, time-sensitive decisions at the bedside, a level of precision that is indispensable in complex and urgent medical scenarios like sepsis management.

"Timing of assessment and appropriate fluid resuscitation is critical in sepsis. Our code team has seen firsthand how efficient FloPatch is in assessing both responsiveness and tolerance in sepsis and septic shock," said Jaclyn Bond, Director of Nursing at Riverside University Health System. "We are excited and proud to be one of the early adopters of this cutting-edge technology, and the timing couldn't be better as we raise awareness during Sepsis Awareness Month."

Dr. Destry Washburn, Co-Sepsis Chair and Intensivist at Riverside University Health System, concurred: "FloPatch will help us better manage sepsis patients as they triage

available in a sterile kit configuration giving surgeons more efficient solutions in lower extremity trauma situations where time is an important factor. The ankle kit, developed specifically to meet the needs of US surgeons, includes a double multiscrew clamp to facilitate rapid insertion of tibial half-pins and is complemented by the foot support and first metatarsal sterile kits when a more robust construct is desired.

It is estimated that ankle fractures occur in 187 per 100,000 persons per year in the US. "We are excited to expand our external fixation offerings in the US for trauma through the introduction of the Galaxy Fixation Gemini System in several sterile packed configurations," said Kim Elting, President of Global Orthopedics.

In particular, the Galaxy Fixation Gemini ankle kit is the only pin-to-bar system with specific clamps

for fracture treatment



FloPatch by Flosionics Medical, a groundbreaking, wireless, wearable Doppler ultrasound, now implemented at Riverside University Health System for precision fluid management.

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Riverside University Health System has been a cornerstone in healthcare for Riverside County for over 50 years. With a steadfast commitment to pushing the boundaries of medical science and technology, Riverside continues to set the standard for healthcare excellence in the region.

Flosionics Medical is a Canadian medical device company engaged in the research and development of innovative ultrasound technology. Founded in 2015, the company's mission is to improve patient care and the practice of medicine through technology-enabled solutions and ground-breaking clinical research.

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# Features

ARABO TIMES  
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Victoria Silvstedt

Photo courtesy of Grazia

## Beauty in a life well-lived pilates, pores & power walks

**B**orn in Skelleftehamn Sweden and raised in a family of five in Bollnäs, having one older sister and one younger brother Victoria Silvstedt standing nearly six feet tall, with platinum blonde hair and icy blue eyes, can surprise anyone in a matter of milliseconds.

She's a model, an actress, a star. While her hobbies and passions can take you to movie sets, ski slopes, runways, and everything happening on social media, she's down to earth and has already found the key to her perfect life -- being imperfect and simply enjoying it.

In her childhood days, she says, was keen on horseback riding and wanted to become a veterinarian.

Since her father was the captain of a local ski team, she started alpine skiing at the age of five. In 1989, Silvstedt placed fourth at the Swedish national alpine skiing youth championship, in the giant slalom event won by Pernilla Wiberg. However, an accident in the middle of a skiing competition, she injured her shoulder and that ended her competitive skiing career at the

age of 16.

A few years later, Silvstedt was invited to participate in the Miss Sweden beauty pageant and was chosen to represent her country in the 1993 Miss World pageant in Sun City, South Africa, eventually making it to the Top 10.

Silvstedt was signed up by a modeling agency in Paris, and she started working for various prestigious fashion houses, including Chanel, Christian Dior, Giorgio Armani, Givenchy, Loris Azzaro, and Valentino, appearing in advertisements and fashion shows. While living in Paris, she shared a flat with Melania Trump.

In the 2000s and 2010s, Silvstedt has continued modeling internationally, appearing in numerous magazines, including FHM, Glamour, GQ, Hello!, Maxim and Vanity Fair, working for various brands such as Lynx, Nike, Renault and Triumph International and being the cover star for the re-issued Russ Meyer DVDs.

Silvstedt has worked as an actress since the late 1990s, when she appeared in Hollywood television series such as Malibu, CA and Melrose Place. Since then, she has also appeared in a number of Hollywood comedy films, including BASEketball, The Independent, Out Cold, and Boat Trip. Silvstedt has also appeared as a guest actress on Ocean Ave., a Miami-based soap opera, broadcast in Sweden and Florida.

Silvstedt has also starred in films and television series in various European countries, especially in Italy. As a leading actress, she has appeared in Italian films such as La mia vita a stelle e strisce and Un maresciallo in gondola, in which she played Kim Novak.

Silvstedt has been presenting numerous television shows and television specials all around the world since the 1990s. She has hosted entertainment shows such as Candid Camera on CBS, Eurotrash on Channel 4, and Wild On! on E!, and appeared as a presenter in various awards shows, including NRJ and World

Continued on Page 12

AND DON'T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF

editor's choice



## People &amp; Places

## Well-lived

Continued from Page 11

Music Awards. She has also served as a celebrity judge on Project Catwalk, the British reality television series focusing on fashion design.

Silvstedt released her dance music album *Girl on the Run* through the EMI label in 1999. Three singles, "Hello Hey", "Rocksteady Love" featuring Turbo B, and "Party Line", were also released to support the album sales, and the album went gold in Sweden. In 2010, she released her fourth single called "Saturday Night", a Whigfield cover.

She says, she loves singing, but it is just a hobby, and that she cannot see herself making a full-time career out of it.



Silvstedt

Silvstedt debuted with her own reality television series *Victoria Silvstedt: My Perfect Life* on E! in 2008. The show has since been aired all around the world, including Europe, Asia, Australia, and the Americas.

The first season covers her personal and work life, following her to St. Tropez, Monaco, Cannes, Paris, Rome, London, Helsinki, Stockholm, Los Angeles, and New York City. She also visits her family in Northern Sweden, where she grew up, and spends time with her childhood friends, horseback riding et cetera.

In 2016, she participated in the Swedish reality series *Stjärnorna på godset* alongside some of Sweden's best known reality series stars such as Meral Tasbas, Kristina Ribohn and Robban Andersson.

Having an interest in fashion design, Silvstedt launched her own lingerie collection *Very Victoria Silvstedt* at London Fashion Week in 2006. The *Very Victoria Silvstedt* brand was then officially launched for retail in collaboration with the Marie Meili brand in Paris in 2013.

Silvstedt published her autobiography *Les Secrets de Victoria*. Dans la Tête de Victoria Silvstedt (Jean-Claude Gawsewitch Éditeur), co-written with journalist Christelle Crosnier, in France in 2010.

Silvstedt met Chris Wragge in 1999, when he interviewed her for *Entertainment Tonight*. They were married in June 2000 but then parted ways in 2009.

According to the Finnish broadsheet newspaper *Keskisuomalainen*, Silvstedt earns millions of dollars every year for her work in modeling, television presenting, and promoting various brands and products.

Speaking of beauty tips she says, eat clean, sleep well, and exercise moderately every day. Enjoying life is another good beauty tip. "You'll look better on the outside if you're happy on the inside. Have fun socializing and doing whatever else you enjoy," she says.

"I eat as clean as possible, a balanced Mediterranean diet. I try to buy biologically grown, organic products. I also do everything in moderation. In terms of exercise, it's a lot of Pilates, yoga, and power walks," she added.

She went on to say, "despite what it looks like, movie sets are always less glamorous than they seem. In addition to a lot of preparation, there are long waits and retakes. However, I find it to be a wonderful and challenging experience. However, I prefer live television. It's fast and spontaneous."

Speaking of skiing, she says, the accident during a downhill race forced her to stop skiing. "After I recovered, I got into modeling and participated in beauty pageants like Miss Sweden and Miss World. Having been a skier and wearing ski outfits for most of my life, I had to learn how to walk in high heels and be more feminine. It took some time."

Being a competitive person, she says she misses competitiveness in sports, but "I now use competition in my daily life as a way to set goals and never give up. As a result of doing sports and skiing, I learned discipline and how to cope with failures. You can't always be the best. For me, that's okay, but I have learned never to give up."

When it comes to fashion and beauty, she says, "I think the most difficult part is thinking about how you look or what you eat all the time to stay slim. I don't sweat the small stuff, so it doesn't bother me too much."

Since fashion changes constantly, for Silvstedt life never gets boring. Being a beauty fanatic, "I'm proud to be a part of a Swedish makeup foundation company called 'Base of Sweden'. Besides being vegan and waterproof, this foundation offers full coverage without clogging pores. It's the best, I'm obsessed with it! I'm also very passionate about television work and do TV projects in Sweden and France. I love to travel and invest my money well, which is almost a full-time job! I live in Monaco but also have homes in New York, Miami, St Bart's, and Sweden," she says.

When it comes to balance between personal and professional life, she says, she prefers to keep her personal life private, and "I don't share it with anyone. On social media, you will only find fashion, parties, and events. I also post about my workout regimen so my followers can be inspired to stay active and healthy. I enjoy my free time outside of work. My hobbies are still skiing, horseback riding, traveling, and being outdoors in nature."

How would you describe yourself today in comparison to 20 years ago?

Speaking of her life, she says compared to 20 years ago, "I'm much more mature and self-assured now. I was wild. I have calmed down a bit, thankfully. When I was younger, I attended every event, every party. Now I'm more selective. Furthermore, I am much healthier now than I was back then! You appreciate health and well-being more as you age."

Silvstedt who speaks English, French, and Italian, in addition to her native language Swedish, says her brand will continue to develop. "I'll also film some TV shows in France and Sweden this spring. I like to travel for my job, and I also spend a lot of my free time helping charities close to my heart."



This image released by Sony Pictures shows Sebastian Stan in a scene from 'Dumb Money.' (AP)

## Film

## A tale of Wall Street rebellion hits the silver screen

## 'Dumb Money' recalls GameStop squeeze

By Mark Kennedy

LOS ANGELES, Sept 21: The little guy - or at least the little guy with a few hundred bucks to sink into the stock market - gets a movie to cheer with "Dumb Money," the real story of a very recent financial rebellion that shook Wall Street to its loafers.

Paul Dano plays our hero here, Keith Gill, a new dad from the Boston suburbs who goes online to advise anyone listening about his stock picks wearing a red headband and colorful, cat-themed T-shirts. "I wouldn't take investment advice from a guy in a cat shirt," one character warns. But they do.

Gill was bullish on one particular company - GameStop, the struggling retail chain that sells video games and accessories. Large institutional Wall Street firms were betting the company would continue to flounder and parked money on losses.

But Gill convinced a band of smaller-pocketed and novice investors to pile in and buy GameStop stock, pushing the stock higher and higher, a so-called "short squeeze" that caused billions of losses for hedge funds. That is until Wall Street fought back (and not entirely fairly).

"Dumb Money," whose title comes from the derisory term institutional investors call regular folk, wears its love of the little guy on its sleeve. The film uses very likable blue-collar workers and students in Texas, Pittsburgh and Boston while the Wall Street guys are cartoonishly playing tennis or are being served fancy meals by servants.

## Impressionistic

Lauren Schuker Blum and Rebecca Angelo, two former Wall Street Journal reporters-turned-screenwriters, wrote the script and Craig Gillespie, director of the Tonya Harding black comedy "I, Tonya," helms in a more linear, less impressionistic way than his last film.

"Dumb Money" is a sort of corrective to "The Wolf of Wall Street," and "The Big Short," which concentrated on boardrooms. This movie is set in dorms and basement offices and hospitals. If complex financial products were previously explained by Margot Robbie in a

## Japan TV network to acquire Totoro creator Studio Ghibli

TOKYO, Sept 21, (AP): Studio Ghibli, the famed Japanese animation studio of Hayao Miyazaki, will become a subsidiary of Nippon Television Network Corp., both sides said Thursday.

Succession worries had been a priority at Ghibli, as Miyazaki has turned 82, and producer Toshio Suzuki is 75, the companies said in a joint statement.

The boards of both companies agreed at meetings Thursday that the major commercial broadcast network will become Studio Ghibli's top shareholder, with a 42.3% stake. Financial details were not given.

Nippon TV said it will send executives to support Ghibli's management, while honoring its creative independence so it can focus on animation and other artistic projects.

The deal was first discussed last year at an "onsen" hot springs, the companies said, when Suzuki asked Nippon TV executive Yoshikuni Sugiyama for help in managing Ghibli. Sugiyama promised to give support. Miyazaki's son Goro is also an ani-

mation director and has been mentioned as a possible successor. But he had expressed doubts, saying the responsibility was too great.

Ghibli and Nippon TV have collaborated in the past, since "Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind" aired on TV in 1985. Nippon TV has also helped produce various Ghibli works, starting with Miyazaki's 1989 "Kiki's Delivery Service." It also helped set up the museum devoted to Ghibli works in Tokyo.

Earlier this year, Miyazaki finished "The Boy and the Heron," completed after seven years. It is based on a book but is also loosely based on Miyazaki's wartime childhood. The Japanese title, which better expresses its theme, translates to: "How Will You Live?"

Miyazaki won an Oscar for his 2001 "Spirited Away." He has occasionally declared he was retiring but has always returned to his craft.

He has produced an extensive range of animation works enjoyed by adults as well as children, including "My Neighbor Totoro" and "Ponyo."

bathtub, this time they're discussed by a fully-clothed nurse between rounds.

That nurse is played by America Ferrera and she's just superb, reflecting the rest of the cast of Pete Davidson, Vincent D'Onofrio, Nick Offerman, Anthony Ramos, Sebastian Stan, Shailene Woodley and Seth Rogen. Davidson, who can be uneven, here offers a stand-out comedic and dramatic turn. Dano is the calm, everyman center, instantly amiable. And Cardi B's "WAP" is the delightful soundtrack connecting them.

Belief (cross head)

The movie is at its most compelling when GameStop's stock soars 1,600% - making potential investors into paper millionaires but leaving them anxious about whether to ride higher or cash

out. There's an almost religious belief in Gill and a visceral we're-not-gonna-take-it-anymore attitude from dumb money to the status quo.

The populist message here is clear - the longer Wall Street overlooks the value of people, the financial system will remain broken. The GameStop revolution was a corrective. "The game has changed," Gill's wife tells him.

Gillespie enlivens the movie with snatches of real TV news coverage - CNN, Fox Business and CNBC, among them - as well as internet memes that small investors used - often populated by gorillas - that urged each other to hold onto GameStop stock not to make money but to stick it to the hedge funds, who squeeze profits by big layoffs.



Cara Delavigne attends the Fendi women's Spring Summer 2024 fashion show in Milan, Italy, Wednesday, Sept. 20. (AP)



Gould



Costner

## Variety

**SANTA BARBARA, Calif:** Kevin Costner and his wife of nearly 19 years, Christine Baumgartner, have reached a settlement in their divorce.

"Kevin and Christine Costner have come to an amicable and mutually agreed upon resolution of all issues pertaining to their divorce proceedings," the couple said in a joint statement released Tuesday by the actor's publicist, Arnold Robinson.

The agreement ends what had become a contentious court fight, and lets the couple avoid a trial that had been scheduled for December in a Santa Barbara County, California court.

Baumgartner filed for divorce in May. The two had already fought in court over child support payments. After a two-day hearing in which both Costner, 68, and Baumgartner, 49, took the stand to testify, a judge on Sept. 8 ordered Costner to pay about \$63,000 per month for their three children, People reported. Baumgartner had sought about \$175,000 per month.

Costner and Baumgartner, a model and handbag designer, began dating in 1998 and married at his Colorado ranch in 2004.

They have two sons, ages 16 and 14, and a 12-year-old daughter together.

It was the second marriage for Costner, the Oscar and Emmy winning star of TV's "Yellowstone," and films including "Dances With Wolves," "The Bodyguard" and "Bull Durham."

He also has four adult children from previous relationships. (AP)

**NEW YORK:** Tenor Stephen Gould, who announced earlier this month that he had been diagnosed with incurable bile duct cancer, has died. He was 61.

Gould's agent Stephanie Ammann confirmed the singer died Tuesday in Virginia. No other details were immediately available.

The singer withdrew this summer from the Bayreuth Festival in Germany, where he was scheduled to perform the title roles in "Tannhäuser" and "Tristan und Isolde" and Siegfried in "Götterdämmerung."

Gould said he made the announcement after the Bayreuth Festival ended last week because "I did not wish anything to cloud this year's achievements."

Frequently appearing as a heroic tenor, Gould performed at many of the world's great opera houses. He debuted in Richard Wagner's "Ring" cycle in Bayreuth in 2006, earning raves during the challenging four-nights of performances.

The Associated Press called him "a naturally engaging performer, unusually athletic and youthful as befits the teenage hero" during his performance of the third "Ring" show,

"Siegfried."

According to the Mayo Clinic, biliary tract cancer often doesn't cause any symptoms in the early stages. It's often discovered by ac-



US actor and singer Jared Leto of Thirty Seconds to Mars takes the stage at a live concert, at Telekom's Digital X Internet Congress, in Cologne, Germany, Wednesday, Sept. 20. (AP)

cident - for example, through routine blood tests or imaging done for an unrelated reason.

He is survived by his sister. (AP)

**DETROIT:** Two lawsuits filed by a Detroit-area man whose decades in prison for drug dealing and work as an informant inspired the movie "White Boy Rick" have been dismissed by a federal judge who found he waited too long to file them.

US District Court Judge Judge F. Kay Behm on Monday dismissed the pair of lawsuits Richard Wershe Jr., 54, had filed, including one filed in 2021 that sought \$100 million and claimed Wershe was coerced into assisting police while just a helpless teenager. The Detroit News reported.

Behm's ruling sided with multiple federal and local government defendants who argued for the dismissal of the cases based on the statute of limitations.

"The court has considered all of the arguments presented in the written motions, supplemental briefs, and oral argument, and finds that plaintiff's claims were untimely and barred by the relevant statutes of limitations," Behm said in the written ruling. "... Defendants' motions to dismiss are granted."

Wershe's life was the basis of the 2018 film "White Boy Rick," starring Matthew McConaughey and Richie Merritt. The title referred to Wershe's nickname in his younger days. (AP)

Climate

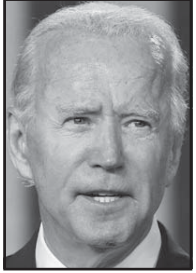
UK delays petrol car ban

Biden executive order forms 'Climate Corps'

WASHINGTON, Sept 21, (AP): After being thwarted by Congress, President Joe Biden will use his executive authority to create a New Deal-style American Climate Corps that will serve as a major green jobs training program.

In an announcement Wednesday, the White House said the program will employ more than 20,000 young adults who will build trails, plant trees, help install solar panels and do other work to boost conservation and help prevent catastrophic wildfires.

The climate corps had been proposed in early versions of the sweeping climate law approved last year but was jettisoned amid strong opposition from Republicans and concerns about cost.



Biden

Democrats and environmental advocacy groups never gave up on the plan and pushed Biden in recent weeks to issue an executive order authorizing what the White House now calls the American Climate Corps.

"After years of demonstrating and fighting for a Climate Corps, we turned a generational rallying cry into a real jobs program that will put a new generation to work stopping the climate crisis," said Varshini Prakash, executive director of the Sunrise Movement, an environmental group that has led the push for a climate corps.

With the new corps "and the historic climate investments won by our broader movement, the path towards a Green New Deal is beginning to become visible," Prakash said, referring to a comprehensive jobs-and-climate plan supported by many activists and some Democrats but ridiculed by Republicans as a socialist nightmare that would raise taxes and hamper the economy.

Prakash, a frequent Biden critic, participated in a White House call on Tuesday promoting the new job corps, which comes as Biden tries to strengthen his appeal to young voters in the 2024 presidential campaign.

The Sunrise Movement and other climate activists, including many young adults, were outraged this spring after Biden approved the huge Willow oil-drilling project in Alaska. Opponents say the project and others approved by Biden put his climate legacy at risk and are a breach of his 2020 campaign promise to stop new oil drilling on federal lands.

Concerns

Those concerns were put aside, for now, as environmental activists hailed the new jobs program, which is modeled after the Civilian Conservation Corps, created in the 1930s by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, a Democrat, as part of the New Deal.

"Young people nationwide are excited to see the launch of the American Climate Corps, a program which will put more than 20,000 young people on career pathways in the growing fields of clean energy, conservation and climate resilience," said Cristina Tzintzún Ramirez, president of NextGen America, an organization that promotes education, registration and mobilization for voters ages 18 to 35.

"Young people are fighting for climate justice every day in their community, and now they have even more opportunity to continue this fight in their careers," Ramirez said.

More than 50 Democratic lawmakers, including Massachusetts Sen. Ed Markey and New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, had also encouraged Biden to create a climate corps, saying in a letter on Monday that "the climate crisis demands a whole-of-government response at an unprecedented scale."

The lawmakers cited deadly heat waves in the Southwest and across the nation, as well as dangerous floods in New England and devastating wildfires on the Hawaiian island of Maui, among recent examples of climate-related disasters.

A federal climate corps will "prepare a whole generation of workers for good-paying union jobs in the clean economy" while helping to "fight climate change, build community resilience and support environmental justice," the lawmakers wrote.

The White House declined to say how much the program will cost or how it will be paid for, but Democrats proposed \$10 billion for the climate corps in the climate bill before the provision was removed.

Republicans have largely dismissed the climate corps as a do-gooder proposal that would waste money and could even take jobs away from other workers displaced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We don't need another FDR program, and the idea that this is going to help land management is a false idea as well," Arkansas Rep. Bruce Westernman, chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, said in 2021.

Rep. Joe Neguse, a Colorado Democrat who has co-sponsored a climate corps bill, said it's important to train the next generation of federal land managers, park rangers and other stewards of our natural resources. Neguse and other Democrats have said the program should pay "a living wage" while offering health care coverage and support for child care, housing, transportation and education.

A key distinction between the original Civilian Conservation Corps and the new climate contingent is that, unlike the 1930s, the US economy is not in an economic depression. The US unemployment rate was 3.8% in August, low by historical measures.

The new corps is also likely to be far more diverse than the largely white and male force created 90 years ago.

White House climate adviser Ali Zaidi said the administration will work with at least six federal agencies to create the climate corps and will pair with at least 10 states. California, Colorado, Maine, Michigan and Washington have already begun similar programs, while five more are launching their own climate corps, Zaidi said: Arizona, Maryland, Minnesota, North Carolina and Utah.

Also:

**LONDON:** Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced Wednesday that he's delaying by five years a ban on new gas and diesel cars that had been due to take effect in 2030, watering down climate goals that he said imposed "unacceptable costs" on ordinary people.

The move angered green groups, opposition politicians and large chunks of UK industry, but was welcomed by some in the governing Conservative Party who chafe at the expense of ending the country's reliance on fossil fuels.

At a news conference, Sunak said he was moving the deadline for buying new gasoline and diesel cars from 2030 to 2035, weakening a ban on new natural-gas home furnaces due to start in 2035, and scrapping a requirement for landlords to make properties more energy-efficient.

He said he would keep a promise to reduce the UK's emissions of climate-warming greenhouse gases to net zero by 2050, but with "a more pragmatic, proportionate, and realistic approach."

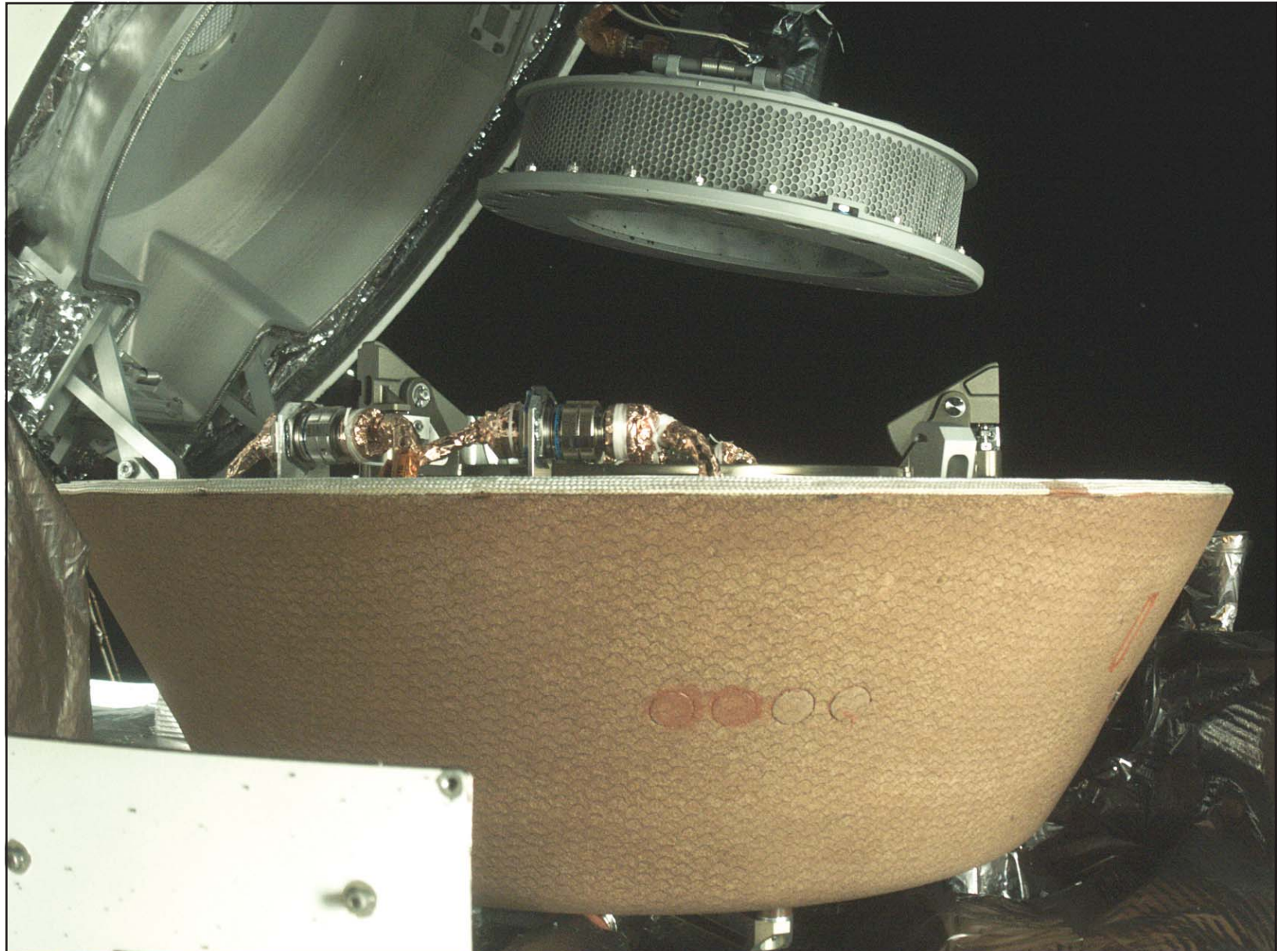
In a statement designed at least in part to woo voters ahead of an election next year, Sunak rejected environmental proposals including new aviation taxes, measures to encourage car-pooling and taxes on meat - none of which has actually been introduced.

To meet net-zero goals, he said, the government will build more windfarms and nuclear reactors, invest in new green technologies and introduce new measures to protect nature.

Sunak argued the UK was "far ahead of every other country in the world" in transforming to a green economy, but said moving too fast risked "losing the consent of the British people."

"How can it be right that British citizens are now being told to sacrifice even more than others?" he said.

UK greenhouse gas emissions have fallen by 46% from 1990 levels, mainly because of the almost complete removal of coal from electricity generation. The government had pledged to reduce emissions by 68% of 1990 levels by 2030 and to reach net zero by 2050.



In this undated image provided by NASA, a sample container hovers over a capsule on the OSIRIS-REx spacecraft near the asteroid Benu. On Sunday, Sept. 24, the OSIRIS-REx spacecraft will fly by Earth and drop off what is expected to be at least a cupful of rubble it grabbed from the asteroid Benu, closing out a seven-year quest. (AP)

Space

Osiris-Rex spacecraft caps off 7-year quest

NASA to deliver biggest asteroid sample

WASHINGTON, Sept 21, (AP): Planet Earth is about to receive a special delivery - the biggest sample yet from an asteroid.

A NASA spacecraft will fly by Earth on Sunday and drop off what is expected to be at least a cupful of rubble it grabbed from the asteroid Benu, closing out a seven-year quest.

The sample capsule will parachute into the Utah desert as its mothership, the Osiris-Rex spacecraft, zooms off for an encounter with another asteroid.

Scientists anticipate getting about a half pound (250 grams) of pebbles and dust, much more than the teaspoon or so brought back by Japan from two other asteroids. No other country has fetched pieces of asteroids, preserved time capsules from the dawn of our solar system that can help explain how Earth - and life - came to be.

Sunday's landing concludes a 4 billion-mile (6.2-billion-kilometer) journey highlighted by the rendezvous with the carbon-rich Benu, a unique pogo stick-style touchdown and sample grab, a jammed lid that sent some of the stash spilling into space, and now the return of NASA's first asteroid samples.

"I ask myself how many heart-pounding moments can you have in one lifetime because I feel like I might be hitting my limit," said the University of Arizona's Dante Lauretta, the mission's lead scientist.

A brief look at the spacecraft and its cargo:

Asteroid chaser Osiris-Rex blasted off on the \$1 billion mission in 2016. It arrived at Benu in 2018 and spent the next two years flying around the small spinning space rock and scouting out the best place to grab samples. Three years ago, the spacecraft swooped in and reached out with its 11-foot (3-meter) stick vacuum, momentarily touching the asteroid's surface and sucking up dust and pebbles. The device pressed down with such force and grabbed so much that rocks became wedged around the rim of the lid. As samples drifted off into space, Lauretta and his team scrambled to get the re-

maining material into the capsule. The exact amount inside won't be known until the container is opened.

Discovered in 1999, Benu is believed to be a remnant of a much larger asteroid that collided with another space rock. It's barely one-third of a mile (half a kilometer) wide, roughly the height of the Empire State Building, and its black rugged surface is packed with boulders. Roundish in shape like a spinning top, Benu orbits the sun every 14 months, while rotating every four hours. Scientists believe Benu holds leftovers from the solar system's formation 4.5 billion years ago. It may come dangerously close and strike Earth on Sept. 24, 2182 - exactly 159 years after the asteroid's first pieces arrive. Osiris-Rex's up-close study can help humanity figure out how to deflect Benu if needed, Lauretta said.

Osiris-Rex will release the sample capsule from 63,000 miles (100,000 kilometers) out, four hours before it's due to touch down at the Defense Department's Utah Test and Training Range on Sunday morning.

Command

The release command will come from spacecraft builder Lockheed Martin's control center in Colorado. Soon afterward, the mothership will steer away and take off to explore another asteroid. The capsule - nearly 3 feet wide (81 centimeters) and 1.6 feet tall (50 centimeters) - will hit the atmosphere at 27,650 mph (44,500 kph) for the final 13 minutes of descent remaining. The main parachute will slow the last mile (1.6 kilometers), allowing for a mild 11 mph (18 kph) touchdown. Once everything is deemed safe, the capsule will be hustled by helicopter to a makeshift clean lab at the range. The next morning, a plane will carry the sealed container full of rubble to Houston, home to NASA's Johnson Space Center. NASA is livestreaming the touchdown, set for around 10:55 a.m. EDT.

A new lab at Johnson will be limited to the Benu rubble to avoid cross-

contamination with other collections, said NASA curator Kevin Righter. Building 31 already holds the moon rocks brought back by the Apollo astronauts from 1969 through 1972, as well as comet dust and specks of solar wind collected during two previous missions and Mars meteorites found in Antarctica. The asteroid samples will be handled inside nitrogen-purging gloveboxes by staff in head-to-toe clean room suits. NASA plans a splashy public reveal of Benu's riches on Oct. 11.

This fall is what NASA is calling Asteroid Autumn, with three asteroid missions marking major milestones. The Osiris-Rex touchdown will be followed by the launch of another asteroid hunter on Oct. 5. Both the NASA spacecraft and its target - a metal asteroid - are named Psyche. Then a month later, NASA's Lucy spacecraft will encounter its first asteroid since soaring from Cape Canaveral, Florida, in 2021. Lucy will swoop past Dinkinesh in the main asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter on Nov. 1. It's a warmup for Lucy's unprecedented tour of the so-called Trojans, swarms of asteroids that shadow Jupiter around the sun. Neither Psyche nor Lucy will collect souvenirs, nor will Osiris-Rex on its next assignment, to explore the asteroid Apophis in 2029.

This is NASA's third sample return from deep space, not counting the hundreds of pounds (kilograms) of moon rocks gathered by the Apollo astronauts. The agency's first robotic sample grab ended with a bang in 2004. The capsule bearing solar wind particles slammed into the Utah desert and shattered, compromising the samples. Two years later, a US capsule with comet dust landed intact. Japan's first asteroid sample mission returned microscopic grains from asteroid Itokawa in 2010. It's second try yielded about 5 grams - a teaspoon or so - from the asteroid Ryugu in 2020. The Soviet Union transported moon samples to Earth during the 1970s, and China returned lunar material in 2020.



In this image from video released by NASA, the Osiris-Rex spacecraft touches the surface of asteroid Benu on Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2020. (AP)



Larsen

Tagelagi

Discovery

**WWI sites added to Heritage list:** UNESCO added World War I funerary and memorial locations across the Western Front to its prestigious World Heritage registry, expanding its list of landmarks of monumental importance.

The World Heritage Committee announced the decision Wednesday during its ongoing meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The list includes sites the panel has deemed "of outstanding value to humanity," according to the agency, and deserving of "special protection" - including funding and international protection in times of war under the Geneva Convention.

The newly added sites stretch from Belgium's north to eastern France, battle zones where the Allied forces clashed with the German army from 1914 to 1918. The array of sanctuaries ranges from expansive necropolises bearing multitudes of soldiers from different nationalities to humbler graveyards and individual monuments.

The list previously included 1,157 sites notable for their extraordinary natural wonders or distinctive human contributions.

From the archaeological remnants of Turkey's Gordion to the well-preserved Jewish heritage sites in Germany, this year's additions aimed at encouraging reflection and admiration for world culture, according to UNESCO.

In a statement released Wednesday, France's defense ministry hailed the decision as a recognition of the "exceptional universal value" these WWI sites hold, marking a meaningful counter to the "inhumanity of war."

Belgium and France have been campaigning to include these sites in UNESCO's registry since the early 2010s. Sites are nominated to and designated by the UN cultural agency's World Heritage Convention.

The incorporation of the WWI memorial grounds into the World Heritage List is meant to be a testimony to the legacy of the fallen soldiers, according to UNESCO. (AP)

**Niue plans to protect Pacific:** The tiny Pacific island nation of Niue has come up with a novel plan to protect its vast and pristine territorial waters - it will get sponsors to pay.

Under the plan, which was being launched by Niue's Premier Dalton Tagelagi on Tuesday in New York, individuals or companies can pay \$148 to protect 1 square kilometer (about 250 acres) of ocean from threats such as illegal fishing and plastic waste for a period of 20 years.

Niue hopes to raise more than \$18 million from the scheme by selling 127,000 square-kilometer units, representing the 40% of its waters that form a no-take marine protected area.

In an interview with The Associated Press before the launch, Tagelagi said his people have always had a close connection with the sea.

"Niue is just one island in the middle of the big blue ocean," Tagelagi said. "We are surrounded by the ocean, and we live off the

ocean. That's our livelihood."

He said Niueans inherited and learned about the ocean from their forefathers and they want to be able to pass it on to the next generation in sustainable health.

Most fishing in Niue is to sustain local people, although there are some small-scale commercial operations and occasional off-shore industrial-scale fishing, according to

the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization.

"Because of all the illegal fishing and all the other activities at the moment, we thought that we should be taking the lead, to teach others that we've got to protect the ocean," Tagelagi said.

Unregulated fishing can deplete fish stocks, which then cannot replenish, while plastics can be ingested by or entangle ma-



A person sits on a rock face overlooking the ocean in Niue in this 2018 photo. The tiny Pacific island nation of Niue has come up with a novel plan to protect its vast and pristine territorial waters - it will get sponsors to pay. Under the plan, which was being launched by Niue's Prime Minister Dalton Tagelagi on Tuesday Sept. 19, in New York, individuals or companies can pay \$148 to protect 1 square kilometer (about 250 acres) of ocean from threats such as illegal fishing and plastic waste for a period of 20 years. (AP)

rine wildlife. Human-caused climate change has also led to warmer and more acidic oceans, altering ecosystems for underwater species.

Niue is also especially vulnerable to rising sea levels threatening its land and freshwater, and the island is at risk of more intense tropical storms charged by warmer air and waters.

With a population of just 1,700 people, Niue acknowledges it needs outside help. It's one of the smallest countries in the world, dwarfed by an ocean territory 1,200 times larger than its land mass.

Under the plan, the sponsorship money - called Ocean Conservation Commitments - will be administered by a charitable trust.

Niue will buy 1,700 sponsorship units, representing one for each of its citizens. Other launch donors include philanthropist Lyna Lam and her husband Chris Larsen, who co-founded blockchain company Ripple, and US-based nonprofit Conservation International, which helped set up some technical aspects of the scheme.

Maël Imirizaldu, marine biologist and regional leader with Conservation International and the Blue Nature Alliance, said one problem with the conventional approach to ocean conservation funding was the need for places like Niue to constantly seek new funding on a project by project basis.

"The main idea was to try and switch that, to change the priority and actually help them have funding so they can plan for the next 10 years, 15 years, 20 years," Imirizaldu said.

Simon Thrush, a professor of marine science at New Zealand's University of Auckland who was not involved in the plan, said it sounded positive. (AP)

### Crew rout Fire 3-0 to clinch playoff berth

# Messi leaves late in 1st half for Miami against Toronto with leg issue

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., Sept 21, (AP) — Lionel Messi returned to Inter Miami's lineup on Wednesday night. It was a short-lived comeback, and now he's sidelined again.

Messi was subbed off in the 37th minute of Inter Miami's match against Toronto, after spending a few minutes laboring with what appeared to be a leg issue. Miami came up big without him, winning 4-0 to move within five points of the final playoff spot in Major League Soccer's Eastern Conference.

Robert Taylor, who came on for Messi, had two goals and an assist. But Messi's status overshadowed everything, and Inter Miami coach Gerardo "Tata" Martino said after the game that the Argentine star will miss Sunday's game at Orlando.

"He had an old injury that had been bothering him," Martino said, as relayed through a team official who

out.

It was the second big injury blow for Inter Miami on Wednesday. Jordi Alba — another celebrated midseason addition — had to leave in the 34th minute, shortly before Messi's night was over. Alba will not play Sunday, either.

Facundo Fariás and second-half sub Benjamin Cremaschi had the other goals.

Messi had a couple of chances Wednesday, and appeared to stop running somewhat abruptly after carrying the ball deep into the Toronto box in the 33rd minute. He was barely engaged after that, leaning forward at one point as if to stretch the back of his legs, then eventually took off his captain's armband — actually trying a long pass while holding the armband — before waiting for play to stop so he could depart.

Cucho Hernández scored three goals in the first 23 minutes — his second hat trick in the last three matches — and the Columbus Crew clinched a playoff spot with a 3-0 victory over the Chicago Fire.

The hat trick by Hernández was the second fastest from the start in league history. Nashville SC's Hany Mukhtar set the league record with a hat trick in the first 16 minutes of a 5-1 victory over the Chicago Fire in July of 2021. His three goals came in a league-record span of six minutes.

Columbus (14-9-6) ups its unbeaten run at home to 14 (10-0-4). The Crew set a club record with a 16-match streak in 2010. They had a 14-match run in 2008.

Chicago (8-12-9) has been shut out in five straight matches for the first time in club history.

Columbus grabbed a 1-0 lead on a PK goal by Hernández in the 8th minute following a yellow card on Fire goalkeeper Chris Brady. Hernández scored again on a PK for a 2-0 lead eight minutes later after Yaw Yeboah drew a yellow card on defender Arnaud Souquet. Hernández finished off the hat trick when he used a pass from Julian Gressel to push the lead to 3-0.

Patrick Schulte turned away one shot to earn the clean sheet for Columbus. Brady had two saves for Chicago. Mounsef Bakrar scored the only goal Matt Freese would need in the first half and New York City FC defeated Orlando City 2-0.

Despite the loss, Orlando City (14-7-8) clinched a playoff spot for the fourth straight season after D.C. United played to a 1-1 draw with Atlanta United.

Bakrar netted his third goal of the season in his fifth appearance, scoring unassisted in the 40th minute to give NYCFC a 1-0 lead at halftime.

NYCFC (7-10-13) stretched its advantage to 2-0 on a goal by Talles



Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi, (right), takes the ball past Toronto FC defender Kobe Franklin during the first half of an MLS soccer match in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (AP)

Magno in the 68th minute. Andres Jasson notched an assist on Magno's fourth goal this season.

Freese totaled two saves to earn the clean sheet in his sixth start of the season for NYCFC. Pedro Gallese saved five shots for Orlando City.

NYCFC won for just the fourth time in its last 25 matches in all competitions (4-11-10). The three previous wins were over Canadian teams. The win over Orlando City is the club's first over an American team since a 3-1 victory over Dallas on April 22.

Hany Mukhtar scored his 15th goal of the season and he added an assist as Nashville beat Sporting Kansas City 3-0.

Nashville (12-9-7) ended a six-game winless streak — with its last road win coming against Dallas on June 3. Sporting KC (9-13-8) has gone 7-3-

1 in its last 11 regular-season home games after going winless in the first four this season.

Mukhtar made it 2-0 in the 66th minute by hammering home a failed clearance. Mukhtar has 58 regular-season goals since joining the league in 2020.

Fafá Picault headed in Daniel Lovitz's corner kick in the 29th to open the scoring. Jack Maher also scored on a header, at the end of Mukhtar's free kick, in the 76th.

Héctor Herrera and Griffin Dorsey scored first-half goals and the Houston Dynamo breezed to a 4-1 victory over the Vancouver Whitecaps on Wednesday night.

Houston (12-10-7) ran its regular-season unbeaten streak to seven (4-0-3), its longest run since an eight-match

streak in 2012.

The Dynamo scored first on an unassisted goal by Herrera in the 13th minute. It was his fourth goal of the season.

Houston took a 2-0 lead into half-time when Griffin Dorsey took a pass from Corey Baird in the 44th minute and scored for the first time this season.

Houston pushed its lead to 4-0 on goals by Iván Franco — his third of the season — in the 73rd minute and Ibrahim Aliyu — also his third — unassisted in the 84th minute. Brad Smith assisted on Franco's goal.

Leo Chú scored a first-half goal, Albert Rusnák added an insurance score in the second half and the Seattle Sounders defeated the Colorado Rapids 2-1 on.

Chú found the net when he took a

pass from João Paulo in the 34th minute and scored for a fifth time this season.

Seattle (12-9-9) stretched its lead to 2-0 in the 56th minute on a goal by Albert Rusnák. Cristian Roldán picked up an assist on Rusnák's fourth netter of the campaign.

Sounders goalkeeper Stefan Frei missed a chance at his league-leading 12th clean sheet of the season when Cole Bassett scored for the fourth time this season, unassisted in the 80th minute. Frei finished with one save. Marko Ilic had one save in his eighth start of the season for Colorado (4-14-10).

Seattle improves to 25-8-4 in 37 all-time meetings with the Rapids. No other team in the league has more wins over a single opponent since the Sounders joined the league in 2009.

### SOCCER

translated his remarks from Spanish to English.

In an earlier answer that was not translated, Martino said Messi would miss at least one more match. The 36-year-old Messi had missed two matches — one for club, the other for country — in recent days, after sitting out Argentina's World Cup qualifying win at Bolivia on Sept. 12, and Inter Miami's 5-2 loss at Atlanta United this past Saturday.

Fatigue was cited in both cases, and the team did not provide any diagnosis of what is troubling the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner now. The game was scoreless when Messi was subbed



Houston Dynamo midfielder Hector Herrera (left), brings down the ball in front of Vancouver Whitecaps midfielder Ryan Rapanos during the first half of an MLS soccer match in Houston. (AP)

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# Nick hits 2 homers, makes pivotal throw in Phillies win

### Astros avoid sweep, stay half-game ahead of Rangers

ATLANTA, Sept 21, (AP) — Nick Castellanos hit two home runs and saved the game with a brilliant throw as the Philadelphia Phillies beat the Atlanta Braves in 10 innings, handing the NL East champions their fifth loss in six games.

The Braves rallied from a four-run deficit and had a chance to walk off with the win in the ninth after pinch-runner Luke Williams stole second and third.

Orlando Arcia hit a fly ball down the right-field line that appeared deep enough to bring home the tagging Williams. But Castellanos made the catch in foul territory, spun around and threw home in time for Garrett Stubbs to tag the runner on the right shoulder before his foot touched the plate.

Craig Kimbrel (8-6) claimed the win and Matt Strahm earned his second save.

#### Astros 2, Orioles 1

In Houston, Mauricio Dubon's RBI single with one out in the ninth inning lifted Houston to the win over Baltimore, helping the Astros avoid a sweep and stay a half-game ahead of Texas for first place in the AL West.

Yainer Diaz doubled to right field off Danny Coulombe (5-2) to start Houston's ninth, and he moved to third on a groundout by Chas McCormick.

Dubon then singled into the gap in right field to score Diaz.

Closer Ryan Pressly (4-5) pitched a scoreless ninth for the win.

#### Tigers 4, Dodgers 2

In Los Angeles, rookie Reese Olson won for the third time in his last four starts, combining with two relievers on a three-hitter to help Detroit beat Los Angeles.

Olson (5-7) allowed one run on two hits in six innings. His only mistake came in the sixth inning when Max Muncy drove an elevated slider into the stands in right-center to trim the Tigers' lead to 2-1.

The 24-year-old right-hander has given up just five runs in 30 innings over his last five starts. Will Vest worked 1 2/3 innings for his second save.

#### Diamondbacks 7, Giants 1

In Phoenix, Merrill Kelly threw 6 2/3 strong innings, Corbin Carroll hit his 25th homer and stole his 50th

base of the season, and Arizona won its fifth straight game by beating San Francisco.

Kelly (12-7) gave up one run on three hits, walking two and striking out five.

Arizona's four-run seventh put the game out of reach. Carroll and Ketel Marte led off with back-to-back homers off reliever Ryan Walker, extending Arizona's lead to 5-1. Gabriel Moreno and Emmanuel Rivera added RBI singles.

#### Twins 5, Reds 3

In Cincinnati, Jorge Polanco's two-run single capped a three-run ninth inning, helping Minnesota overcome Hunter Greene's 14 strikeouts to beat Cincinnati.

With Minnesota trailing 3-2, Willi Castro singled leading off the ninth against Reds closer Alexis Díaz (9-5), then stole second and took third

#### BASEBALL

on catcher Luke Maile's throwing error. Kyle Farmer followed with a tying single.

#### Nationals 13, White Sox 3

In Washington, Lane Thomas hit a grand slam for Washington in a rout of Chicago.

Joey Meneses and Dominic Smith also homered for Washington, which had a season high in runs and won back-to-back games for the first time since taking three in a row from Aug. 24-26.

Gavin Sheets drove in two runs for Chicago, which has dropped nine of its last 12 games and 14 of 19.

Thomas broke the game open after Jesse Scholtens allowed Luis García's single, hit Jake Alu and walked CJ Abrams to load the bases in the third inning. Thomas hammered a curveball to left for his 26th home run and second career grand slam to put Washington up 8-1.

#### Rangers 15, Red Sox 5

In Arlington, Marcus Semien drove in three runs and scored for the AL-best 115th time, Jonah Heim and Mitch Garver hit back-to-back homers and playoff-chasing Texas beat Boston.

Rookies Josh Jung and Evan Carter each added two-run homers for the Rangers, who remain a half-game behind Houston for the AL West lead and tied with division foe Seattle for the American League's third and final wild-card spot.

Left-hander Martin Perez (10-4) struck out five while allowing three hits over 4 2/3 scoreless innings in relief of Jon Gray.

#### Royals 6, Guardians 2

In Kansas City, Nelson Velázquez hit a three-run homer, Angel Zerpa shut down Cleveland in relief of Zack Greinke, and Kansas City rolled to the victory and a three-game sweep.

Zerpa (3-3) got the final out of the fourth inning and allowed three hits the rest of the way. He struck out four without a walk.

Bobby Witt Jr. and Edward Olivares also drove in runs to send the Royals on their final road trip having won six of their past seven games.

#### Padres 3, Rockies 2

In San Diego, Luis Campusano tied the game with a bases-loaded single with one out in the seventh and Ji Man Choi followed with a sacrifice fly for his first RBI with San Diego, who beat Colorado to extend their season-best winning streak to seven.

Josh Hader pitched the ninth for his 31st save, retiring Brendan Rodgers with a runner on third. Luis García (2-3) got the win and Rockies starter Chase Anderson (0-6) took the loss.

#### Mariners 6, Athletics 3

In Oakland, Dominic Canzone homered and drove in four runs as Seattle beat Oakland to complete a three-game sweep and maintain their position in the tight AL West race.

Julio Rodríguez and Cal Raleigh added back-to-back homers to give Seattle 20th home runs in a season for the seventh time in franchise history. Raleigh also doubled, giving him 52 extra-base hits, the most by a Mariners catcher in a season.

Seattle remained tied with Texas for the third AL wild-card berth and one-half game behind Houston in the AL West. The Rangers and Astros both won.

#### Angels 8, Rays 3

In St. Petersburg, Brandon Drury homered twice with five RBIs and Los Angeles stopped a six-game skid by beating AL wild card-leading Tampa Bay. Tampa Bay remained 2 1/2 games behind first-place Baltimore in the AL East.

Drury hit a three-run drive off Aaron Civalo (7-5) during a four-run second that put the Angels ahead 6-0. He made it 8-1 on his 23rd homer, a two-run shot in the sixth against Erasmo Ramírez.

# Bayern hold off Man United in 7-goal thriller

## Arsenal make winning return to CL

**MUNICH, Sept 21, (AP):** Mathys Tel's stoppage-time goal proved enough for Bayern Munich to beat Manchester United 4-3 in their Champions League opening game.

Tel scored with a spectacular finish in the second minute of injury time, restoring Bayern's two-goal lead just when United threatened to pull off another remarkable comeback after Casemiro scored in the 88th.

Casemiro did score again in the fifth minute of stoppages with a header to Bruno Fernandes' free kick, but this time there was no fairy-tale ending for United, which beat Bayern with two late goals to win the 1999 Champions League title.

United had forced the initiative early as the old rivals met again in the group stage, but Harry Kane's penalty in the 53rd for 3-1 seemed to be the final blow for an injury-hit team low on confidence after starting the Premier League with three defeats in five games.

United was without the injured Luke Shaw, Harry Maguire, Tyrell Malacia, Mason Mount and Aaron Wan-Bissaka, and coach Erik ten Hag was forced to name three goalkeepers among his substitutes.

United almost grabbed a shock early lead with Alphonso Davies sliding in to deny Facundo Pellistri from close range. Bayern goalkeeper Sven Ulreich denied Christian Eriksen from the rebound.

Bayern had to wait till the 20th minute for its first chance and had fortune on its side with United keeper André Onana deflecting Leroy Sané's harmless-looking shot inside the right post in the 28th after Sané had played a one-two with Kane.

Serge Gnabry capitalized by adding another goal four minutes later, sweeping a shot from distance inside the far post.

Höjlund scored with a deflected shot early in the second half, but Danish compatriot Eriksen was penalized through VAR for hand ball after Dayot Upamecano headed the ball into his hand.

Kane duly converted the penalty for his first Champions League goal in a Bayern jersey. The six-time champion maintained control until Casemiro restored some excitement to the finish.

Arsenal made a stylish return to the

Champions League by sweeping aside PSV Eindhoven 4-0 at Emirates Stadium after a six-year absence from the competition.

Arsenal seemed determined to make up for lost time and jumped out to a 3-0 lead by the 38th minute - with PSV goalkeeper Walter Benitez having made a couple of good saves by then to prevent an even bigger scoreline.

In a game played in driving rain throughout, Bukayo Saka, Leandro Trossard and Gabriel Jesus all scored in the first half, before Martin Odegaard added the fourth with a long-range strike in the 70th.

Arsenal qualified for the Champions League for 19 straight years under Arsene Wenger but had not played in the competition since 2016-17. PSV last played in it five years ago, and the two teams met in the group stage of the second-tier Europa League last season.

## SOCCER

Arsenal beat PSV 1-0 at home that time, but this was a far more one-sided affair.

Saka opened the scoring in the eighth minute by slipping away from U.S. international Sergino Dest and slotting in the rebound after Benitez had pushed away a low shot from Odegaard. Saka turned provider by teeing up Trossard on the edge of the area in the 20th, and the Belgian fired a low right-footed shot just inside the far post.

It was Trossard's turn to assist on the next one, sending in a cross from the left to Jesus, who downed the ball with one touch and blasted a shot into the far corner with his second. Jesus was making his first start of the season after recovering from a knee injury.

PSV had started brightly and tested Arsenal goalkeeper David Raya with a couple of low shots on the slick surface in the opening few minutes. But the visitors rarely threatened again until a counterattack in the 54th, when Johan Bakayoko only managed a weak shot straight at Raya.

Odegaard added gloss to the scoreline after collecting a pass from substitute Reiss Nelson and driving forward before unleashing a low 25-yard strike past the outstretched Benitez.

The result ended PSV's perfect start to the season after winning its first four games in the Dutch league. Arsenal remained unbeaten in all competitions.

In the other Group B game, Sevilla drew 1-1 with Lens in Spain.



The Warriors player displays the championship trophy.

## Warriors emerge as champs in inaugural hockey championship

The "Warriors" club emerged as champions in the inaugural Men's Super Ice Hockey Championship of the 2023-2024 sports season. Simultaneously, the "Wild Cats" team secured the women's category title in these championships, both of which were hosted by the Winter Sports Club two days ago.

The "Warriors," the defending

champions from the previous season, secured victory by defeating the second-placed "Stars" with a score of 7-4 in a fiercely contested match. The winning team effectively seized their opportunities and displayed exceptional skills. In contrast, the "Wild Cats" secured their championship with an emphatic win over the "Blue Waves," triumphing with a score

of three goals to nil. The victorious players delivered remarkable performances in both offense and defense, paving the way for their team to claim the championship in this competition.

Club President Fahid Al-Ajmi explained that the club's organization of sporting championships encompassing various winter sports disciplines and age groups is aimed at

providing club players with opportunities to passionately and safely engage in their preferred sports. He emphasized that hosting these tournaments also serves as preparation for players to represent national teams in international competitions, highlighting the outstanding skills of players from all four teams in the championship matches.

## Historic achievement

# Kuwait's Al-Fadl advances to semis in rowing

HANGZHOU, Sept 21: Abdulrahman Al-Fadl, a member of our national rowing team, has advanced to the semi-finals following a highly competitive event in which he clinched the third position. Al-Fadl expressed his elation at reaching this stage, marking it as a historic achievement in his career. He underlined his dedication to intensify his efforts and focus in the upcoming semi-final matches, with the ultimate goal of securing a spot in the finals and vying for the coveted medals.

## ROWING

Meanwhile, two athletes from our national rowing team, Mohammed Al-Sabti and Youssef Abdulhadi, embarked on their journey at the Asian Games by finishing fifth in the men's double sculls competition. The competition was fierce,

featuring teams from India, Iraq, and Hong Kong. Al-Sabti and Abdulhadi are set to compete in the repechage rounds next Sunday at 6:00 am.

Reflecting on the intense competition in the men's double sculls rowing event, Mohammed Al-Sabti, a member of our national rowing team, acknowledged the presence of highly-ranked competitors and world champions in the field. He pledged to exert additional effort to attain the best possible results in the upcoming matches and reiterated his commitment to representing the team in the most exemplary manner. Al-Sabti also highlighted the overall exceptional atmosphere of the tournament, attributing it to the precise scheduling, convenient transportation, and the picturesque surroundings, which collectively made it one of the most memorable Asian Games experiences they have had.



Abdulrahman Al-Fadl after his qualification.



Arsenal's Gabriel (left), and PSV's Noa Lang vie for the ball during their Group B Champions League soccer match, between Arsenal and PSV Eindhoven at the Emirates Stadium in London. (AP)

## Pay 'dispute' between players and FA appears to be resolved

LONDON, Sept 21, (AP): Players from the England women's team appear to have reached an agreement with the country's soccer federation regarding a dispute over bonuses and commercial structures.

England captain Millie Bright said at a news conference on Thursday that the players "feel really confident moving forward about the structure we now have in place" with the Football Association. Exact details of the agreement have yet to be officially announced.

## SOCCER

In a statement released before the recent Women's World Cup in Australia, the England squad expressed disappointment at the dispute having not been resolved before the tournament and said the players had decided to pause talks with the intention of revisiting them.

Players from teams at the World Cup were due to receive individual payments directly from FIFA for the first time, ranging from \$30,000 to

\$270,000 depending on what stage of the tournament they reached.

England players didn't receive any payments from the FA, reportedly because the governing body perceived payments coming from FIFA to be enough.

There is also believed to be frustration over a commercial strategy which players feel limits their ability to earn extra money from sponsorship.

"We've had a really good conversation with the FA," Bright said. "We have come to an agreement, but I think it's bigger than just the bonus."

"For us it's about being world leaders on and off the pitch, and as we know the women's game is evolving very quickly and conversations like this need to happen in order to make sure in all areas we're at the top of our game."

England lost to Spain in the World Cup final, a year after the team coached by Sarina Wiegman won the European Championship for the first time.

England's first match since the World Cup is against Scotland on Friday in the inaugural Women's Nations League.

## Bangladesh vs New Zealand abandoned

MIRPUR, Bangladesh, Sept 21, (AP): The first of three one-day internationals between Bangladesh and New Zealand was abandoned Thursday because of heavy rain.

New Zealand, sent to bat first, reached 136-5 in 33.4 overs after the match had been reduced to 42 overs following a one-hour delay. The rain then returned and the game was called off.

The second match is on Saturday as the teams also look ahead to the Cricket World Cup in India.

Opener Will Young made the team-best 58 while Henry Nicholls scored 44. Left-arm fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman claimed 3-27 and left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed had 2-21.

Young and Nicholls combined for a 97-run partnership for the third wicket, highest for New Zealand in this stand

at Mirpur venue, after being slumped to 16-2.

New Zealand made a watchful start but left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman broke through, by sending back opener Finn Allen for 9.

In his next over, Mustafizur had Chad Bowes caught by Nurul Hasan after he edged behind for 1.

Young and Nicholls survived some excellent bowling of Mustafizur and Tanzim Hasan and kept the side unscathed in a bowling favorable condition.

They also dealt the Bangladeshi spinners confidently before Mustafizur came back in his second spell to trap Nicholls leg-before.

Young, who hit four fours and one six in his 91-ball innings, threw his wicket after trying to charge left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed needlessly.

## OM in crisis again as they face PSG

PARIS, Sept 21, (AP): Marseille is in crisis again as they prepares to face bitter rival Paris Saint-Germain in the French league on Sunday.

A quick glance at the standings shows that undefeated Marseille are in fourth place and is one point above PSG in fifth.

Hardly awful.

Yet a chaotic week saw Spanish manager Marcelino step down on Wednesday after only a handful of games in charge of Marseille. He had replaced Igor Tudor, who left after just one season.

Marcelino's departure came after a tense board meeting between supporters groups - who have long held positions of strong influence - and the directors.

## SOCCER

"It's been quite a torment," veteran striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang said. "Of course it's not easy. But I'm not going into what we've said to each other (players and directors)."

Supporters groups reportedly expressed their strong dissatisfaction at the level of play so far. Sunday's 0-0 home draw with Toulouse was Marseille's third draw in five games so far. Still, the team is only two points behind leader Monaco and victory in Paris would condemn PSG to a second straight league defeat at home after the 3-2 loss to Nice.

"It's a strange context," said Aubameyang, a former Borussia Dortmund, Arsenal and Barcelona striker. "When you look at the league table we're still in it and there's nothing dramatic."

Aubameyang was speaking on the eve of Marseille's Europa League game at Ajax later Thursday. Following the PSG match, Marseille has a tough trip to Monaco next weekend.

But Marseille appear a rudderless ship at the moment.

## 'Vatanevver will not return as coach and GM'

# Thomas and Bonner help Sun advance to fifth straight semis

MINNEAPOLIS, Sept 21, (AP): Alyssa Thomas tied a career-high with 28 points, DeWanna Bonner had 25 points and 10 rebounds, and the Connecticut Sun beat the Minnesota Lynx 90-75 on Wednesday night to advance to their fifth straight WNBA playoff semifinals.

Connecticut will play the New York Liberty on Sunday in a best-of-five series. The Sun lost all four regular-season games with the Liberty this season. It was the second consecutive season that the Sun went on the road to win Game 3 of their first round playoff series.

Tyasha Harris added 18 points off the bench for Connecticut. She made four of the Sun's nine 3-pointers. Thomas also had 12 assists and six rebounds.

Napheesa Collier led Minnesota with 31 points. Kayla McBride, who scored 28 points in Game 2 on Sunday, was held to 10 points on 3-of-12 shooting.

Connecticut made eight of its first nine shots and scored 14 straight points to take a 20-6 lead. Minnesota was within 32-29 before Connecticut scored the next 11 points for a 14-point lead. The Sun made 11 of their last 13 shots of the first half, including Bonner's baseline jumper just before the buzzer for a 49-34 lead.

Bonner and Thomas scored or assisted on 40 of the Sun's 49 first-half points. Bonner was 5 of 6 from the field in the first half for 14 points and Thomas also scored 14 points on 7-of-12 shooting.

Bonner made two 3-pointers in the opening 3:05 of the third quarter for a 57-38 lead.

Bonner became the third player in WNBA playoff history with 1,000 points and 500 rebounds, joining Tamika Catchings and Candace Parker.

Emre Vatanevver will not return as the Chicago Sky's coach and general manager after taking over on an interim basis following James Wade's midseason departure, the team said Wednesday.

Whether he will go back to serving as an assistant coach was not clear.

## BASKETBALL

The announcement comes three days after the Sky were swept out of the playoffs by the defending-champion Las Vegas Aces. Led by All-Star Kahleah Copper, Chicago finished eighth in the WNBA at 18-22 and made the postseason for the fifth year in a row.

Vatanevver, who started as an assistant with the Sky in 2018, took over when Wade left for an assistant coach-

ing job with the Toronto Raptors. He led Chicago to an 11-13 record. The Sky were 81-59 in 4-1/2 seasons with Wade and won the franchise's first championship in 2021.

The Sky tied the Las Vegas Aces for the league's best record in 2022, only to get knocked out by the Connecticut Sun in the semifinals. But they weren't the same team after that.

The roster underwent a big transformation in the offseason, with Candace Parker, Courtney Vandersloot and her sharp-shooting wife Allie Quigley not returning.

## McLaren gives Oscar multi-year extension

LONDON, Sept 21, (AP): McLaren has signed Oscar Piastri to a multi-year contract extension just 15 races into his rookie season.

Piastri has a season-best finish of fourth and with 42 points scored is ranked 11th in the Formula One standings. He signed with McLaren last year after turning down a promotion with Alpine that led to a contractual fight over the 22-year-old Australian.

A review board ruled that McLaren held a valid contract for Piastri, who has raced alongside Lando Norris this season. With the Piastri extension announced Wednesday, McLaren now has both drivers signed through at least 2025.

Before the F1 promotion, Piastri joined George Russell and Charles Leclerc as the only drivers to win both the F2 and F3 championships.

He also won the Formula Renault Cup Championship in 2019.



Minnesota Lynx guard Rachel Banham (15) shoots while defended by Connecticut Sun guard Tyasha Harris (52) during the second half of Game 3 of a WNBA first-round basketball playoff series in Minneapolis. (AP)



Italy's Montanna loane reacts after scoring a try during the Rugby World Cup Pool A match between Italy and Uruguay at the Stade de Nice, in Nice. (AP)

# Sports

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## Kuwait keep qualification hopes alive



Sheikh Jaber Thamer Al-Jaber, Fatima Hayat and Ali Al-Marry with Kuwaiti Athletes at the Asian Games.

'Hoisting Kuwaiti flag signifies official start of Kuwait's participation'

**HANGZHOU, Sept 21:** The Kuwaiti Olympic team maintained their hopes of advancing to the second round with a hard-fought 1-1 draw against Bahrain in a match played yesterday at JinHua Stadium, part of the 2023 Asian Games Group F.

After suffering a severe 0-9 defeat in their opening match against South Korea, the Kuwaiti team rebounded and secured their first point in the group. They now face a crucial final round match against Thailand on Sunday, where a victory is needed to secure their place in the second round.

Portuguese coach Emilio Peixe made several strategic changes to the squad that faced South Korea. The starting lineup for this match featured Abdulrahman Al-Fadhli, Mohsen Fallah, Abdulaziz Najj, Abdulrahman Al-Dehaini, Faisal Al-Shatti, Fahd Al-Fadhli, Osman Al-Dosari, Fahd Al-Azmi, Hamad Al-Tuwail, Fahd Al-Harbi and Talal Al-Qaisi.

The Kuwaiti players displayed strong determination and resolve throughout the game, exhibiting good organization and repeatedly threatening the opponent's goal. However, their efforts did not result in goals. Unfortunately, Kuwait faced two set-backs within the first thirty minutes of the match. In the 15th minute, Abdulaziz Najj was substituted due to an injury, with Youssef Al-Haqqaq replacing him. Then, in the 31st minute, Talal Al-Qaisi also had to leave the field due to an injury, and Salman Al-Awadi took his place.

### ASIAN GAMES

The first half ended with a goalless draw. Before the start of the second half, the Kuwaiti coaching staff made two substitutions, with Bandar Al-Salama and Sultan Al-Faraj replacing Fahd Al-Azmi and Fahd Al-Harbi, aiming to strengthen the team and apply more pressure on the opponent in their quest for a crucial victory.

However, the match didn't go entirely as planned for the coaching staff and players. In the 53rd minute, Ali Hassan scored the opening goal for Bahrain. Coach Peixe responded by substituting Osman Al-Dosari with Mohammed Al-Rashid.

As the game progressed, Kuwait gradually gained control and launched attacks on Bahrain's goal. In the 74th minute, Salman Al-Awadi scored the equalizing goal from a set-piece situation.

Abdulrahman Al-Dehaini came close to securing all three points for Kuwait, but his header narrowly missed the right post in injury time. The final minutes of the match witnessed some confrontations between players due to aggressive tackles by Bahraini players, resulting in a red card for Bahrain's substitute Ali Nemer.

Meanwhile, a flag-raising ceremony took place at the Sports Village in Hangzhou, China, where the 19th Asian Games will kick off on September 23 and run until October 8. Among the attendees were Sheikh Jaber Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, a member of the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee, Fatma Hayat, the head of the Kuwaiti delegation, and Assistant Secretary-General Captain Ali Al-Marry, along with several Kuwaiti athletes participating in the games.

Sheikh Jaber Thamer Al-Sabah stated in a press release that hoisting the Kuwaiti flag signifies the official start of Kuwait's participation in the 19th



Fatima Hayat and Ali Al-Marry during the Kuwaiti Flag Raising at the Olympic Village.

Asian Games. He expressed confidence in all Kuwaiti athletes, emphasizing their responsibility to compete and represent themselves with distinction. He also praised the efforts of the administrative, coaching, and athlete teams.

Fatma Hayat, head of the Kuwaiti delegation, mentioned that the flag-raising ceremony saw the participation of 40 athletes and was attended by the mayor of Hangzhou village, along with a member of the championship's organizing committee.

She added that our national teams began their daily training on Thursday, following a rest day for the delegation upon their arrival at the sports village in Hangzhou. The organizing committee has scheduled training sessions throughout the duration of the games.

Our national fencing team commenced their training sessions at 5:00 PM at the Hangzhou Dianzi University sports hall, under the guidance of their Italian coach Luigi Taratello. The team includes Ali Abbas, Mohammed Abdul Kareem, Ali Al-Nakas, Abdulrahman Al-Mane, Ali Rustom, Youssef Al-Shamlan, and Abdulaziz Al-Shatti. They are supervised by the President of the Fencing Federation, Abdul Kareem Al-Shamlan, and Assistant Secretary Hamad Al-Awadi.

At 2:00 PM, our national handball team began their training sessions at the Gymnasium Sports Center (GSC) at Zhejiang Gongshang University. The team comprises Saif Al-Adwani, Saleh Ali, Fawaz Al-Musharrehk, Fawaz Al-Mulla, Abdulwahab Al-Muzain, Abdulaziz Al-Shammari, Mohamed Bouyabes, Heidar Dashti, Fawaz Mohammed, and Fawaz Mubarak, along with Youssef Najim, Mohamed Reza, Fawaz Saadoun, and Hassan Saqr.

The shooting team will commence training in Skeet and Rifle Shooting at the Fu Yang shooting range and hall.



Players battle for the ball during Kuwait and Bahrain match.

Barcelona host Celta Vigo

## Bellingham can't stop scoring for 'Madrid' but faces challenge at Atletico in 1st derby

**BARCELONA, Spain, Sept 21, (AP):** Jude Bellingham has surpassed all expectations since arriving at Real Madrid by scoring big goal after big goal to keep his team with a perfect six wins across all competitions.

Bellingham has scored in all but one of his appearances with Madrid. The 20-year-old England midfielder will now face his first derby on Sunday at Atletico Madrid in the Spanish league when the hosts will aim to stop him increasing his tally of six goals in as many games.

### SOCCER

Bellingham has shown a knack of being where he needs to be to snatch last-gasp winners. He was there to turn in a rebound and secure a 1-0 win over Union Berlin in their Champions League opener on Wednesday, after having scored a similar goal against Getafe in the Spanish league earlier this month.

For Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti, Bellingham "has talent and it looks like he's lucky" with the ball bouncing his way.

Madrid tops the Spanish league with a two-point lead over Barcelona and Girona. Athletic Bilbao is fourth at five points adrift.

Atletico is already eight points back in seventh place and is wary of top rivals from opening up a lead that would be hard to close.

Diego Simeone's team was flying high after dealing Rayo Vallecano a 7-0 defeat on the road last month. But since returning from the international break, Atletico has slumped to a 3-0 loss at Valencia and drew 1-1 at Lazio in its Champions League opener after the opposing goalkeeper equalized with a stoppage-time header.

Atletico is hoping forward Memphis Depay and midfielder Koke Resurrección will be back from injury in time for the game. Pablo Barrios, its scorer against Lazio, is injured and will miss the game at the Metropolitan Stadium.

Madrid will likely still be without winger Vinicius Junior, who is recovering from a muscle injury. Defender Eder Militao and goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois are out with long-term leg injuries.

Barcelona hosts Celta Vigo on Saturday with João Félix thriving after joining the club from Atletico at the close of the transfer window.

The Portugal forward has scored three goals in his first two appearances for Barcelona, including a double to help beat Antwerp 5-0 in the Champions League this week.



Real Madrid's Antonio Rudiger (right), hits a header during the Champions League group C soccer match between Real Madrid and FC Union Berlin at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid. (AP)

Félix said that he had to take a pay cut to leave Atletico on loan, but that it was worth it to find a team that fits his creative playing style.

Celta has only won once since Rafa Benítez took over as its coach this summer.

Girona, the surprise of the league so far, hosts Mallorca on Saturday.

The small club from north of Barcelona is undefeated thanks to nine different players chipping in with goals, led by Cristhian Stuani and Yangel Herrera with two each.

English soccer club Leeds is going to sport's highest court for a second appeal case involving former striker **Jean-Kévin Augustin**, this time contesting a \$30 million salary settlement in their dispute over a transfer deal during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport said Thursday that a Nov. 16 hearing is set for Leeds to challenge a FIFA award in favor of the French striker.

Leeds was ordered by FIFA in March to pay Augustin more than 24.5 million pounds (\$30 million) for breach of a five-year contract agreed in the 2019-20 soccer season affected by the pandemic.

Second-tier Leeds, which is owned by the San Francisco 49ers, lost a first CAS ruling last year. That upheld a FIFA decision ordering Leeds to pay Leipzig a 6.7-million euro (\$7.1-million) first instalment in a transfer deal of 21 million euros (\$22.4 million) for Augustin.

## Italy 'rebound' to blow out Uruguay

**NICE, France, Sept 21, (AP):** Italy rebounded from a 10-point halftime deficit to blow away Uruguay 38-17 on Wednesday and set up a potentially decisive clash against New Zealand at the Rugby World Cup.

All the talk about Pool A has been about New Zealand and France, but Italy has dispatched Namibia and Uruguay with bonus points and has a chance to send home the All Blacks - whom Italy has never beaten - when they meet next week.

"We could not have asked for more," Italy winger Monty Ioane said. "The boys are confident, we're ready to take on anyone. The next two are the biggies. It's an awesome opportunity to go against the best teams in the world. But we are not worried at all as long as we just focus on ourselves."

"The All Blacks have a crazy attacking style, but we have just got to be prepared with our defense. In return, we have a crazy attacking system as well. It's just who turns up on the day."

### RUGBY

In the first half against Uruguay, Italy didn't look like it could tie the All Blacks' boot laces.

After conceding the first try in a nervous first quarter, Uruguay turned the pressure back on Italy and the Azzurri buckled. They lost two players to the sin-bin and played with 13 men for nine minutes. Uruguay earned two tries and finished the half with a 45-meter drop goal.

Uruguay led 17-7 and good for the Rugby World Cup's first shock.

But captain Andrés Vilaseca was given a harsh yellow for a high tackle and the difference between Italy, aiming for the quarterfinals, and Uruguay, aiming for a rare Rugby World Cup win, became sharply evident.

Italy pounced with four tries in 15 minutes to earn the precious bonus point and a fourth straight test win for the first time since 1994.

"It was a really tough game," captain Michele Lamaro said. "I told all the Uruguayan guys they can be proud of their performance, they put us under a lot of pressure but in these moments, what counts the most is how strong is the team, and in the second half we showed that and smashed everything we could."

"I'm really proud of the boys and I'll share this moment for the rest of my life with them."

Italy took the lead from Uruguay in the seventh minute when wing Lorenzo Pani took crash ball off a scrum and scored on his Rugby World Cup debut.

Uruguay flyhalf Felipe Etcheverry dragged his first two penalty kicks wide and intercepted Lamaro but was dragged down short of the tryline by opposite Tommaso Allan.

## Kuwait make progress in FIFA rankings

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 21:** Kuwait's national football team has made significant strides in the latest FIFA global rankings, climbing two positions in the September update released yesterday. They now hold the 135th spot in the world rankings and rank 25th in Asia.

Meanwhile, the Argentine national team, reigning world champions, retained their top position in the FIFA global team rankings. "La Albiceleste" continued to lead the rankings, with France in second place and Brazil in third.

England maintained their fourth-place ranking, followed by Belgium in fifth, Croatia in sixth, and the Netherlands in seventh.

A notable change within the top ten FIFA-ranked teams was Portugal's rise to eighth place, while Italy slipped to

ninth. Spain held firm in the tenth spot. On the African continent, the Moroccan national team surged to thirteenth place in the global rankings, securing the top spot in Africa. Senegal claimed the twentieth position globally and second in Africa. Tunisia landed in twenty-ninth place globally, while

### SOCCER

Algeria settled at thirty-fourth place worldwide and fourth in Africa. Egypt held the thirty-fifth position globally and the fifth in Africa.

In the Asian continental rankings, Japan led the pack, followed by Iran in second place, South Korea in third, Australia in fourth, Saudi Arabia in fifth, Qatar in sixth, Iraq in seventh, and the United Arab Emirates in eighth.