



## Congratulations pour in as Amir marks 3 years rule



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

### Declaration of allegiance renewed

KUWAIT CITY, Sept. 28. (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah marks the third year since assuming office on September 29, 2020, where Kuwait witnessed a new era of constant developments.

After 14 years of the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's rule, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf who was then the Crown Prince took his constitutional oath before the National Assembly (Parliament) as the 16th Amir of the State of Kuwait.

In his early years, he was known for his hard working personality and various achievements which later reflected on his political journey where he succeeded in every position he served in.

His Highness the Amir started his political journey as the governor of Hawalli district in February 1961, until March 1978, when he was appointed as the Minister of

Interior, and in 1988 as the Minister of Defense.

After Kuwait's liberation from Iraq, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad was appointed in the new government as the Minister of Social Affairs in April 1991 and served in the post until October 1992.

In October 1994, His Highness the Amir served as Deputy Chief of the National Guard until July 2003. During his service in the National Guard, he contributed to further training and preparations of guards to maintain Kuwait's peace and stability.

Following his position as Minister of Interior in 2003, an Amiri decree was issued appointing him as First Deputy Prime Minister until 2006, when he was named the Crown Prince of Kuwait.

Continued on Page 4

### Other Voices

## Due diligence is a must

By Khalaf Ahmad Al Habtoor  
UAE Businessman

If you follow the news lately, you feel like you are watching fictional action movies with recurrent disasters and calamities. Recently, several countries have gone mad as they got engulfed in chaos, wars, and internal and external conflicts. This is not pure coincidence, as the situation is getting worse with no restrictions whatsoever.

Conflicts and tensions are the new norm worldwide; no continent is spared. They are raging in the heart of Europe, notably through the Russian-Ukrainian war and the protests in the French streets.

In Asia, several countries, such as Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Palestine and Israel, are witnessing internal conflicts and instability, while other countries, including Armenia, Azerbaijan, North and South Korea, China and Taiwan, are on the brink of war. Not to mention the civil wars in Sudan and other African countries; even the United States, the most powerful country in the world, is threatened by insecurity.

These countries represent the peak of the global conflict that risks spreading to other countries and regions as part of the struggle for control and international influence. The war between Russia and Ukraine is almost a global war by proxy between two camps, where all kinds of weapons have been used so far except biological and nuclear weapons.

In the First and Second World Wars, the conflict between different camps led to the emergence of influential powers that created a new reality based on suppressing others and controlling weak countries at all levels. We are now witnessing a new era of international conflict, almost similar to the conditions that led to the First and Second

World Wars, with comparable goals even though the means differ.

Ongoing conflicts use innovative methods that conceal the true intentions through deception and misleading. The weapons used are not only military, but they also include instigating conflicts and hotspots of ethnic, sectarian, tribal, ideological, and civil tensions. Economic weapons also lead to the impoverishment and starvation of populations, driving them to emigrate, which would pave the way to implement dubious schemes made possible through the chaos of creative immigration.

These wars have dire consequences all over the world, especially in the European countries whose logistic, military and economic resources are being depleted, which leads to their weakening and highly endangers their existence and the lives of their citizens. Wars have also a heavy toll on the global economy and created a food crisis that affected everyone on this planet.

In light of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and the confrontation in Africa, it can be easily concluded that there is a connection between the wars led by major powers for control. Conflicts are spreading throughout the continents, and states are competing over control. Roles change as new powers emerge while others are eclipsed. Meanwhile, the populations of those African countries are intentionally driven to head towards European countries in a massive wave of legal and illegal immigration.

In my opinion, the flow of hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing from wars is an imminent threat. For example, the systematized immigration from unstable countries to Europe made the Old Continent reel under the burden of refugees who wreaked havoc in the European countries. Those states are unable to expel them out of fear of the reactions of human rights organizations and other international bodies.

Continued on Page 4



Al Habtoor

## 'PENALIZE VIOLATING BANKS, EXCHANGES' MP calls for 3% remittance tax to boost local economy

Saudi, Bahrain imposed fees years ago: lawmaker

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: MP Fahad bin Jame'e submitted a proposal to impose fees on remittances by three percent of the remittance amount.

He revealed that the remittances sent from Kuwait are roughly KD 5 billion or \$17 billion per year, indicating that the neighboring countries including Saudi Arabia and Bahrain imposed such fees several years ago.

The lawmaker urged the Central Bank of Kuwait to impose penalties on the violating banks and money exchange companies.

Also, MP Fahad bin Jame'e submitted another proposal to grant exceptional indemnity to the non-ranked military officers at Kuwait Army, National Guard, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate and Ministry of Interior.

He explained that the decisions issued by the Council of Ministers stipulated granting exceptional indemnity to the officers who retired after 2010 but it did not include the non ranked officers, which violates the principle of justice and equality.

### Conflict

Meanwhile, MP Abdulhadi Al-Ajmi submitted parliamentary questions to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah about the issue of conflict of interests in appointing the Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Adel Al Mane'e.

He asked if Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Sabah was aware about the violations related to promoting Al-Mane'e as a member of staff of lecturers at the College of Law in Kuwait University (KU), after leaving the university, based on the decision to appoint him as the Secretary General of the Council of Public Sector Universities, which means that he is no longer part of the university.

The lawmaker said there are suspicions about conflict of interest between the Council of Public Sector Universities presided over by Al-Mane'e and the Kuwait University administration.

MP Al-Ajmi indicated that the Council of Public Sector Universities approved the committee, which was formed by the Acting President of Kuwait University to name the KU President with pressures imposed on the College of Law to continue promoting Al-Mane'e in violation of the KU regulations.

He asked Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Sabah if he was aware of such violations before appointing Al-Mane'e as the Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research.

### Appoint

The lawmaker said the issue exceeds the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education and is a bigger issue related to the procedures adopted to appoint senior officials, which reflects negatively or positively on the performance of the government and the public institutions.

In another development, MP Abdul Kareem Al-Kandari called upon the government to take an action much stronger than submitting a protest letter against the recent procedures of Iraq towards the agreement signed with Kuwait to organize marine movement in Abdullah Port.

He said, "We are no longer talking only about the bad intention of the Iraqi party but we are faced with an attitude of hostility represented in the statement signed by 174 Iraqi MPs asking to send a copy of the ruling issued by Iraqi Federal Court to nullify the agreement with Kuwait to the United Nations, in addition to the decision of the Iraqi Government to cancel the security protocol signed by Kuwait and Iraq."



KUNA photo  
Kuwaiti shooters Abdullah Al-Tarqi and Iman Al-Shamaa celebrate after winning the silver medal in the mixed skeet competition held as part of the 19th Asian Games currently hosted by China. — See Page 16

2 for final rulings issued

## 15 cases of public funds squandering: MoE

### Newswatch

By Abdul Rahman Al-Shammari  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: A memorandum prepared by the Ministry of Education revealed the existence of 15 cases of squandering of the public funds, including 12 pending cases in the ministry, one adjourned by the Public Prosecution, and two for which final rulings were issued.

According to the memorandum, the list of cases includes one related to recording false data in the lists of completed work concerning the implementation of contract No. 40 regarding comprehensive maintenance in preparation for the academic year. The first accused in the case was sentenced to seven years in jail, imposed a fine of KD 3,000 and dismissed from the job. The second accused was sentenced to seven years in prison followed by deportation from the country.

The list includes a case related to the unlawful disbursement of salaries in excess of the required amount to a female employee. A ruling was issued in absentia to imprison the accused for seven years with hard labor, the confiscation of forged documents in the ministry, and then deportation.

Referrals to the Public Prosecution regarding public money issues were based on reports from the Ministry of Education.

Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) had submitted a report against the director general of an educational zone after he agreed with the company contracting with the ministry to change the contracted category, even though

he is not authorized to do so. This made it impossible for the ministry to impose fines on the contracting company in such a case.

The Public Prosecution decided to file the report, explaining that the pending cases were inside Kuwait, and the Ministry of Education has not received anything from the

Continued on Page 4

### Day by Day

IT IS often said: 'What goes around, comes around'. The oppressor is unjust because he has wronged, the one who finds joy in others' suffering is reprehensible, and the wrongdoer is held accountable for his actions. Do not despair, for your Lord is the epitome of justice.

Oh, you who stole the plane, apartments, and the homes of those who trusted you, the betrayer of trust and bringer of death.

You abandoned prayer and implicated your wife and children by transferring your thefts into their accounts. You will face the consequences of your actions, and this time, there will be no escape from the shame and defeat you have brought upon yourself. Your intelligence may have served you once, but your Lord blinded your vision, and greed has eroded all you had amassed.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



## Prayer Timings

Fajr .....	04:20	Asr .....	15:04
Sunrise ..	05:39	Maghrib ..	17:38
Zohr .....	11:39	Isha .....	18:55

# Local

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

## Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

**By Day:** Hot with light variable wind to moderate northerly wind with speeds of 08-30 km/h.  
**By Night:** Rather hot to mild

## Weather

with light variable wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind with speeds of 08-30 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	40	31
Kuwait Airport	42	24
Abdaly	43	25

Jahra	43	27
Salmiyah	34	31
Ahmad	34	33
Nuwaisib	38	26
Wafra	42	24

## Officials conduct inspection tour of traffic operations within Sabah Al-Salem University City

# Kuwait University and Mol collaborate on traffic awareness campaign

By Abdul Rahman Al-Shammari  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: In the presence of Kuwait University's Acting Secretary General, the Security and Safety Department at the university, in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior's General Traffic Department, represented by the Public Relations and Traffic Awareness Department, successfully concluded their second annual traffic awareness campaign. The campaign took place from September 24 to September 27, with the primary goal of promoting traffic culture and educating students and university staff about traffic safety and security regulations within Sabah Al-Salem University City.

The closing ceremony was attended by Brigadier General Nawaf Obaid from the Ministry of Interior, along with representatives from the Ministry of Interior, the Acting Dean of the College of Education, Professor Dr. Issa Al-Balhan, assistant deans, and several university employees and students.

During the conclusion event, an inspection tour of traffic operations within Sabah Al-Salem University City was conducted. The Acting Director of the Security and Safety Department introduced the university's entrance gates that serve visitors to the university city. The tour also reviewed traffic flow and identified the starting point for buses and their routes to reach the city,

including the designated student loading and unloading area (Drop-off Zone).

The Acting Secretary General of Kuwait University extended a warm welcome to the attendees and emphasized that Kuwait University is a significant project in the State of Kuwait over the past decade, acknowledging the challenges such projects can face and the importance of addressing them effectively.

Acting Director of the Security and Safety Department, Yousef Al-Khamis, highlighted the importance of conducting traffic awareness campaigns within the university city, emphasizing that it operates under the umbrella of traffic laws. He mentioned that the campaign reached a

large number of students through social media and in-classroom awareness lectures, which resulted in numerous inquiries and questions from students directed to the Ministry of Interior.

Al-Khamis also introduced a guide titled "Know Your Destination," designed to assist visitors in navigating Sabah Al-Salem University City by identifying entrances and exits, as well as the university's seven gates. He noted that the Security and Safety Department offers roadside assistance services in case of vehicle problems, with a direct line for emergencies.

Additionally, Al-Khamis presented statistics on incidents within the university city and showcased a

video illustrating improper behaviors by visitors, highlighting the presence of 12,000 surveillance cameras throughout the university's surroundings and corridors.

Colonel Abdullah Bahman from the Traffic Awareness Department at the General Traffic Department of the Ministry of Interior discussed the essential traffic laws that must be adhered to. He emphasized that this campaign, held for the second consecutive year in partnership with Kuwait University's Security and Safety Department, began at the College of Engineering and Petroleum and concluded at the College of Education.

Bahman explained the roles of traffic personnel on the road, in-

cluding awareness and guidance, problem-solving, and the functions of the central control room. He also addressed the primary causes of traffic accidents, which often involve driver violations, vehicle maintenance issues, and road-related errors. Notably, he emphasized that 93% of accidents result from inattentiveness, especially due to mobile phone usage while driving.

Bahman provided traffic safety tips and instructions to students, underlining the importance of compliance. He mentioned a proposal to link a student's academic performance with their behavior on the road within the university city, wishing safety for all Sabah Al-Salem University City visitors.



KUNA photo  
Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Communications Affairs Fahad Al-Shula in a group photo during the inauguration of the new route between Kuwait's Shuwaikh and UAE's Khalifa ports.

# GTD awaits approval of law to hike traffic violation fines

'Harsher penalties contribute to adherence to rules and laws'

By Munaif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: At a time when the streets are witnessing horrific traffic accidents due to recklessness and lack of abiding by the traffic rules while driving, in addition to using mobile phones and speeding, the leadership of the General Traffic Department is awaiting the approval of a law to increase penalties for traffic violations in order to deter violators and put an end to the loss of lives.

According to traffic leaders, the current traffic law must be amended and the value of violations and penalties must be increased in order to be a deterrent to violators. This was evident years ago when they saw a reduction in the number of violations related to parking in spaces allocated for the disabled after the penalties were increased. These violations had decreased from 60,000 annually to 400. This requires amending the current traffic law so that everyone adheres to the traffic rules and laws, and the number of traffic violations decreases.

### Responsibility

The leaders of the General Traffic Department appealed to members of the National Assembly to amend the law to increase penalties for the traffic law, which is the responsibility of the parliament's Interior and Defense Committee, and to place it among the priorities of the next session.

However, a number of parliamentarians believe that raising the value of traffic violations may constitute a burden on the citizen's pocket.

In this context, Brigadier General Khaled Al-Adwani from the

## Municipal Council's 5th regular session on Monday

Top body's responses to members, including response to Behbehani's query top agenda

By Enas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: The Municipal Council, during its fifth regular session of the second term headed by Abdullah Al-Mahri next Monday, will discuss its agenda, which includes a number of items.

The most prominent among the items is the executive body's responses to the council members, including the response to the question submitted by the Municipal Council member Ismail Behbehani regarding the evaluation criteria for highway projects.

They will also discuss the responses to the two questions submitted by Abdullah Al-Enzi, the first regarding the sewage station in the Mutlaa Housing Project and complementary works to it, and the second regarding the main entrance and exit to the city of Jaber Al-Ahmad opposite the northwestern Sulaibikhat area.

Questions were also submitted

by the council member Munirah Al-Amir regarding clarifications about the fourth structural plan, as well as regarding the Kabad Road extending from the Sulaibikhat Bridge to Kabd livestock pens.

The Municipal Council will also discuss a number of requests, including one from the Ministry of Electricity and Water to reallocate the location of the main transfer station in Egaila Block 6, a request to modify the area of the site of the Environment Public Authority, the former Shuwaikh police station, mentioned in the decision of the Municipal Council in the third Shuwaikh area, and a proposal from the Public Markets Committee regarding changing the slaughterhouse site to a temporary tent market site in the Second Shuwaikh Industrial Area.

It will also discuss the initiative of the Sahlia Real Estate Company to design and supervise the development of Othman Bin Affan Street, and the initiative of the Boubyan United Company and the DMDI office for the design

and supervision of the implementation of the wall and gates of the Sulaibikhat Cemetery.

The Municipal Council intends to discuss the municipality's responses to members' questions, including the response to the question submitted by Sherifa Al-Shalfan regarding the municipality's role in adhering to international agreements to limit the impact of climate change, and the response to the question submitted by member Dr. Hassan Kamal regarding the studies and approvals to implement the entrances and exits of the Sabah Al-Salem area, in addition to the response to Fahad Al-Abd Al-Jader's question regarding the closed bridges.

It also intends to discuss the recommendations issued by the first workshop of the Environmental Affairs Committee of the second session of the thirteenth legislative chapter of the Municipal Council held on Thursday, September 21, 2023 regarding the problem of wastewater on and around the roads.

160 people due to accidents during the first half of the current year, and an increase in the number of traffic accidents by 42,659 traffic accidents compared to this period last year, as the number of traffic accidents in the first half of last year was 38,860 traffic accidents.

In a related context, the General Traffic Department, under the guidance of the Assistant Undersecretary for Public Security, Traffic and Operations Affairs Major General Abdullah Al-Rajaib and the Director General of the General Traffic Department Major General Yousef Al-Khadada, is carrying out continuous traffic campaigns throughout the week to arrest reckless motorists, seize their vehicles, and refer them to court.

## 10 doctors undergo training

# 'Endoscopic Neurosurgery' workshop held: Dr Rashed

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: Ten doctors from the neurosurgery and ear, nose and throat surgery specialties underwent training to use the endoscopic technique for the first time in the State of Kuwait during the "Endoscopic Neurosurgery" workshop, which was held at Zain Hospital with the participation of Prof. Henry W. S. Schroeder, who is the chairman at the Department of Neurosurgery at the University Medicine in Greifswald, Germany.

This was revealed by the consultant general surgeon and a member of the organizing committee Dr. Asma Al-Rashed in a press statement issued after the workshop ended on Sunday. It was held at Zain Hospital for a total of 20 hours over three days, under the supervision of the Kuwait General Surgery Association, which had organized it with the cooperation of the Kuwait Ear, Nose and Throat Association.

She explained that the workshop is the first of its kind in Neuroendoscopy surgery in Kuwait. The idea behind holding the workshop was presented by Dr. Maryam Al-Mutawa (Head of the organizing committee), who participated in it in Germany, France, and the United States, and had wanted to organize it in the State of Kuwait.

The workshop aims to train Kuwaiti doctors in various specialties of neurosurgery, ear, nose and throat to use the surgical endoscope technique and its medical applications.

The workshop included a live broadcast of operations using the endoscope at Ibn Sina Hospital.

The training program included a



Dr Asma Al-Rashed

group of scientific lectures presented by Prof. Schroeder and a group of neurosurgeons and ENT surgeons from the Ministry of Health and Kuwait University hospitals. Practical training was also conducted on cadavers to hone the doctors' skills and raise their efficiency in using the brain endoscope.

Dr. Al-Rashed said the organizing committee thanked the Ministry of Health, the associate professor, and the education and training team, adding that it awarded certificates to the trainees in this workshop.

She wished them success in applying the skills they acquired from the workshop.

Dr. Al-Rashed praised the sponsorship of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, ATC, and Mizan Medical for supporting these training programs for doctors in Kuwait.

## Symposium held

# Iraq's crises with Kuwait fabricated to create internal problems: scholars

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: Two scholars from the Kuwait University emphasized that the Khor Abdullah agreement signed between Kuwait and Iraq focuses on regulating navigation and is unrelated to border demarcation, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Dr. Ghanem Al-Najjar, a Professor of Political Science and International Relations, and Dr. Muhammad Al-Haddad, an Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Sociology, both agreed that Iraq is creating political crises with Kuwait to fulfill its ambitions or contain internal pressures.

During the symposium 'Kuwait, Iraq, and the Gulf between them' organized by the Center for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies in collaboration with the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Kuwait University, the scholars stressed that the agreement had been ratified by both parties and deposited with the United Nations. They stated that the recent ruling by the Iraqi Federal Supreme Court, declaring the ratification of the agreement unconstitutional, did not address technical aspects and instead perpetuated false claims regarding Iraq's rights over Kuwait.

Dr. Al-Najjar highlighted that the primary issue in the Gulf region is water scarcity, and future conflicts are likely to be water-related. Kuwait, like many others, faces challenges due to a shortage of freshwater. He explained that crises between Kuwait and Iraq are primarily political and often revolve around water. Iraq tends to create crises whenever it harbors ambitions.

Dr. Al-Najjar recounted Kuwait's historical reliance on importing freshwater from the Shatt al-Arab, initially through transport ships and local distributors, and eventually through wa-

ter distillation stations.

Regarding the "Khor Abdullah" agreement, Dr. Al-Najjar clarified that it is deposited with the United Nations, ratified, and pertains to regulating navigation, not border demarcation. He emphasized that historically, Iraq has no claim to Kuwait, and the disputes are sea-related rather than land-based.

He pointed out that concerns about Iraq persist in Kuwait due to repeated outbreaks of crises. Despite this, Kuwait has provided substantial aid to Iraq, including hospitals, schools, and various projects. The recent discussion on the Iraqi court's ruling regarding the Khor Abdullah Agreement has led to differing opinions even within Iraq.

Dr. Al-Najjar concluded by noting that despite Iraq sharing borders with six different countries, its most security-regulated border is with Kuwait, both on land and at sea.

Dr. Muhammad Al-Haddad, the professor of anthropology, further clarified that the "Khor Abdullah" agreement focuses on regulating navigation and does not pertain to maritime border demarcation. He highlighted the increasing importance of the Gulf beyond transportation and trade, emphasizing its significance as a reservoir of natural resources like oil and gas.

Al-Haddad stressed that Kuwait is protected by international law, and its borders are clear and recognized by both parties. Kuwait has never violated Iraqi sovereignty and has instead provided significant aid. He attributed the tensions between Kuwait and Iraq to historical ethnic pluralism, often exploited in the context of national sovereignty, reinforcing that Kuwait is protected by international laws and should not fear Iraq.



# diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## 'Between parliamentary confusion and government deficit'

"OBSERVING the course of public affairs in our nation is disheartening, witnessing a decline in political efficacy at both executive and parliamentary levels; chaos and confusion now dictate their choices and paths, disregarding what poses a threat to our state's existence, sovereignty, and the preservation of its citizenship and identity," columnist **Dr. Muhammad Al-Maqati** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"Deliberately, matters of great importance are swept aside, concealed, delayed, and even neglected, becoming subjects of political bargaining and electoral gains, all at the cost of our nation's independence, resilience, and sovereignty.

"The negligence extends to the file of nationality and citizenship, where conspiracies and calamities have befallen Kuwaiti nationality and national identity. These vital aspects were disrupted through political naturalization, aimed at garnering loyalties and immediate gains.

"This meddling soon evolved into a planned political strategy, eroding the foundations of the state's political community. Shockingly, we've witnessed members in the National Assembly who obtained citizenship through absurd naturalization practices, highlighting the catastrophe affecting our national existence and identity. When those responsible for legislation arouse suspicions about their citizenship acquisition, the gravity of the situation becomes evident.

"Furthermore, some have received citizenship in contradiction to Article 1 of Law No. 15 of 1959, reserved for the founders' generation or their offspring. A number of these legislators infiltrated Parliament and promptly initiated proposals for naturalization laws, violating loyalty and belonging, and undermining national identity.

"Legislative tampering expanded to changing the status of a naturalized person to an 'originally' Kuwaiti, contrary to the constitutional definition established in Article 82, which unequivocally affirmed Kuwaiti status in 1962. These constitutional provisions were set by Law No. 15 of 1959, a fundamental basis for that status.

"However, legislative meddling refused to alter this status, defying constitutional norms with heretical and deviant legislation unsupported by reality or law.

"In this tumultuous atmosphere, marred by questions and astonishment, forgery of nationality proliferated, leading to judicial rulings and government decisions to revoke hundreds of falsified cases. This ongoing national concern emphasizes the threat posed to our sovereignty and national identity. The state faces a reality that jeopardizes national identity and challenges its constants, particularly the issue of dual citizenship. The surge in voters, surpassing five times their number from 1992 to 2023, underscores the imbalance and risks linked to citizenship and national identity.

"It's no surprise that Parliament's priorities, given its current composition, stray far from safeguarding the nation's independence and identity.



Dr Al-Maqati

Dishearteningly, those we relied upon for their sense of patriotism remain silent, while new citizens, due to naturalization tampering, audaciously push to widen naturalization avenues. Their motive is to manipulate paperwork and hinder the rectification of flawed citizenship conditions and naturalization that violate the constitution and the choices of the founding fathers, as defined in the Citizenship Law No. 15 of 1959.

"Observing the Council members' priorities reveals their misplaced focus, failing to serve the public interest, disregarding the provisions of the Constitution, and undermining national identity. This indifference towards protecting national identity and addressing issues tampering with nationality is regrettable, overshadowed by electoral gains and irrational populist demands.

"Parliamentary efforts have deviated, preoccupied with superficial concerns rather than defending our homeland and its citizens. Worse yet, our government has lost its direction, unable to implement, confront challenges, or bear its responsibilities. Its program mirrors the misguided priorities of the 2022 government, primarily establishing the General Authority for Citizenship and the Central Policy Agency."

Also:

"Despite the Court of Cassation grappling with overcrowding and a backlog of case files, its General Assembly has yet to make a decision regarding an increase in the court's departments," columnist **Hussein Al-Abdullah** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"The association's statement did not indicate a noticeable rise in the number of court advisors to address this pressing issue. The concerning reality faced by the court is no secret to those in charge of judicial affairs, including the President of the Court of Cassation, the Chairman of the Judicial Council, and members of the Council and the Ministry of Justice. This reality demands urgent attention, as its persistence will detrimentally affect the efficacy of justice and erode litigants' trust, ultimately disregarding the severity of the situation and its impact on people's rights.

"The issue extends beyond a mere accumulation of case files. It is about legal matters that have remained stagnant for many years, while technological advancements have revolutionized the provision of judicial services in neighboring countries. Despite warnings about this problem a decade ago and promises from successive presidents of the Judicial Council to address it, the reality reveals a lack of concrete plans and effective mechanisms to tackle the issue. This negligence has resulted in a disaster that will take years to rectify.

"Efforts have now commenced to find solutions and overcome the hurdles hindering the appeals process. Some of the solutions that should have been implemented include increasing the number of judicial chambers and members of the Cassation Prosecution, organizing evening committees, or scheduling sessions two or three times per week instead of the current once-a-week sessions. However, the responsible administration, regardless of its position, has failed to take meaningful steps to alleviate the escalation of this problem.

"Even the solutions proposed earlier this year, such as reviewing recent appeals in the counseling room before scheduling sessions, have accumulated. Sessions for the counseling chamber are now set in some chambers until 2024, possibly extending to 2025, while the adjudication of all prior appeals remains suspended, exacerbating the backlog.

"As litigants, we await a change or development in the current situation. There are approximately 85,000 appeals pending before the Court of Cassation, with 75,000 in accumulation. It is crucial to address the accumulated administrative appeals, especially those related to employees' rights and claims, the accumulated commercial appeals affecting those involved in commercial matters, and the accumulated appeals of labor disputes affecting the legal positions of workers and employers.

"A proactive resolution is essential to restore faith in the justice system and ensure the timely dispensation of justice."

□ □ □

"Some observers believe that one of the reasons for the growth of racism in Turkey is that some extremist secular opposition parties used the presence of Arab refugees on the soil of Turkey as a card to win in the last presidential elections. This racist campaign intensified after Erdogan won the presidency, and the Arabs rejoiced in his victory," columnist **Abdulaziz Al-Fadhli** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"Some forms of this racism became evident from the verbal and physical attacks that some Arabs - either tourists, residents, or refugees - were subjected to during the recent period.

"Some people sought to exaggerate and generalize these attacks, even though they were committed by a small group. It is therefore unfair to describe the entire Turkish people in this way!

"Tens of thousands of Arab and Gulf tourists visit Turkey annually, and they return to their homes with the intention of repeating the visit. This is because of Turkey's beautiful atmosphere and touristic services, as well as hearing the call to prayer that resonates in the air, and being reassured by the availability of Halal food.

"It is clear that there is a systematic hostile campaign against Turkey led by countries, parties and institutions with political, religious and economic dimensions.

"One of the indicators of this is that Arabs are subjected to racism, harassment, theft, and beatings in America and Europe, but it is rare to find anyone talking about this in the media or social media. It is only highlighted when it happens in Turkey!

"Racist rhetoric affects internal security and stability. It is harmful for Turkey's international reputation and has a negative impact on the tourism sector, which is one of the contributors to the economy of Turkey.

"Therefore, we find that President Erdogan's speeches often include a rejection of racism, and the Turkish government is striving to combat racist rhetoric. Perhaps one of its latest moves is its arrest of dozens of promoters and supporters of racism who were referred to trial."

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary

### 'Future projects being prepared'

About 4,613 million imperial gallons of strategic water reserve: Eng Hajri

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: Director of the Public Relations Department and the Water Facilities Projects Department at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Eng. Maha Al-Hajri says the currently available strategic water reserve amounts to about 4,613 million imperial gallons.

In a press statement issued yesterday, Eng. Al-Hajri said, "We are working to increase 610 million gallons from the currently proposed projects.

"Future projects are being prepared to add another 2,552 million gallons to the stock in the coming years. There are a large number of tanks in various parts of the country.

"The water tanks project in Mutla City was recently completed and launched into service.

"There are five fresh water tanks with a total capacity of 275 million imperial gallons, in addition to another project that is being completed, which is the Funatees tanks project for two tanks with a capacity of 85 million imperial gallons each. Some projects are proceeding according to the established schedules, and the tanks will enter service soon, which will strengthen the network in the internal areas.

"The summer peak season of 2023 ended without significant obstacles in terms of water supply and its reserves in the country.

"The ministry, in order to cover the high demand for consumption during the summer periods, is compensating for this through the strategic reserve."

She explained that water projects are being implemented according to the programs prepared for them. The ministry is working to offer more contracts that will increase the strategic reserve of water.

In another development, the ministry's committee for preparing and implementing a strategy to rationalize electricity and water consumption participated in the Green Consumption Day event held at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare office.

In addition, the ministry announced yesterday the exit of two sub-feeders from the main substation B, which led to a power outage in Rumaithiya Block 3.

Emergency teams were present at the site to repair the necessary parts and restore electrical power as quickly as possible.

### Other Voices

#### Arrogant peacocks

By Ahmed alsarraf

Muslims consistently extend invitations to individuals of different faiths, encouraging them to embrace Islam. This eagerness intensifies, especially when the target is a prominent figure, even if it's a third-tier footballer.

Scholars often feel a responsibility to set a positive example, despite potential ignorance or naivety. However, in reality, they do not necessarily embody exemplary behavior in society.

Their appearances may be religious, but their actions and repetitive preaching, which everyone is familiar with, do not necessarily align with true education and knowledge.

They tend to believe that such sermons allow them to influence the hearts and minds of their followers, elevating their status above teachers, scientists, and physicians.

This perception fosters a false sense of superiority, overshadowing their actual unfortunate circumstances that lack a foundation in science and understanding. According to a friend, this false sense of superiority hinders scholars from acknowledging their need for growth and discarding backwardness.

When residing in foreign countries, often labeled as atheistic lands, they prioritize benefiting from available privileges. Simultaneously, they make efforts to evade fulfilling their commitments, such as tax payments. Dishonestly providing information to gain illegal financial and social support is not uncommon.

They are diligent in securing their entitlements, including the minimum salary requirement. However, when running a business, they might illegally employ individuals without providing social insurance and pay them salaries below the mandated minimum.

In some Gulf countries, including Kuwait, scholars resort to divorcing their wives formally to gain unauthorized social benefits or housing from the Municipality. Later, they remarry them in secret, facilitated by covert contracts signed by witnesses from their own circles, ready to testify to the legitimacy of the marriage.

Despite engaging in these unethical practices, they exhibit arrogance, likened to proud peacocks displaying their colorful feathers, believing their purity surpasses that of believers in other faiths.

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## Securitymen nab 700 residency law violators during past week

Verdict upholds monthly alimony for wife, other expenses

By Munaif Naif, Jaber Al-Hamoud and Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: The Criminal Security Sector, led by Major General Hamid Al-Dawwas and the sector leaders, continued their successive strikes on drug dealers, residency law violators, owners of liquor factories, and thieves of subsidized diesel, as it was able to arrest 700 residency law violators during the past week.**

According to security statistics, officers from the departments of Residence Affairs Investigations in all governorates were able to arrest 42 people of different nationalities who were caught trading in locally manufactured liquor, 152 people for immoral acts via social media, and 21 others for trading in narcotic substances.

The detectives also arrested a four-member gang of different nationalities for carrying out electronic fraud, seven people for stealing electrical cables, seven for stealing subsidized diesel and sand from Wafra area, and two for stealing vehicles.

According to security sources, strict instructions were issued to intensify the work of officers from the criminal security and residency affairs sector to combat drug dealers, their promoters, abusers, and "thieves," and to strike the dens of vice and their promoters through social media.

□ □ □

**Court verdict upheld:** The Court of Appeals upheld the verdict issued by the Family Court that obligated a Kuwaiti citizen to pay his wife a monthly amount of KD 450 as alimony, children's support, maid's salary, and the rent for a babysitter's residence, as well as make a one-time payment of KD 500 to furnish the babysitter's residence.

According to the case files, the legal counsel representing the wife Lawyer Inam Haider demanded in her claim statement to prove her client's custody of her children from her husband and to oblige him not to dispute her in this matter and to pay her previous spousal support of both types, starting from the date he refrained from spending on her, and to make it continuous.

Lawyer Haider also requested the court to oblige the husband to pay her maintenance of both types for their children from the date of filing the lawsuit, make it continuous, and oblige him to provide a car or pay for it in cash, even in monthly installments, within the limits of KD 5,000, as well as pay the maid's monthly salary continuously, and the expenses for recruiting the maid and a babysitter, and the rent of the babysitter's residence continuously every month.

□ □ □

**Case fabricated:** Expressing hope for a favorable resolution in the case of Kuwaiti citizen Mubarak Al-Ajmi, who was wrongly detained in Thailand under allegations of mobile phone theft, Kuwait's Ambassador to Thailand, HE Muhammad Al-Failakawi, said, "We anticipate a positive outcome upon appeal, and we remain optimistic for good news."

Al-Failakawi told Al-Seyassah daily that the Kuwaiti embassy is actively following up Al-Ajmi's case, emphasizing, "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is fully informed about the case and has taken all necessary steps."

Al-Ajmi, accompanied by his father, was in Thailand for medical treatment for six months. While they were on their way back home, he was arrested at the Bangkok airport, due to a misunderstanding when an airport staff member accidentally swapped Al-Ajmi's phone with another passenger's similar-looking phone. This misunderstanding led the passenger to falsely accuse Mubarak of theft. In an extortion attempt, the passenger demanded 100,000 baht (approximately 850 Kuwaiti dinars) to drop the fabricated accusation.

### Varsity ordered to pay KD1,500 comp

## Court overturns decision issued by private university to expel student

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: The Court of Appeals overturned the decision issued by a private university to expel a student from the university during the second semester after failing her in a scientific subject.

The court obligated the university to pay compensation worth KD 1,500 to her, affirming that the seized papers and tools were not considered evidence based on fraud.

The details of the incident are summarized in what was presented by the student's legal counsel Lawyer Khaled Hussein Al-Sawai, who said his client was surprised by the accusation of cheating and the use of inappropriate words by one of the female administrative employees. After that incident, a decision was issued to fail her in that subject and dismiss her from the university during the second semester.

The student appealed the university's decision but to no avail, stating that the decision was not based on a valid reason and was not justified by reality and the law, but rather it was an abuse of power because the cheating incident had no basis in truth, no papers or tools were seized from her, and no records from surveillance cameras were produced.

Lawyer Al-Sawai said the invigilator, when questioned, had testified that the cheating incident was not true, and denied what was attributed to his client.

In the merits of its ruling, the court explained that the decision taken by the university was not based on any act of fraud and had no basis in truth, as no papers or tools were seized, and the records of the surveillance cameras were not produced. Moreover, the invigilator, when questioned, testified that the cheating incident was not true. In addition, the plaintiff had denied the accusations leveled against her.



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# Kuwait affirms commitment to nuclear peace

Strengthening global security and development

**VIENNA, Sept 28, (KUNA):** The State of Kuwait affirmed Thursday the important role played by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in transferring knowledge to help member states benefit from the peaceful applications of nuclear power and strengthening nuclear security and safety systems in the world.

Kuwait is keen on cooperating with the IAEA to use nuclear energy and build capabilities to implement vital and safe projects that contribute to social and economic development, said Kuwait's Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Representative to the United Nations organizations in Vienna Talal Sulaiman Al-Fassam at the 67th session of the IAEA General Conference in Vienna.

He stressed Kuwait's eagerness to enhance coordination with all member states to achieve the goals of using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

The Kuwaiti envoy highlighted the constructive cooperation between Kuwait and the IAEA in various fields, mainly the technical cooperation, as Kuwait submitted four new national projects for the production of genetically modified crops, groundwater management, treatment of cancer, and detection of marine microplastic pollution.

"In addition to the continuous coordination in the areas of nuclear technical applications in the oil industry, the production of genetically modified crops and researching the feasibility of using small reactors to produce electricity," Ambassador Al-Fassam unveiled.

He pointed to Kuwait's contribution to the three phases of the program to modernize the IAEA's atomic laboratories in Seibersdorf, Austria, wishing the success and completion of the modernization program.



KUNA photo  
Kuwait's Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Representative to the United Nations organizations in Vienna Talal Sulaiman Al-Fassam speaking at the 67th session of the IAEA General Conference.

In the field of nuclear security, Ambassador Al-Fassam said that his country hosted, during the period from May 28-June 8, 2023, eight IAEA experts to benefit from their expertise in the nuclear field and inform them of all laws, government decisions, and activities related to radioactive and nuclear materials.

Kuwait is keen to strengthen its national nuclear security measures and systems for physical protection in accordance with the International Physical Protection Advisory Service (IPPAS) system established by the International Atomic Energy Agency in 1995, he said.

He touched on the crucial role of the agency in implementing the comprehensive safeguards system.

Ambassador Al-Fassam renewed Kuwait's call for Iran to continue cooperation with the IAEA to clarify and settle the outstanding issues and to fully adhere to the comprehensive and joint plan of action issued in pursuant to the UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

He also urged Iran to cooperate with the international agency to provide the necessary credible guarantees regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear materials and activities in Iran and ensure the continuation of its status as a non-nuclear-weapon state.

Ambassador Al-Fassam affirmed Kuwait's commitment to establishing a Middle East free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in accordance with the decision of the 1995 NPT Review Conference and the results of the review conferences in 2000 and 2010.

He emphasized the importance of Israel joining, as a non-nuclear-weapon party, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and subjecting all of its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

While the right of countries to produce, develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes within the framework of what was ensured in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Kuwait warns of the danger of the spread of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction as they constitute a challenge to international peace and security, especially at a time the world is witnessing delicate challenges and rapid developments, Ambassador Al-Fassam said.

He re-affirmed Kuwait's continued support for the leading role played by the International Atomic Energy Agency and its effective contribution to building capabilities, achieving sustainable development, confronting economic, food and other crises and its role in strengthening nuclear security and safety systems.

He welcomed the General Conference's adoption of the decision to re-appoint Mr. Rafael Grossi as Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency for a second term of four years, expressing Kuwait's support for the efforts made by Mr. Grossi, including his appreciated efforts towards strengthening the agency's role to protect all nuclear sites, preventing a nuclear accident that threatens international peace and security.



Opening of the charitable art exhibition 'Drawings of Hope'.

## 'Drawings of Hope'

### UNHCR hosts charity art exhibition

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28, (KUNA): On Wednesday, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Kuwait hosted the "Drawings of Hope" charity art exhibition. This event aimed to show support for refugee education and raise awareness of the stories of those who have been compelled to leave their communities or homelands through the medium of art.

During the exhibition's opening ceremony, Nisreen Rabiean, the UNHCR representative in Kuwait, emphasized the cultural significance of this initiative. She highlighted the collaborative effort to raise awareness about the 15 million school-age refugees worldwide and the importance of their voices.

Rabiean underscored that the project also intends to shine a spotlight on this critical issue, inspiring positive actions toward change and a brighter future for refugees across the globe. She explained that this innovative endeavor was initiated by visual artist Lina Hijazi, who aimed to support refugee education. Remarkably, the initiative quickly gained momentum, with the participation of 23 artists.

Rabiean further clarified that the purchase of each piece of artwork would make a profound impact on a generation displaced by war, conflict, and displacement. It would provide them with fresh opportunities for their educational journeys, ultimately enabling them to lead better lives and support both themselves and their families.



Side of the exhibition

KUNA photos

She expressed her gratitude to all the participating artists and extended her appreciation to the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their support in obtaining the necessary approvals to hold the exhibition and for their continued backing of UNHCR's activities in Kuwait, turning them into tangible realities.

Lastly, Rabiean thanked Nasser Al-Ajmi, the Director General of the Tanmia Charitable Society, for facilitating the electronic platform used to collect support during this event.



# October

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### Due diligence

Continued from Page 1

Chaos is being nurtured to achieve mischievous aims. This is the case in Libya, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Israel and Iran, where instability reigns. As for Lebanon, which suffers from major crises as well as insecurity and economic instability, the Syrian refugee flow has gotten out of control, posing an unprecedented existential threat to the country. Major powers also have their share of chaos and instability; the protests in France can attest to that.

In the face of such chaos worldwide and old and new conflicts, I, as a GCC citizen, cannot but sound the alarm to warn of chaos and conflicts spreading to our countries. What are we planning to do? Will we sit by idly without taking any preventive or defensive measures?

Complacency is not an option. We should be careful and on the alert to protect our land and existence. At some point, wars risk to over-spill due to conflict between states over global power. This would lead to a new world war.

Amid all these conflicts, the GCC countries might face security, military, humanitarian, and even economic challenges. Are we ready to deal with these risks if they occur, God forbid?

Prevention is the best treatment. I do not want to spread fear; I just urge you to take the necessary steps to limit the damage and consequences of any disaster that might take place in the world. We should rely on ourselves to face all challenges without waiting for help neither from the East nor from the West. God helps those who help themselves. In addition, these countries are vulnerable, and they will only care about saving themselves.

In this article, I wanted to shed light on the conspiracy looming over our region, and that would sweep us away in a vicious circle of conflicts and confrontations engulfing countries and continents and paving the way for a new era of conflicts and power sharing.

Therefore, I call upon the GCC countries to establish a consolidated crisis unit to closely monitor the developments and put plans to defend our existence, security, and stability. I fear conflict and chaos would reach the Arab Gulf, which would face the greatest risk of random and illegal immigration by Africans, Asians and others to our countries.

Over the years, I warned in my articles published in my book "Would anyone listen?" of things that happened later. Today, I am trying to anticipate the events in all transparency and realism. Let's work to protect ourselves and our societies by providing them with means of defense and prevention to be ready for emergencies and to undercut all parties trying to implement agendas that are harmful to our Arab region. We will not tolerate any infringement on our lands.

### Congratulations pour

Continued from Page 1

Upon assuming his rule, His Highness the Amir pledged to follow the footsteps of the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah by maintaining national unity and protecting stability and security, as well as completing the Kuwaiti mediation process of uniting the Gulf Cooperation Council member countries and strengthening pan-GCC dialogue at the 41st GCC Summit, hosted by Saudi Arabia in 2021.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has received a message from His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, expressing congratulations on the third anniversary of His Highness the Amir's taking of the helm of power.

His Highness the Crown Prince, in the cable, expressed sincere felicitations and cordial sentiments on the occasion of His Highness the Amir's ascending to the top post, wished him lasting good health and praying to His Almighty to keep him "as the father and supporter" for the people of Kuwait.

He recalled, on the glorious national occasion, the comprehensive achievements that have been made during His Highness' era in various fields, affirming that Kuwait, with the steady steps, would head for further development and prosperity.

"We also renew the declaration of allegiance to pursue fulfilling the tasks faithfully behind your sagacious leadership for sake of promoting our precious homeland," His Highness Sheikh Mishal wrote to His Highness Sheikh Nawaf.

In return, His Highness the Amir sent a letter to His Highness the Crown Prince, expressing gratitude for his brotherly torrents of feelings, manifesting identical wishes for him and the homeland.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has received messages from National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun, His Highness the Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah and His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

Among the senior and ranking officials and figures who expressed good wishes to His Highness the Amir on the national occasion was His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, who wished His Highness well-being, praying that he may remain Kuwait's sagacious leader and mastermind of its development.

In return, His Highness the Amir sent letters to the good wishers, voicing identical wishes for them and the homeland.

The Ministers of Defense and Interior congratulated on Thursday His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on the third anniversary of assuming office.

In a cable address to His Highness the Amir, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah expressed wishes of good health and welfare on this glorious occasion.

The minister affirmed that Ministry members would continue onward to safeguard Kuwait's security under the watchful eye of the leadership, vowing to continue efforts to protect citizens and residents alike against any harm or danger.

In a similar fashion, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah wished His Highness good health and evermore success in leading the country.

### 15 cases

Continued from Page 1

Public Prosecution indicating that there are pending cases of squandering of the public funds related to it being tried outside the country.

On its part, the ministry explained that referring the facts to the Public Prosecution is based on the existence of a suspicion of squandering the public funds. In the event of a decision to preserve it, such suspicion on public funds is excluded.

However, in the event of a conviction ruling, the value of the money subject to the squandering is determined according to what is included in the ruling.

From its end, the ministry collects and recovers the amounts subject to squandering in accordance with the established legal procedures.

The facts that reveal a suspected crime of squandering of public funds are referred to the prosecution to take legal and judicial measures in that regard.



Kuwait leading the global list for obesity and diabetes worldwide

# Kuwait marks World Heart Day, calls for healthy lifestyle

By Mirvat Abdeldaymen

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28 (KUNA): Despite the huge advancement in medical science, cardiovascular diseases have become more prominent due to poor lifestyle choices, eating habits, and lack of physical activity.

While that might be discouraging for many, countries around the globe, including Kuwait, will be observing World Heart Day on September 29, an event promoting awareness of heart diseases and ways to counter them.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one of the main culprits causing deaths are cardiovascular diseases which amount to 16 percent of those deceased globally.

In 2000, over two million people died due to heart-related diseases with the number jumping horrifically to around nine million in 2019 according to WHO estimations, the number might even reach around 23 million by 2030 if no preventative plans were set in motion.

On the numbers of those suffering from heart disease in Kuwait, Dr. Abeer Al-Bahho -- health reinforcement department at the Health Ministry -- told KUNA that cardiovascular diseases were the number one cause of death in the country according to a study carried out in 2021.

**Deaths**

The study showed that there were 9.78 deaths from cardiovascular diseases for every 100,000 of the population, she revealed, noting that the global percentage had reached 85 percent, around 18.6 million annually.

Symptoms vary for cardiovascular disease including tightness in the chest, numbness of legs, hands, and arms, and various others, said Dr. Al-Bahho, adding that eating healthy and exercising presented a huge chance for people to ward off heart disease.

Unfortunately, Kuwait is leading the global list for obesity and diabetes worldwide, factors which might contribute to cardiovascular diseases, Consultant Cardiologist Dr. Farida Al-Hadid said in a similar statement.

Al-Hadid indicated that she had led a study from 2003-07 focusing on employees at government institutes, revealing that the effort had shown that 24 percent of employees were suffering from high blood pressure, a factor that might lead to heart disease.

There are many causes for heart disease, she affirmed, noting that genetics, heavy smoking, and bad health habits might also play a part in this matter.

A failing heart will have an impact on various organs, stated the consultant.



Dr. Samah Al-Kharji, Head of cardiology at the Adan Hospital



Dr. Farida Al-Hadid, Consultant Cardiologist



Dr. Sana Al-Majed, head of the health ministry's department of nutrition



Dr. Abeer Al-Bahho, health reinforcement department at the Health Ministry

## #UseHeart movement rallies for change as heart disease continues to claim most lives

WHF urges all sectors, citizens to combat cardiovascular disease

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: This World Heart Day, the World Heart Federation (WHF) is urging all sectors and citizens to join forces and take down cardiovascular disease (CVD) from its "number one killer" position. Conditions of the heart or blood vessels, including stroke and heart failure, killed more than 20 million people in 2021.

However, up to 80 percent of premature heart attacks and strokes can be prevented. Many affected by the high-trending CVD rates include those under 55 years of age and people in low- and middle-income countries, as well as some high-income countries.

Professor Daniel J. Piñeiro, President of WHF, said, "The figures are so staggering that in 2013, ischaemic heart disease featured in the Guinness Book of World Records. We want to set a new record, one that improves the health and access to care for every citizen and mobilizes everyone to improve cardiovascular health."

**Powerful platform**

Dr. Mohammed Al Jarallah, Chief Medical Officer and Head of the Department of Cardiology at Al Amiri Hospital, said, World Heart Day, observed annually on September 29th, serves as a powerful platform to unite individuals, communities, and organizations in the fight against cardiovascular diseases (CVDs). As the leading cause of death globally, CVDs claim the lives of millions each year. How-



Professor Daniel J. Piñeiro, President of World Heart Federation



Dr. Mohammed Al Jarallah, Chief Medical Officer and Head of the Department of Cardiology at Al Amiri Hospital



Dr. Rajesh Rajan, Cardiologist at Al Amiri Hospital



Dr. Raja Dashti, Senior Consultant Cardiologist at Al Amiri Hospital

ever, by implementing sustainable changes, adopting healthier habits, and prioritizing preventive measures, we can make a significant impact in reducing the global burden of heart diseases.

"The global #UseHeart movement springs from the annual World Heart Day campaign to drive year-long awareness and action to reverse the debilitating impacts of CVD."

Dr. Raja Dashti, Senior Consultant Cardiologist at Al Amiri Hospital, said, "CVD prevalence can be traced to gaps in care systems, variable access to prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.

Though relatively easy to monitor and treat, high blood pressure remains the leading risk factor for developing CVD. National health systems must expand coverage of essential services for CVD and other circulatory conditions, prioritize primary care and early screening, allocate public funding, and ensure an adequate workforce."

**Innovative initiatives**

Dr. Rajesh Rajan, Cardiologist at Al Amiri Hospital, said, Through innovative initiatives, collaborative partnerships, and community engagement, we aim to empower individuals to take control of their heart health.

By providing accessible resources, education, and support, we strive to inspire positive lifestyle changes that will have a lasting impact on the well-being of individuals and communities alike. "The global #UseHeart movement is for the health, well-being, and productivity of the citizens.

The #UseHeart movement is also a celebration of the strides made in raising awareness, improving and expanding treatments, and using telemedicine and other digital interventions."



The medical team in the vascular unit at Jaber Hospital.

**Pioneering rare surgical breakthrough**

### Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital achieves new milestone in aortic arch catheterization

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28, (KUNA): Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital has reported a remarkable achievement by its Vascular Unit. They successfully performed a highly intricate catheterization procedure on a 65-year-old patient afflicted with an 8-centimeter aortic arch aneurysm—a surgery considered one of the most intricate and rarest arterial catheterization procedures ever conducted.

Dr. Ahmed Amir, the Head of the Vascular Unit and an expert in Vascular Surgery and Arterial Catheterization, shared in a press statement today that this operation was an exceedingly complex endeavor. It involved the complete replacement of the aortic arch and its associated arteries leading to the brain and hands, all accomplished through a catheter with minimal intervention.

Amir explained that cases of this nature necessitate the production of a specialized stent tailored to the patient's arterial dimensions. Crafting such a stent typically requires 6-8 weeks, involving a meticulous process of development and testing before it can be utilized for the intended patient.

He highlighted that this cutting-edge technology is typically available only in select hospitals worldwide. Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital began employing branched stents in 2020 and has continuously adopted the latest international



Aortic arch catheterization

KUNA photos

advancements in branched aortic arch catheterization.

Amir stressed that these procedures demand a concerted effort from an integrated team, encompassing vascular surgeons, cardiologists, anesthesiologists, intensive care specialists, and kidney surgeons. Their collaborative approach ensures the formulation of the most suitable treatment plan to minimize complications.

The hospital takes pride in

achieving accreditation as one of the first centers in the Middle East to offer this groundbreaking procedure, following a series of successful surgeries for less complex aortic aneurysms. Amir expressed optimism that by embracing the latest global technologies in heart surgery, the hospital will help reduce the need to send patients abroad for treatment, ultimately aspiring to become a regional hub in the Middle East for aortic aneurysm care.

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## 'Poorly behaved tourists' force popular spot's closure

# Leaf-peeping social media users clogging a Vermont back road

POMFRET, Vt., Sept 28, (AP): Social media users take note: You won't be able to snap that fall foliage selfie at a popular Vermont spot. The town has temporarily closed the road to nonresidents due to overcrowding and "poorly behaved tourists."

The normally quiet dirt road from Pomfret to Woodstock, home to the frequently photographed Sleepy Hollow Farm, will be open only to residents through mid-October. And local law enforcement plans to enforce it.

In recent years, social media users and photographers have clogged the narrow road for selfies and fall foliage shots of the scenic private property, drawn by its colorful hillside trees, the barn and classic New England home.

Locals say they understand the lure of the beautiful leaves and landscape, but say some visitors have gone too far: blocking traffic with their parked vehicles, obstructing access for residents and emergency vehicles, as well as picnicking and even relieving themselves on private land surrounding the home. One Instagram poster even tipped followers about how easy it is to go around the entrance gate to the private property, which also has surveillance cameras.

"Poorly behaved tourists have damaged roads, had accidents, required towing out of ditches, trampled gardens, defecated on private property, parked in fields and driveways, and verbally assaulted residents," said the organizers of a GoFundMe site called Save Cloudland Road.

"It's just a shame," said local resident Nancy Bassett. "It spoils it for a lot of people."

### Destinations

Overcrowding driven by social media posts have plagued other destinations around the globe, from a street in Paris to a small city in California that was overrun with visitors when heavy winter rains produced a "super bloom" of wild poppies. Disneyland-sized crowds hit Lake Elsinore, California, in 2019 "who trampled the very habitat that they placed so high in regard."

People illegally parked their cars along the freeway, created gridlock affecting emergency responders and infringed on residents' ability to shop or even get to work, Lake Elsinore

Mayor Natasha Johnson said. This year, the canyons where wild poppies grow and nearby parking areas were completely off-limits, with the sheriff warning violators could be ticketed, towed or even arrested.

Zion National Park in Utah took another approach to ease overcrowding and improve safety on its popular Angels Landing hike: Hikers are now required to get a permit.

On that back road in Vermont, the increase in foliage season traffic during the last several years has spurred "by extraordinary tourism interest in private properties" and caused "significant safety, environmental, aesthetic, and quality of life issues," the Select Board of Pomfret, a town of just over 900, wrote in a message to the community.

Social media users have reacted in various ways.

"Honestly it has been photographed so many times I don't see the point anyway," one wrote on Facebook. "I definitely can't blame them as social media has given away so many great spots."

A local milk truck driver advised: "Please, come to VT and enjoy our foliage. It's amazing. For the love of God, PLEASE pull off the road before stopping to take pics, and please pull off the road instead of driving 25 in a 50."

Other posters wrote: "Vermont is really beautiful. So are lots of other places," and, "Why in the world would you want to visit somewhere with a crowd of people? There are beautiful spots that can be enjoyed

and you'll have them all to yourself."

The scenic, winding Vermont passage named Cloudland Road is now temporarily closed to nonresidents and lined with no-parking signs and no-photo signs along the farm property. There's also a no trespassing sign at the gate.

Locals encourage tourists to visit nearby attractions that can accommodate them with parking and other amenities.

"People love the leaves and we understand foliage and it brings people here and we don't want that to stop," said Linda Arbuckle, a clerk at the local general store. "Unfortunately some people, not all, have taken it to the next step, where people have come home and people have been on their porches having lunch."



Photos from the event.

## Indian Ambassador inaugurates Kuwait Badminton Challenge 2023

# Top badminton stars compete in IBAK tourney

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: The highly anticipated international badminton tournament of 2023, the Kuwait Badminton Challenge, organized by the Indian Badminton Association-Kuwait (IBAK), kicked off at the association's Salwa badminton court Wednesday evening.

The event, which was inaugurated by the chief guest, the Indian Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Dr Adarsh Swaika, accompanied by Second Secretary, (Political, Information, Culture and Community Affairs & Associations) Nikhil Kumar, captivated badminton enthusiasts and

showcased the remarkable skills of international badminton stars in the Kuwait region.

The tournament, spanning three days, is poised to delight badminton aficionados in Kuwait with an impressive lineup of top-ranking international stars from India, Malaysia, the Middle East, and Kuwait.

Partaking in the event, featuring both team and open categories, will be over 40 international players alongside local talents from Kuwait.

In its 8th edition, the event is anticipated to be another accolade for the Indian Badminton Association-



The Indian Ambassador, HE Dr. Adarsh Swaika, is addressing the event.

Kuwait (IBAK), garnering support from prominent corporate entities in Kuwait. The defending champions and six-time winners, IBAK All Stars, will strive to defend their title against five other formidable teams in the team event category.

The open category will witness players competing for top honors across six disciplines: Elite Men's Doubles, Men's Singles, Professional Men's Doubles, Advanced Men's Doubles, Intermediate Doubles (exclusive to IBAK members), Above 50 Men's Doubles, and Mixed Doubles categories.



## GCC Presidents, GCA CEOs meeting held

The first ever meeting of GCC Presidents and CEOs of Gulf Cricket Associations (GCA) took place in Doha on Sept 23 where key decisions were made along with future strategies and plans for the development and growth of cricket in the region.

The meeting was hosted by

Sheikh Abdul Aziz Bin Saud Al Thani at the iconic raffias hotel where the hosting rights for Gulf T20I Cricket Championship of Men's and Women's were given to Kuwait Cricket Club for the year 2024 in the presence of KCC President Haider Farman and Director General Sajid Ashraf.



Photos from the event.



A group photo from the event.

## Trichur Engineering College Alumni Association celebrates TECONAM-23

The Trichur Engineering College Alumni Association in Kuwait (TECAL Kuwait) came together to celebrate Onam 2023, known as TECONAM-23, at the Kohinoor Hotel in Fahaheel, following traditional customs and festivities.

The event commenced with the lighting of the Bhadra Deepam by Mr. Abdul Jabbar, the Alumni Chairman. It was graced by the presence of distinguished guests, including Mr. Suresh Krishnan, Mrs. Rema Jayakumar, Sudheer Krishnakumar, Sunil Chandran, Jacob Paret, Santhosh Joseph, Unnikrishnan, and more.

The event was elegantly hosted by Ms. Ameya Suresh, whose flawless Malayalam presentation showcased her remarkable skills and potential. Following the inauguration, various cultural performances were presented by alumni and their families.

The event began on a spiritual note with a prayer song by Nandana Ramesh, setting a divine mood. The program featured splendid performances, including the Thiruvathira dance by TEC Ladies, a soulful piano performance by the young talent Johan Smijoe, and a semi-classical dance performance by the highly talented Neha Vyas, which was a delightful surprise for the audience.

Duet songs by Rema Jayakumar with Jaya Kumar and Bhavana with Jinesh added a musical touch to the evening. The audience enjoyed a new experience with a stand-up comedy performance by Jinesh Ramakrishnan.

The program also featured energetic solo dance performances by young talents Alaina Shyji, Ms. Zainab Rifad, and Anaila Shyji,

which were truly impressive. The medley led by Chack Joy and his team featured a combination of old and new melodies that took the audience on a nostalgic journey.

One of the program's highlights was the group dance performance by both kids and seniors, showcasing the diversity of talent among the alumni and their families.

The event's culinary highlight was the delicious organic homemade Sadhya, prepared by the families of alumni members. The Sadhya was a testament to the culinary skills and traditions of the community. Alumni General Secretary, Unnikrishnan, delivered the vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to all those who contributed to making TECONAM-23 a memorable and vibrant celebration of Onam.



Under the patronage of His Excellency Eng. Abdulrahman Abdulmohsen A. AlFadley, Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture, the Global Prize for Innovation in Desalination (GPID) winners will be announced at the Innovation Driven Desalination Conference.

The conference attracts specialists and experts in the water sector from around the world and will take place in Jeddah from September 30 to October 3.

GPID is in line with the objectives of

Saudi Vision 2030 and aims to support and encourage innovative desalination solutions.

More than 105 participants from research centers and universities, entrepreneurs, and representatives of national, regional, and global desalination companies are competing for the \$10 million prize.

Their projects aim to reduce energy usage, minimize capital and operating expenses, incorporate modern technologies, change business models, and

advance analytical studies that promote innovation. The winning entries will be chosen based on their potential to shape the future of the desalination sector.

GPID is sponsored by the Saline Water Conversion Corporation (SWCC) with a strong commitment to pioneering solutions and technological advancements.

The sponsorship showcases SWCC's position as a true world leader in innovation and knowledge and as the primary

advocate for creating an environment within the desalination industry, that nourishes the conception, progress, and execution of such initiatives.

With such an active and broad engagement from global companies and individuals with creative ideas, GPID aims to contribute to spreading the culture of innovation in the water sector and transform it into a culture of work and practice that enhances our readiness for the future.

SWCC is committed to promoting and

encouraging innovative and sustainable development efforts and is pleased to endorse the local companies that have contributed to this prize, including Mutlaq Al Ghowairi for Contracting, Rawafid Industrial, Saudi Services for Electro Mechanic Works (SSEM), AlSharif Group, Al-Fanar, and Al-Rashed.

Organizers of GPID assigned a committee of experts to judge and evaluate contestants based on prize criteria and ensure essential governance requirements were met.

Market Movements

28-09-2023

Country	Index	Change	Closing pts
UAE	- DFM	+0.52	4,163.58
PHILIPPINES	- PSEI	+1.17	6,385.52
JAPAN	- Nikkei	-1.54	31,872.52
PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	-0.34	46,252.02
SAUDI	- Tadawul	-0.19	11,076.94

# Business

## Rising gas prices continue to limit purchasing power of the households with middle income

DULUTH, Ga., Sept 28, (Business Wire): Primerica, Inc. (NYSE: PRI), a leading provider of financial services in the United States and Canada, announced today the release of the Primerica Household Budget Index™ (HBI™), a monthly index illustrating the purchasing power of U.S. middle-income households with incomes between \$30,000 and \$130,000. In August 2023, the average purchasing power for U.S. middle-income households was 97.4%, down from 97.5% in July 2023. A year ago, in August 2022, the index stood at 88.6%. The slight decrease this month shows that middle-income budgets are still stressed and saving for the future, while eliminating debt remains a challenge.

Primerica Household Budget Index™ - In August 2023, the average purchasing power for U.S. middle-income households was 97.4%, down from 97.5% in July 2023. A year ago, in August 2022, the index stood at 88.6%. The slight decrease this month shows that middle-income budgets are still stressed and saving for the future, while eliminating debt remains a challenge. (Graphic: Business Wire)

"The fragile financial condition of middle-income families experienced continued stress in August," said Glenn J. Williams, CEO of Primerica. "Both gas and food costs rose, impacting the increase in purchasing power occurring since last June. Even small changes in the costs of necessity items can put families in the position of having to take on more debt or not being able to save as much for the future."

"The cumulative impacts of inflation have been severe for middle-income households and go a long way to explaining why consumer sentiment is so low and credit card debt so high," said Amy Crews Cutts, Ph.D., CBE®, economic

consultant to Primerica. "Although worker compensation has been rising, it has not risen as fast as inflation in the cost of everyday necessity items for which middle-income households have little room in their budgets to accommodate."

The index baseline is set at January 2019 and can be thought of as when middle-income households set a budget based on their earned income at that time. Between 2014 and 2020, the HBI™ results recorded steady gains in purchasing power for middle-income families, with a peak of 102.8% in November 2020. This means that relative to January 2019, households were in a stronger financial position to pay their monthly bills because wage growth outpaced the cost of everyday goods. Increasing inflation then caused the index to plummet. In June 2022, it reached a post-pandemic low of 85.4%.

Since the baseline of January 2019, the average middle-income household has cumulatively spent around \$2,677 more than budget on basic necessities. In line with this, if the pandemic and ensuing inflation would not have been a factor, the HBI™ today would be closer to 110%. For more information on the Primerica Household Budget Index, visit [www.householdbudgetindex.com](http://www.householdbudgetindex.com).

The Primerica Household Budget Index™ (HBI™) is constructed monthly on behalf of Primerica by its chief economic consultant Amy Crews Cutts, Ph.D., CBE®. The index measures the purchasing power of middle-income families with household incomes from \$30,000 to \$130,000 and is developed using data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor and the Federal Reserve. The index looks at the cost of necessities including food, gas, utilities and health care and earned income to track differences in inflation and wage growth.

The HBI™ is presented as a percentage. If the index is above 100%, the purchasing power of middle-income families is stronger than in the baseline period and they may have extra money left over at the end of the month that can be applied to things like entertainment, extra savings, or debt reduction. If it is under 100%, households may have to reduce overall spending to levels below budget, reduce their savings or increase debt to cover expenses. The HBI™ uses January 2019 as its baseline. This point in time reflects a recent "normal" economic time prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Periodically, prior HBI™ values may be revised due to revisions in the CPI series and Consumer Expenditure Survey releases by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Primerica, Inc., is a leading provider of financial services to middle-income households in North America. Independent licensed representatives educate Primerica clients about how to better prepare for a more secure financial future by assessing their needs and providing appropriate solutions through term life insurance, which we underwrite, and mutual funds, annuities and other financial products, which we distribute primarily on behalf of third parties. We insured over 5.7 million lives and had over 2.8 million client investment accounts on December 31, 2022. Primerica, through its insurance company subsidiaries, was the #3 issuer of Term Life insurance coverage in the United States and Canada in 2022. Primerica stock is included in the S&P MidCap 400 and the Russell 1000 stock indices and is traded on The New York Stock Exchange under the symbol "PRI."

## EU struggles to update asylum laws 3 years on

BRUSSELS, Sept 28, (AP): Three years after unveiling a plan for sweeping reform of the European Union's outdated asylum rules, government ministers struggled on Thursday to overcome yet another obstacle to putting the new system in place, fueling doubt as to whether it will ever see the light of day.

The New Pact on Migration and Asylum was touted as the answer to the EU's migration woes when it was made public in September 2020. The 27-nation bloc's old rules collapsed in 2015 after well over 1 million people arrived in Europe without authorization. Most were fleeing war in Syria or Iraq.

But little progress was made on the pact as the member states bickered over which country should take charge of migrants when they arrive and whether other countries should be obligated to help.

That riddle was solved, at least temporarily, in June. The plan is held up now over a "crisis regulation" laying out extraordinary measures that could be taken in the event of a massive, unforeseen movement of migrants.

It would involve setting up processing centers on the EU's outside borders where people would be screened when they arrive and include the option to detain people until their asylum claims are assessed.

But the clock is ticking on the whole deal. Elections will be held across the EU in June. For the pact to get through, officials and lawmakers say, an agreement on all 10 parts of the plan must be sealed by February. A new European Commission and European Parliament will start work next year and they may want to modify the pact, raising the risk that it might unravel.

"It's not just the crisis regulation, it's about the whole pact," Spanish Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska warned his EU counterparts as he chaired their meeting in Brussels. The European Parliament must endorse the asylum plan, and lawmakers are blocking talks on parts of it until progress is made.

"There's still a lot of technical and political work to be done" in talks with the lawmakers, said Grande-Marlaska, whose country holds the EU's rotating presidency. "Negotiations on outstanding, sensitive issues are now on hold and this is of great concern to us."

Not only will there be new institutions. Hungary and Poland, which have nationalist and anti-migrant governments, will each take over the bloc's presidency for six months, starting with Budapest in July, then Warsaw in January 2025. Presidencies help set the EU's working priorities.

Hungary and Poland vetoed an EU summit statement in late June after they were outvoted on other parts of the pact. They show no sign that they will back down.

"We have to take a decision based on consensus," Hungarian Deputy Interior Minister Bence Rétvári said. Hungary opposes the use of majority voting. "This is something we cannot accept, we have to have consensus on this issue for it to go ahead, and we don't have a consensus here," he told the ministers.

Human and migrant rights groups are dismayed at the EU's focus on outsourcing its migrant concerns to countries that people leave or transit to get to Europe. Sometimes it uses coercive measures to get its way.

The latest example: the European Commission announced Thursday that it has tightened its visa rules for travelers from Ethiopia, because the country is failing to take back enough of its people who try to enter Europe without authorization.

The new crisis regulation also worries nongovernmental organizations.

"People who arrive at the EU's borders must be able to seek asylum, have their claim examined fairly, and be received with dignity," said Eve Geddie, director of Amnesty International's EU office. "This agreement risks leaving people stranded, detained or destitute along Europe's borders and will do nothing to improve the common response to asylum-seekers in Europe."

For the International Rescue Committee, or IRC, it's just part of a package of measures that could set EU policy on the wrong track for years to come, should the pact ever actually enter force.

"Rather than striking deals with non-EU countries designed to stop people reaching Europe without proper guarantees to respect human rights, the EU must establish truly independent bodies empowered to monitor and prevent human rights violations at borders," IRC Senior Vice President Harlem Desir said.

## Deficit in MEW's budget

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: Despite the huge boom in the collection of revenues and debts owed by consumers following the establishment of the electronic interfaces between the Ministry of Interior and the service ministries, informed sources revealed an expected deficit in the budget of the Ministry of Electricity and Water amounting to KD 3.394 billion during the current fiscal year.

They stressed that the reason behind the deficit is the widening gap between total expenditures estimated at approximately KD 4.113 billion, and revenues estimated at approximately KD 719 million for selling electricity and water services and supplying electricity to the new plots.

The sources called for the need to stop the bleeding of funds directed to support electricity production on an annual basis, represented by the value of oil and lubricants used to operate electricity and water production plants. It amounted to KD 2.917 billion in the current budget, which is an increase of KD 788 million com-

pared to last year's budget of KD 2.129 billion under the item of "commodities and services."

They stressed the need to approve the law to transform the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy into an institution that has been locked up for more than six years and has not seen the light of day yet.

The sources said transforming the ministry into an institution will enable the latter to establish companies and participate in the capital of companies related to achieving its goals.

They explained that they were surprised by the ministry's slowness in completing a consultancy exercise related to the restructuring of its various sectors. The consultant was scheduled to prepare documents related to transforming the ministry into a public institution that includes a number of sectors responsible for companies under the supervision and follow-up of the institution. The initial vision for the exercise includes the production and transmission of energy and water, and collection of fees for the services provided by the ministry through companies.

## US govt estimates economy grew last quarter at a 2.1 percent rate

Figure unchanged from previous projection

WASHINGTON, Sept 28, (AP): The U.S. economy grew at a 2.1% annual pace from April through June, extending its sturdy performance in the face of higher interest rates, the government said Thursday, leaving its previous estimate unchanged.

The second-quarter expansion of the nation's gross domestic product - its total output of goods and services - marked a modest deceleration from the economy's 2.2% annual growth from January through March.

Consumer spending, business investment and state and local government outlays drove the second-quarter economic expansion.

The economy and job market have shown surprising resilience even as the Federal Reserve has dramatically raised interest rates to combat inflation, which last year hit a four-decade high. The Fed has raised its benchmark rate 11 times since March 2022, sparking concerns that ever-higher borrowing rates will trigger a recession.

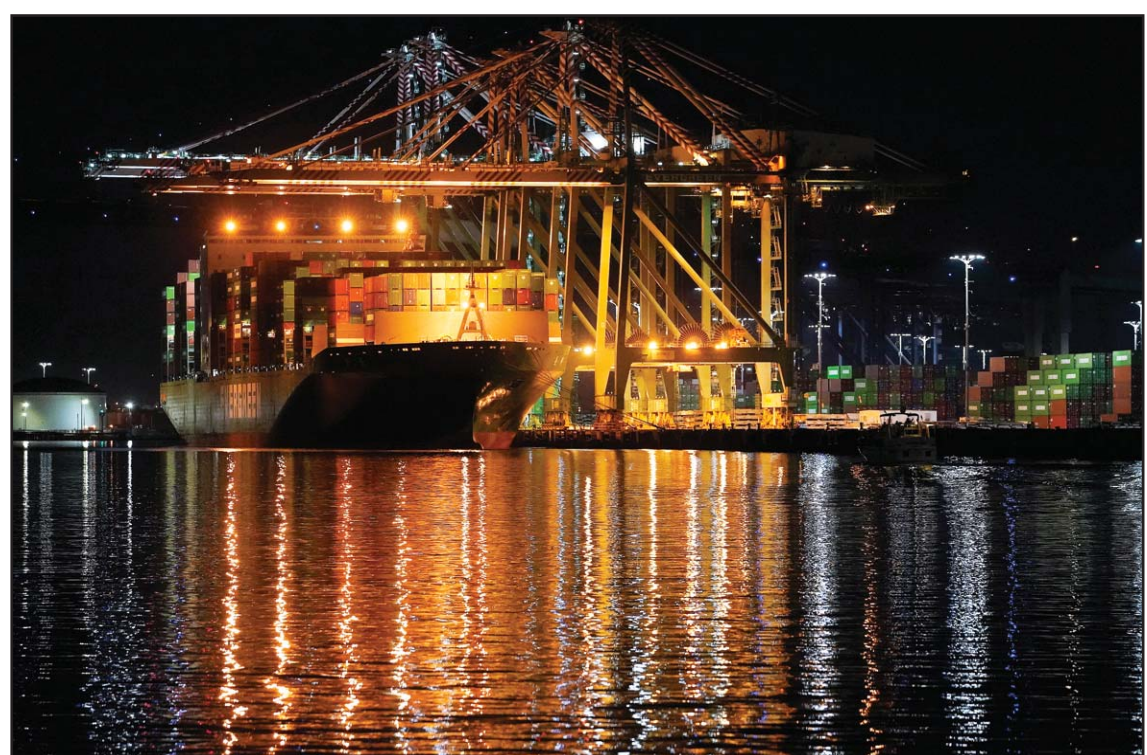
So far, though, inflation has eased without causing much economic pain, raising hopes that the central bank can pull off a so-called soft landing - slowing the economy enough to conquer high inflation without causing a painful recession.

Still, those higher rates have taken a toll. Consumer spending, for example, rose at an annual rate of just 0.8% from April through June, down sharply from the government's previous estimate of 1.7% and the weakest such figure since the first quarter of 2022.

But business investment excluding housing, a closely watched barometer, rose at a 7.4% annual pace, the fastest rate in more than a year. And state and local government spending and investment jumped 4.7%, the biggest such quarterly gain since 2019.

Thursday's report was the government's third and final estimate of economic expansion in the April-June quarter.

Growth is believed to be accelerating in the current July-September quarter, fueled in part by many still-free-spending consumers. Americans, for example, flocked to theaters for the hit summer movies "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer" and splurged on Taylor Swift and Beyonce tickets. Business investment is also thought to have remained solid.



The container ship Ever Libra (TW) is moored at the Port of Los Angeles on Nov. 21, 2022. On Thursday, the Commerce Department issues its third and final estimate of how the U.S. economy performed in the second quarter of 2023. (AP)

## 3rd Annual Intel Applications Top 40 companies revealed

SEATTLE, Sept 28, (Business Wire):

Madrona announced the Intelligent Applications Top 40, a list of the top 40 private companies building applications and infrastructure leveraging artificial intelligence and machine learning. The winning companies were selected by venture investors across 50 top-tier venture firms and leading corporate venture teams actively investing in this space. This year, the team also voted on 5 Rising Star companies.

The list is being released two weeks before the Intelligent Applications Summit, where leaders in the space will discuss issues, challenges and innovations in AI. Hosted in partnership with Microsoft, AWS for Startups, NYSE Group, McKinsey, and Pitch-

Book, the IA Summit will be held in Seattle on October 10th and 11th. IA40 Summit

These companies are net new companies, generally referred to as native GenAI companies, that are building on AI models to generate content. With nearly two-thirds of the 2023 list being new companies, it is clear that the release of models such as those from OpenAI, Anthropic and others, is driving both building and investment.

The use of these models is not limited to net new companies. Established application companies, referred to as Gen-enhanced companies, including IA40 winners such as Canva, Notion, and Airtable, have moved swiftly to leverage AI models to launch new

features or enhance existing products. While Gen-native and Gen-enhanced applications are in some cases going head to head for consumer and information worker attention and dollars, Gen-enhanced companies have distribution, brand recognition, and a network effect over Gen-native companies.

This year, IA40 winners from the early stage through the late stage are harnessing foundation models like GPT-4, Stable Diffusion, Anthropic, and Llama-2. In contrast, last year, only a few early-stage and mid-stage companies had started adopting foundation models, mainly relying on closed-source models such as OpenAI's.

Economists have estimated that the economy expanded at a roughly 3.2% annual rate in the third quarter, which would be the fastest quarterly growth in a year. Even more optimistic estimates have projected that growth from July through September exceeded a 4% annual rate, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.

Even so, the acceleration in growth

isn't likely to endure. The economy is expected to weaken in the final three months of the year. Hiring and income growth are slowing. And economists think the savings that many Americans amassed during the pandemic from federal stimulus checks will have evaporated by next quarter.

The economy also faces an array of obstacles that are expected to hobble

growth. They include surging oil prices, the resumption of student loan payments, the effects of the United Auto Workers strike, the loss of pandemic-era child care aid and a likely government shutdown beginning this weekend.

The combined effects of those factors will hamper Americans' ability to spend and likely weaken the economy.

## Emirati and Egyptian banks agree to a currency swap deal

CAIRO, Sept 28, (AP): The central banks of the United Arab Emirates and Egypt agreed Thursday to a currency exchange deal, which could bolster the struggling Egyptian economy.

A joint news release said the agreement would allow the two central banks to exchange up to 5 billion Emirati dirhams and 42 billion Egyptian pounds, or roughly the equivalent of \$1.36 billion.

The Egyptian pound lost more than 50% of its value against the dollar in

the last 18 months, and the country is suffering from a shortage of foreign currency. Egypt, the Middle East's most populous country, is the world's largest importer of grain. Its supplies traditionally have come from eastern Europe, so it has been hit hard by the fallout of the Ukraine war.

Last month Egypt's annual inflation rate stood at 39.7%, more than double compared to the same month last year, when it recorded 15.3%.

Currency swap arrangements are

usually deployed when nations are seeking to shore up central and domestic banks by providing them with extra liquidity in the form of a foreign currency.

"It seems again that the UAE is providing Egypt with financial support," said James Swanston, an economist specializing in the Middle East and North Africa. "Egypt's central bank needs more ammunition to prop up its currency."

The UAE and the other gulf states

have been chief backers of President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi's government since it came to power in 2013. Estimates suggest over \$100 billion in Gulf money has gone to Cairo via Central Bank deposits, fuel aid and other support since then.

The heads of the Emirati and Egyptian central banks both said Thursday's deal would enhance cooperation between the two allied countries, but gave few further details about the agreement.



**Al-Hassad**  
More draws and annual returns

Monthly 10,000  
Quarterly 250,000  
Annual 100,000

ahli united bank

Al-Hassad Weekly Draw promotion visual.

**AUB congratulates the winners of Al-Hassad Weekly Draw**

Ahli United Bank (AUB) congratulates the Winners of Al-Hassad Weekly Draw of Al-Hassad Islamic account, which was held on 27 September, 2023 at the bank's head office in the presence of a representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry as well as a representative from Deloitte as the external auditor to oversee the draws as per the instructions of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in this regard.

The Bank Announced 10 Winners Of KD 1,000 As Follows: Azeezah Eid Saeed Al-Sawagh Al-Azmi, Saoud S T Al-Azemi, An-

ukorn Chanphiom, Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Mohammad Abdulkareem Ali Mansouri, Mohd Falak Mohd Salim, Fahad Ahmad Mohammad Al-Kandari, Manal Abdulrahman Fahad Al-Rashed, Kobra Gholamabbas Kargar And Ali Abdulaziz Mansour Al-Mahrous.

During the same day, AUB held the postponed weekly draw of 20 September; 2023 and announced 10 Winners Of KD 1,000 As Follows: Hanan T A Alnajadah, Musaed Salem Ahmad Al-Barjas, Loulwah Ahmad Saffah Al-Dhafeeri, Walter John Vaz, Ab-

bas Hussain Mohammad Hussain Rabeea, Salma Naser Saad Alazmi, Olga Waleed Ahmad Al-Busairi, Ali Manea Faraj Alajmi, Omar Ahmad Abdullah Al-Neseeb and Jaseem H S Abdullah.

In its new package, Al-Hassad Islamic Saving Account presents a broader variety of rewards. Customers could now participate in the draw to win a monthly KD 100,000 prize, in addition to 10 weekly prizes of KD 1,000 each. The grand quarterly prize of KD 250,000 in cash for the winner remains the most important aspiration of customers. It is a

# LuLu Hypermarket launches World Food Festival



Top and above: Some photos of the event

**Event to last for a week**

LuLu Hypermarket, the regional leader in retailing, launched its World Food Festival promotion, which runs from 27 September to 3 October at all outlets of the hypermarket in Kuwait.

The week-long celebration of food products from around the world was inaugurated on 27 September at the AlRai outlet by renowned Indian film actress Rajisha Vijayan and popular Arabic chef in Kuwait, Mimi Murad, along with top management of LuLu Kuwait and representatives of the event's sponsors.

The inaugural event was made even more exciting with a 'Taste & Win' competition that pitted the culinary talents of nearly 50 contestants. The first-place winner

was awarded a gift voucher worth KD100, while the second and third place winners were presented with gift vouchers worth KD75 and KD 50 respectively. All other participants in the contest received consolation prizes. Special prizes were also awarded to all contestants by the well-known mobile brand, Honor.

The World Food Festival witnessed amazing promotional offers and 'never-before' discounts on a wide array of food products from all food brands. Throughout the promotional week, LuLu Hypermarket outlets also held several exciting activities, promotions and displays of culinary feats that ensured a steady footfall of shoppers to these venues.

Some of the crowd-pulling events included, cutting the longest shawarma at the LuLu Fahaaheel branch on 27 September; X'mas cake mixing ceremony on 27 September at the LuLu Dajeej outlet; the 'Mega Loaded Fries' at LuLu Qurain on 28 September; and a live cooking demo by Arabic chef Mimi Murad at the LuLu Qurain outlet on 28 September.

Other exciting activities during LuLu World Food Festival were the multiple cookery contests, and the special food stalls and sampling counters set up at all outlets that offered visitors a chance to taste an array of dishes from around the world, and to buy their desired dishes. Another attraction of the food festival

was the Indian street food stalls that offered authentic Indian fast foods, as well as several food-themed designs, decorations, cutouts and creative food displays that added to the allure of the week-long celebration of foods from all over the world.

The main sponsors of the event were Alwazzan, Bayara, IFFCO, Tiffany, Kitco, Alpro, Americana, Arla, Majdi, Nestle, Seara, Kenwood, Panasonic, Samsung, Black + Decker and Honor.

The World Food Festival reiterated LuLu Hypermarket's commitment to provide shoppers with a world-class shopping experience that offers the finest products from around the world at highly competitive prices.

# Aramco to enter global 'LNG' business by acquiring stake in MidOcean Energy

Agreement built on ties between Saudi company and EIG

**DHAHRAN, Saudi Arabia, Sept 28, (PRNewswire):** Aramco, one of the world's leading integrated energy and chemicals companies, has signed definitive agreements to acquire a strategic minority stake in MidOcean Energy for \$500 million. MidOcean Energy is a liquefied natural gas (LNG) company formed and managed by EIG, a leading institutional investor in the global energy and infrastructure sectors.

MidOcean Energy is currently in the process of acquiring interests in four Australian LNG projects, with a growth strategy to create a diversified global LNG business. The strategic partnership with MidOcean Energy marks Aramco's first international investment in LNG.

The agreement builds on the relationship between Aramco and EIG, which was part of a consortium that acquired a 49% stake in Aramco Oil Pipelines Company, a subsidiary of Aramco, in 2021.

Completion of the transaction is subject to closing conditions which include regulatory approvals. Aramco also has the option to increase its shareholding and associated rights in MidOcean Energy in the future.

Amin H. Nasser, Aramco President & CEO, said: "We are pleased to be strengthening our strategic partnership with EIG through this acquisition, which marks Aramco's first international investment in LNG. We anticipate strong demand-led growth for LNG as the world continues on its energy transition journey, with gas being a vital fuel and feedstock in various industries. We believe that gas will be

# KUFPEC achieves a new milestone by amending a PSC in NSBA, Indonesia

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company, k.s.c.c. (KUFPEC) achieved last week, through its wholly-owned subsidiary KUFPEC Indonesia (Natuna) B.V. (KUFPEC Indonesia), a significant milestone through amending a Production Sharing Contract (PSC) in Natuna Sea Block A (NSBA) in Indonesia. The amendment is expected to contribute to boosting KUFPEC's project in Indonesia.

KUFPEC CEO Mohammad Salem Al Haimer stated "this milestone is an achievement that perfectly aligns with KUFPEC's Strategic Directions, focusing on enhancing our portfolio, ensuring operational excellence, and maximizing financial returns for Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC)".



Mohammad S. Al-Haimer

KUFPEC CEO also extended his gratitude to the Indonesian Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources H.E. Arifin Tasrif and Head of SKK Migas Dr. Ir. Dwi Soetjipto, M.M for their highly supportive role, dur-

ing the 4th International Convention on Indonesian Upstream Oil & Gas 2023, in facilitating this achievement which reaffirms Indonesia's commitment to creating an appealing and advantageous environment for investors.

The PSC's successful amendment is also a remarkable achievement due to its immediate economic impact, increasing reserves and stimulating dynamic exploration and development activities in Indonesia.

KUFPEC is an international upstream company engaged in exploration, development and production of crude oil and natural gas outside the State of Kuwait and is a wholly owned subsidiary of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation.

important in meeting the world's rising need for secure, accessible and more sustainable energy."

Nasir K. Al-Naimi, Aramco Upstream President, said: "This is an important step in Aramco's strategy to become a leading global LNG player. We see significant opportunities in this market, which is positioned for structural, long-term growth. MidOcean Energy is well-equipped to capitalize on rising LNG demand, and this strategic partnership reflects our willingness to work with leading international players to identify and unlock new opportunities at a global level."

Blair Thomas, EIG Chairman and CEO, said: "Energy transition informs every investment decision we make, and we believe LNG has a key role to play in enabling an orderly transition that balances society's

twin goals of decarbonization and energy security. Concurrent with that, we believe the LNG industry is ripe for change and there is a role for a nimble, pure-play company like MidOcean Energy. While our initial focus is on the announced transactions in Australia, we believe the opportunity set is global. We are excited to expand our existing partnership with Aramco to include this important initiative."

De la Rey Venter, MidOcean Energy CEO, said: "It is an honor for MidOcean Energy to have Aramco as a key shareholder and strategic partner. We share the conviction that LNG is an integral enabler of the global energy transition, and we believe that the global LNG industry has strong fundamentals for many decades to come. Synergistic partnerships are core to how

MidOcean Energy will do business, grow and thrive. In Aramco, we have a partner that has long-term thinking in its DNA and an unwavering commitment to enduring collaborations. We look forward to pursuing many new opportunities together."

**About Aramco**

Aramco is a global integrated energy and chemicals company. We are driven by our core belief that energy is opportunity. From producing approximately one in every eight barrels of the world's oil supply to developing new energy technologies, our global team is dedicated to creating impact in all that we do. We focus on making our resources more dependable, more sustainable and more useful. This helps promote stability and long-term growth around the world. www.aramco.com

**US and Polish officials sign deal**

# Plans for Poland's 1st 'nuke' power plant move ahead as

WARSAW, Poland, Sept 28, (AP): Polish and U.S. officials signed an agreement Wednesday in Warsaw to move forward with the construction of Poland's first nuclear power plant as part of an effort by the Central European nation to move away from polluting fossil fuels.

Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki called the deal to build the plant at the Lubiatowo-Kopalino site in the Pomerania region near the Baltic Sea the beginning of a new chapter for Poland, and described nuclear energy as a stable and clean energy source.

"The only clean, stable energy source that is technologically proven and verified in terms of safety is nuclear energy, which is having its big day today," he said at the ceremony.

Morawiecki's government had announced last year that it had chosen the U.S. as its partner for the project.

A consortium made up of Westinghouse and Bechtel signed the agreement with the Polish state-owned utility overseeing the nuclear program, Polskie Elektryczne Jądrowe (PEJ).

The planned site is about 280 kilometers (175 miles) from the border with Germany, which shut its last remaining nuclear reactors in April. Last year, the four German states closest to Poland said they were opposed to the Polish plan.

Many environmentalists traditionally oppose nuclear energy, and in Poland some argue that the initial cost is so high and that it takes so long to develop that it makes more sense to invest in renewable energies. Still, opposition in Poland to the plan has not been high.

Even the Greens party is divided on the matter. That is a reflection of how fears of climate change have persuaded some environmentalists around the world to embrace nuclear power as a solution, because it doesn't involve the burning of fossil fuels.



Poland's Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki talks to journalists as he arrives for the third EU-CEL-AC summit in Brussels, Belgium, Tuesday, July 18, 2023. Polish and U.S. officials signed an agreement Wednesday, Sept. 27, 2023 in Warsaw for the construction of Poland's first nuclear power plant, part of an effort by the Central European nation to move away from polluting fossil fuels. (AP)

Poland is planning to spend \$40 billion to build two nuclear power plants with three reactors each, the last one to be launched in 2043. The deal with the U.S. is for the first three reactors of the Pomerania plant, which officials say should start producing electricity in 2033.

Poland has also signed agreements with South Korea for the construction of a second nuclear power plant as it moves forward with its nuclear energy plans.

Poland has planned for decades to build nuclear power plants to replace its aging coal-fired plants in a country with some of the worst air pollution in Europe.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its use of energy to put economic and political pressure on European nations added urgency to Poland's search for alternative energy sources.



## BUSINESS

### Beyond2020 provides clean water to 10K Vietnamese

With the aim of intensifying efforts towards achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Beyond2020, the UAE-driven humanitarian initiative, has installed environmentally sustainable freshwater resources in communities in rural Vietnam, providing clean water access to 10,000 people.

Launched by the Zayed Sustainability Prize in partnership

with several leading organisations, Beyond2020 carries forward the humanitarian legacy of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan by providing sustainable technologies and solutions to vulnerable communities around the world.

Vietnam marks the 16th deployment of Beyond2020, which will continue to offer life-transforming interventions to a broad number of beneficiaries

worldwide, providing tech for good and fostering development that is inclusive and sustainable.

Commenting on the installation in Vietnam, H.E. Dr. Bader Al Matrooshi, Ambassador of UAE to Vietnam, said, "Both the UAE and Vietnam have a strong resolve to promote innovative solutions that urgently address pressing sustainability challenges. (AP)

### Nayo presents automation solutions at Arablab Live '23

Nayo Biotechnology, a company focused on life science automation, recently exhibited at Arablab Live 2023 in Dubai. As the largest laboratory instrument and testing equipment exhibition in the Middle East region, the event, which took place between Sept 19 and 21 at Dubai World Trade Centre, attracted over 1,000 exhibitors and more than 8,000 visitors from around the world in the fields of biotech-

nology and life sciences, laboratory technology, laboratory automation, and other areas of progressing laboratory science.

As one of China's leading providers of laboratory automation equipment, Nayo Biotechnology presents a range of automation solutions with liquid handling at their core. These automation solutions encompass various fields, including drug discovery, genomics, in vitro diagnostics, molecular

breeding, and more. The primary objective of these solutions is to enhance laboratory efficiency, liberate operators from repetitive and tedious manual tasks, and reduce deviations and errors resulting from human operations. Whether in the realms of basic research, biopharmaceuticals, or clinical diagnostics, these automation solutions have demonstrated outstanding performance and innovation. (AP)

### Dubai Business Forum offers platform for business leaders, investors

## Dubai Chambers unveils 'The Deals Hub' for global trade advancements

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates, Sept 28: Dubai Chambers has unveiled, a new impact-driven platform that creates an innovative space for global business leaders and investors to announce partnerships and deals during the upcoming Dubai Business Forum, which takes place at Madinat Jumeirah in November.

Hosted under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, the Dubai Business Forum will bring together key stakeholders from the government and private sectors across the globe to explore strategic economic partnerships, develop international networks, and open new horizons for business, trade, and investments.

The launch of The Deals Hub creates a dedicated space to forge and announce major business initiatives, partnerships, and investments, with signings witnessed by senior government officials, prominent figures from the public and private sectors, and representatives from the global media.

H.E. Abdul Aziz Abdulla Al Ghurair, Chairman of Dubai Chambers, commented: "The Dubai Business Forum creates a unique platform for deals and investments that will unlock exciting opportunities and promote sustainable economic growth. The launch of The Deals Hub underlines Dubai's growing position as a leading capital of the global economy and reflects the emirate's success in attracting foreign investment and supporting business

### Saudi Arabia's foreign policy attracts foreign investors

## Guangzhou Development District hosts 2023 Saudi Investment Forum

GUANGZHOU, China, Sept. 28: On Sept 25, Saudi (Jazan) Special Investment Promotion and Exchange Forum was held in Guangzhou Development District, also known as Huangpu District, situated in southern China. This exchange meeting between China and Saudi Arabia constituted the inaugural event following the visit of Guangdong delegation to Saudi Arabia in early September.

Nawaf AlWard, General Manager of the Investment Department of Jazan Royal Commission, noted that in recent years, Saudi Arabia has been steadfast in pursuing the "Vision 2030" strategy, the momentum of rapid economic development. The open foreign policy of Saudi Arabia has captivated the attention of foreign investors, particularly those from China. Therefore, the Royal Commission pledges unwavering support to assist corporations in establishing their presence and provide

facilities for those on the ground.

Chen Zhiyong, Deputy Secretary of Huangpu District Committee of the CPC, articulated that the Guangzhou Development District is one of the most powerful, dynamic and efficient regions in the country. With extensive experience in investment promotion and industrial park construction, the region forms five 100-billion-level industrial clusters, including emerging information technology, automotive manufacturing, renewable energy, beauty and health, and new material, as well as three 50-billion level ones consisting of high-end equipment, biotechnology, and integrated circuits. This solid foundation is expected to facilitate the cooperation of production and energy between China and Saudi Arabia.

China-Saudi Jazan Industrial Zone, located in Jazan Industrial City in Saudi Arabia, adheres to a development strategy of "infrastructure advance-

ment, industrial cluster, city-industry integration, and environmental protection". This area spans 32 square kilometers, including a 30-square-kilometer industrial zone and a 2-square-kilometer residential area.

#### Investment

The Silk Road Industrial Services Co., Ltd. was jointly established by Guangzhou Development District, Ningxia Yinchuan Economic and Technological Development District, Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu (RCJY), and Saudi Aramco, responsible for attracting investment and other related work for the industrial cluster zone.

Li Zhe, general manager of the Silk Road Industrial Services Co., Ltd., said that the industrial zone currently has facilities such as the Jazan Commercial Port, seawater desalination plant,

and refinery. By meticulously integrating the eight pillar industries from the Guangzhou Development District with existing industry development plans of Jazan Industrial City, it targets at six predominant sectors, including metal smelting and processing, renewable energy, petrochemicals, marine wind energy equipment, intelligent home appliances, and white goods, along with the construction of specialized industrial parks within parks.

Jansson Victor Johan, Project Manager of Investment Department of Royal Commission at Jazan, also highlighted the region's abundant natural gas, oil, and mineral resources as well as distinct cost advantages. To promote diversified economic development, special economic zones have been established in Jazan, along with a plethora of supportive policies on loans, taxes, and labor, which provide comprehensive service for foreign investors.

Xuzhuang Biotech Co., Ltd., based in Guangzhou Development District, recently signed a cooperation agreement with a Saudi agent. During this promotion event, the company's foreign trade manager Zhang Shixian, conveyed keen enthusiasm for exploring the vast potential of the Saudi market.

Guangzhou Development District insists on a high-quality strategy for both "bringing in" and "going out". By focusing on the development and construction of the Jazan Industrial Zone, the district maintains a high level of openness to foreign countries, actively explores new modes of international cooperation, and builds comprehensive international cooperation platforms such as China-Singapore, China-Europe, China-Russia, China-Israel, and China-Saudi Arabia relationships, to accelerate reciprocal investments.

### Impact livelihoods of millions

## TikTok regrets Indonesia ban on social media e-commerce

JAKARTA, Indonesia, Sept 28, (AP): Chinese-owned app TikTok on Thursday said it regretted the Indonesian government's decision to ban e-commerce transactions on social media platforms and particularly the impact it would have on the millions of sellers who use TikTok Shop.

But TikTok Indonesia said in a statement it will respect the regulations and laws that apply in Indonesia and "will take a constructive path forward."

"We deeply regret the government's announcement, especially how it will impact the livelihoods of the six million sellers and nearly seven million affiliate creators who use TikTok Shop," said the statement sent to The Associated Press on Thursday.

Indonesia banned goods transactions on social media platforms such as TikTok in a bid to protect small businesses from e-commerce competition, accusing them of predatory pricing.

#### Domination

Indonesia's Trade Minister Zulkifli Hasan on Monday announced the decision after a meeting with President Joko Widodo. The ban "is to prevent the domination of the algorithm and prevent the use of personal data in business interests," Hasan told a news conference.

Hasan said the ban, which takes effect immediately, aims to "create a fair, healthy and beneficial electronic commerce ecosystem by prohibiting marketplaces and social media sellers from acting as producers and facilitating payment transactions on its electronic systems," according to a statement released by the Trade Ministry on Wednesday. Marketplaces and sellers can only offer or promote goods and services, he added.

During an inspection to Southeast Asia's largest wholesale market Tanah Abang in Jakarta last week, Minister of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises Teten Masduki said he found that sellers were experiencing a more than 50% loss of profits because they could not compete with imported products sold online at much lower prices.

Masduki said the China-based platform has been involved in "predatory pricing," which caused damages to local small- and medium-sized businesses. He said the new regulation "will justly regu-

expansion."

The Deals Hub will host a full spectrum of agreements including major partnerships, joint ventures, and mergers and acquisitions; IPOs, large

investments, and fundraising rounds; government contracts, cross-border trade agreements, and MoUs.

Dubai Chambers is a non-profit public entity that supports Dubai's vi-

sion as a global player by empowering businesses, providing innovative value-added services and access to influential networks. In March 2021, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed

bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, announced the restructuring of Dubai Chamber and the formation of three chambers for

the emirate, namely, Dubai Chamber of Commerce, Dubai International Chamber, and Dubai Chamber of Digital Economy, which now operate under Dubai Chambers.

### Microsoft exec exposes Apple's tactic

## Apple leverages idea of switching to Bing to extract money from Google

### Meta CEO unveils next version of Quest 3

## Zuckerberg kicks off developer conference with focus on AI, VR

MENLO PARK, California, Sept 28, (AP): Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg kicked off the tech giant's Connect developer conference on Wednesday with a focus on virtual and augmented reality and artificial intelligence.

The company, which renamed itself Meta two years ago, unveiled the next version of its virtual reality headset, the Quest 3. It will cost \$499 and begin shipping Oct. 10.

Standing in a courtyard at his company's Menlo Park, California headquarters, Zuckerberg told the audience of developers, employees and journalists that Meta is "focused on building the future of human connection" - and painted a near-future where people interact with hologram versions of their friends or coworkers and with AI bots built to assist them.

"Soon the physical and digital will come together in what we call the metaverse," he said.

Zuckerberg introduced an AI personal assistant people can interact with using any of Meta's messaging apps - along with a smattering of AI characters he called "a bit more fun," such as "Max the sous chef," who can help

come up with ideas for dinner, or Lily, a "personal editor and writing partner."

"These are just a few we have trained, there are a lot more coming," he said.

He also introduced the next version of Meta's Ray-Ban Stories smart glasses, which let people record video or photos, livestream, listen to music and interact with the Meta AI assistant.

"Smart glasses are the ideal form factor for you to let an AI assistant see what you are seeing and hear what you are hearing," Zuckerberg said.

The glasses will launch Oct. 17 and cost \$299.

#### Transformation

Meta is in the midst of a corporate transformation that it says will take years to complete. It wants to evolve from a provider of social platforms to a dominant power in a nascent virtual-reality world called the metaverse - sort of like the internet brought to life, or at least rendered in 3D.

But this transformation has been slower than expected - and has already cost billions of dollars - and Meta's main business remains advertising on

its social media platforms, Facebook and Instagram. Competition with TikTok remains Meta's biggest challenge, said Insider Intelligence analyst Yoram Wurmsler.

"A lot of this effort around chatbots and stories and other ways just to keep engagement going (like) AI-driven personalization and stuff like that, that's the overarching challenge for the company," he said.

Squeezed by a slump in online advertising and uncertainty around the global economy, Meta has cut more than 20,000 jobs since last November. Zuckerberg dubbed 2023 the company's "year of efficiency" as it reduces its workforce while focusing on more technical hires such as experts in AI to focus on Meta's long-term vision.

Artificial intelligence is central to that vision. Over the summer, Meta released the next generation of its AI large language model and made the technology, known as Llama 2, free for research and commercial use. On Wednesday, it unveiled an AI image generator named Emu, which creates images based on prompts from users.

done that a product like this could not see the light of day," Austin said.

Google lawyer Ken Smurzynski, questioning Parakhin earlier, sought to knock down one of the government's key arguments: that Google's existing market dominance allows it to collect massive amounts of user data to improve search results and widen its lead over competitors.

### Homeless shelters struggle to meet surging demand

## Rising poverty grips Argentina as runaway inflation takes its toll

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, Sept 28, (AP): With tired faces, residents of a homeless shelter in Argentina's capital pass through the main entrance and line up to receive a hot drink and a slice of cake for an afternoon snack.

Places like the Bepo Ghezzi Social Inclusion Center in the Parque Patricios neighborhood of Buenos Aires have seen demand soar as more people are struggling to make ends meet amid an annual inflation rate above 100%.

The portion of Argentines living in poverty reached 40.1% in the first six months of the year, according to figures released Wednesday by the government's INDEC statistics agency. That is up from 39.2% in the second half of 2022.

"I was renting, and it increased. I couldn't af-

ford it," said Lionel Pais, 37, who arrived at the shelter three weeks ago, just after the government devalued the Argentine peso almost 20%, setting off another surge in prices. "These sudden increases that occurred, the economic situation in the country, don't allow me to cover basic expenses."

For much of the 20th century, Argentina showed a social mobility dynamic that gave rise to a large middle class and made the country stand out in the region. But the good times de-railed, and poverty has remained firmly above 25% the last two decades as the South American country stays mired in economic malaise. Prices soared 124.4% during the 12-month period through Aug. 31.

Sebastián Boned, 26, found himself calling the

assistance hotline for people experiencing homelessness when his wages as a hotel receptionist no longer allowed him to cover the 80,000 pesos (\$218) he paid to live in a boarding house.

"It's a peaceful place," he said of the shelter. But the clock for Boned, and all of the shelter's other residents, is ticking. These shelters guarantee housing for only three months. During that time, residents are given guidance on finding work and applying for a subsidy to help them with their rent.

"Most of them tell you their salary doesn't cover their needs," said Mercedes Vucassovich, a social worker who runs the Bepo Ghezzi center.

The median monthly income in Argentina was 87,310 pesos (\$237) during the second

quarter of the year, according to INDEC. A typical family needs more than 280,000 pesos (\$765) to stay out of poverty.

In Morón, a suburb west of the capital, María de los Angeles García and Adrián Viñas Coronel, along with their five children aged 3 months to 13 years, are renting a makeshift dwelling in a low-income neighborhood after spending six months on the streets. With an address, they can enroll their children in a public school.

Their only fixed income is about 90,000 pesos (\$245) a month in social assistance, of which they have to allocate 25% to rent.

"We have to work all day on the street because we don't have enough for food nor diapers for the kids," said García, 31.

Over the past few weeks, Economy Minister

Sergio Massa, who is running for president, has unveiled a series of measures to try to help Argentines who have seen their purchasing power decimated. Most recently, he said those who are not formally employed and not already getting any form of welfare will receive 94,000 pesos (\$256) divided into two monthly payments, in October and November.

The measures come as Massa is trying to gain ground on right-wing populist Javier Milei, who leads in opinion polls ahead of the Oct. 22 presidential election. He says he will turn to dollarization to end inflation.

García and her family receive some help through the Corazon Azul NGO, which provides snacks, medical assistance and donations of goods to vulnerable people in the area.



'I just decided to be cooking once a day'

# Food prices up as nations limit exports ... blame warming, war

WASHINGTON, Sept 28, (AP): How do you cook a meal when a staple ingredient is unaffordable?

This question is playing out in households around the world as they face shortages of essential foods like rice, cooking oil and onions. That is because countries have imposed restrictions on the food they export to protect their own supplies from the combined effect of the war in Ukraine, El Nino's threat to food production and increasing damage from climate change.

For Caroline Kyalo, a 28-year-old who works in a salon in Kenya's capital of Nairobi, it was a question of trying to figure out how to cook for her two children without onions. Restrictions on the export of the vegetable by neighboring Tanzania has led prices to triple.

Kyalo initially tried to use spring onions instead, but those also got too expensive. As did the prices of other necessities, like cooking oil and corn flour.

"I just decided to be cooking once a day," she said.

**Produce**

Despite the East African country's fertile lands and large workforce, the high cost of growing and transporting produce and the worst drought in decades led to a drop in local production. Plus, people preferred red onions from Tanzania because they were cheaper and lasted longer. By 2014, Kenya was getting half of its onions from its neighbor, according to a U.N. Food Agriculture Organization report.

At Nairobi's major food market, Wakulima, the prices for onions from Tanzania were the highest in seven years, seller Timothy Kinyua said.

Some traders have adjusted by getting produce from Ethiopia, and others have switched to selling other vegetables, but Kinyua is sticking to onions.

"It's something we can't cook without," he said.

Tanzania's onion limits this year are part of the "contagion" of food restrictions from countries spooked by supply shortages and increased demand for their produce, said Joseph Glauber, senior research fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute.

Globally, 41 food export restrictions from 19 countries are in effect, ranging from outright bans to taxes, according to the institute.

India banned shipments of some rice earlier this year, resulting in a shortfall of roughly a fifth of global exports. Neighboring Myanmar, the world's fifth-biggest rice supplier, responded by stopping some exports of the grain.

India also restricted shipments of onions after erratic rainfall - fueled by climate change - damaged crops. This sent prices in neighboring Bangladesh soaring, and authorities are scrambling to find new sources for the vegetable.

Elsewhere, a drought in Spain took its toll on olive oil production. As European buyers turned to Turkey, olive oil prices soared in the Mediterranean country, prompting authorities there to restrict exports. Morocco, also coping with a drought ahead of its recent deadly earthquake, stopped exporting onions, potatoes and tomatoes in February.

This isn't the first time food prices have been in a tumult. Prices for staples like rice and wheat more than doubled in 2007-2008, but the world had ample food stocks it could draw on and was able to replenish those in subsequent years.

But that cushion has shrunk in the past two years, and climate change means food supplies could very quickly run short of demand and spike prices, said Glauber, former chief

economist at the US Department of Agriculture.

"I think increased volatility is certainly the new normal," he said.

Food prices worldwide, experts say, will be determined by the interplay of three factors: how El Nino plays out and how long it lasts, whether bad weather damages crops and prompts more export restrictions, and the future of Russia's war in Ukraine.

The warring nations are both major global suppliers of wheat, barley, sunflower oil and other food, especially to developing nations where food prices have risen and people are going hungry.

An El Nino is a natural phenomenon that shifts global weather patterns and can result in extreme weather, ranging from drought to flooding. While scientists believe climate change is making this El Nino stronger, its exact impact on food production is impossible to glean until after it's occurred.

The early signs are worrying.

India experienced its driest August in a century, and Thailand is facing a drought that has sparked fears about the world's sugar supplies. The two are the largest exporters of sugar after Brazil.

Less rainfall in India also dashed food exporters' hopes that the new rice harvest in October would end the trade restrictions and stabilize prices.

"It doesn't look like (rice) prices will be coming down anytime soon," said Aman Julka, director of Wesderby India Private Limited.

Most at risk are nations that rely heavily on food imports. The Philippines, for instance, imports 14% of its food, according to the World Bank, and storm damage to crops could mean further shortfalls. Rice prices surged 8.7% in August from a year earlier, more than doubling from 4.2% in July.

**Bulk**

Food store owners in the capital of Manila are losing money, with prices increasing rapidly since Sept. 1 and customers who used to snap up supplies in bulk buying smaller quantities.

"We cannot save money anymore. It is like we just work so that we can have food daily," said Charina Em, 32, who owns a store in the Trabajo market.

Cynthia Esguerra, 66, has had to choose between food or medicine for her high cholesterol, gallstones and urinary issues. Even then, she can only buy half a kilo of rice at a time - insufficient for her and her husband.

"I just don't worry about my sickness. I leave it up to God. I don't buy medicines anymore, I just put it there to buy food, our loans," she said.

The climate risks aren't limited to rice but apply to anything that needs stable rainfall to thrive, including livestock, said Elyssa Kaur Ludher, a food security researcher at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore. Vegetables, fruit trees and chickens will all face heat stress, raising the risk that food will spoil, she said.

This constricts food supplies further, and if grain exports from Ukraine aren't resolved, there will be additional shortages in feed for livestock and fertilizer, Ludher said.

Russia's July withdrawal from a wartime agreement that ensured ships could safely transport Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea was a blow to global food security, largely leaving only expensive and divisive routes through Europe for the war-torn country's exports.

The conflict also has hurt Ukraine's agricultural production, with analysts saying farmers aren't planting nearly as much corn and wheat.

"This will affect those who already feel food affordability stresses," Ludher said.

EL SEGUNDO, Calif, Sept 28: Mattel, Inc. (NASDAQ: MAT) announced that a team of neuroscientists at Cardiff University and Barbie have released the latest findings from a multi-year study exploring the short and long-term developmental impacts of doll play. In the study's third year, researchers have found that doll play could benefit children with varying social communication styles, including those who display neurodivergent traits commonly associated with autism.

To obtain these new findings, the research team, led by neuroscientist Dr. Sarah Gerson from Cardiff University's School of Psychology's Centre for Human Developmental Science, replicated earlier brain-related discoveries from the previous two years and expanded the study's scope by incorporating a more diverse range of participants, including children ages 4-8 who display both high and low levels of traits commonly associated with autism.

Collaborating with Dr. Catherine Jones, Director of the Wales Autism Research Centre at Cardiff University, this data further backs the conclusions drawn in the first year, demonstrating that playing with dolls either alone or in a group, can support social processing among children. The results from the third year reinforce this finding across children with and without high levels of autistic traits, albeit through their different approaches to play.

**Encourage**

"Our study shows that doll play can encourage social processing in children, regardless of their neurodevelopmental profile. The findings show that all children, even those who display neurodivergent traits commonly associated with autism, may use doll play as a tool for practicing social scenarios and developing social skills, such as empathy," said lead researcher and neuroscientist Dr. Sarah Gerson.

The team of neuroscientists used state-of-the-art functional, near-infrared spectroscopy equipment to explore brain activation while children played with dolls and on tablets, both by themselves and with another person, replicating conditions from Year 1.



The latest peer-reviewed findings from the third year of the study from Cardiff University suggest that doll play could be a beneficial playtime experience for children with varying social communication styles, including those who display neurodivergent traits commonly associated with autism.

'Doll play increases brain activity'

# Playing with dolls allows children to develop, practice social skills: study

**Better win rates**

## New technology EmotionsAI detects digital customers 'emotional needs'

PARIS, Sept 28: AB Tasty announced the launch of EmotionsAI. This new technology enables customers to use AI-based audience segmentation based on their emotional needs; a unique product that helps brands personalize to customers on an emotional level.

This is AB Tasty's first step in leveraging AI to help customers build better digital experiences. EmotionsAI enables customers to achieve better win rates and develop improved methods to personalize the customer experience, which is proven to drive revenue for organizations that can effectively leverage it. EmotionsAI revolutionizes brands' abilities to personalize the customer experience for visitors using the most relevant criterion: emotional need.

"Understanding the needs of customers is critical to achieving commercial success in today's economic landscape," says Alix de Sagazan, Co-CEO and Co-founder of AB Tasty. "They place a high value on experience and personalization, and catering to customers' emotional needs is the best way to meet and exceed their high expectations of customer experience." The technology comes from AB

Tasty's acquisition of Dotaki, a company that has spent 8 years conducting research and psychographic modeling, customer journey mapping, device usage, and AI technology combined with real-time website interactions. Now a feature available within the AB Tasty platform, the impact on win rates of A/B tests is astounding. With EmotionsAI, it is possible to detect a significant impact on revenue in 3 times more A/B tests than without EmotionsAI.

**Decisions**

"Emotions drive 80% of decisions," shares Remi Aubert, AB Tasty's Co-CEO and Co-Founder. "With this in mind, EmotionsAI truly pushes the boundaries of digital experiences. Enabling data-driven decisions based on emotional needs enables brands to create a connection with audiences like never before. It places the customer at the heart of digital experiences and means brands can get clear ROI by diving deeper into what works for different emotional types using these analytics."

As AB Tasty used to be a partner with EmotionsAI, clients have already seen a significant impact on revenue. "Thanks to EmotionsAI, we have the

ability to detect the emotional needs of visitors and enhance our personalization roadmap" says Maxime Lambertin, UX Project Manager at Jacadi, a leading e-commerce site for children and lifestyle products. "What's more, by combining the use of EmotionsAI with AB Tasty, we increased the business impact of our experimentation campaigns. We have gone from a 30% success rate in tests with a business impact to a 90% success rate, making a significant impact for at least one EmotionsAI segment. EmotionsAI currently contributes 10% to our global revenue."

This announcement comes after AB Tasty's best fiscal year performance to date. Signing new logos such as Air Europa, Chico's FAS, Louboutin and Thomson Reuters, AB Tasty has grown by 200% internationally, ending the 2023 fiscal year with its best-performing quarter of all time. Boasting a complete digital customer experience platform, server-side feature management tools, intelligent site search, product recommendations, and AI-based emotional segmentation, AB Tasty continues to establish itself as a leader in experience optimization.

While observing children, researchers saw increased brain activity in the posterior superior temporal sulcus (pSTS) region when playing with dolls, for both play with a social partner and during solo doll play, but less so during solo tablet play. The pSTS region is heavily involved in and active during social and emotional processing. The findings showed that doll play activates brain regions associated with social information processing such as empathy, indicating that doll play may enable children to re-

hearse, use and perform these skills even when playing independently. Interestingly, this effect in the brain was similar between children displaying fewer and greater traits commonly associated with autism.

The study's results suggest that doll play could support social processing, regardless of a child's neurodevelopmental profile, but through different pathways. For children displaying fewer autistic traits, talking about others' mental states related to pSTS activity (i.e., language about others' thoughts and emotions when playing alone with dolls). In contrast, for those displaying more autistic traits, talking with others during doll play was related to pSTS activity, even when playing by themselves (i.e., general social engagement with researchers/experimenters rather than a specific type of talking about mental states).

The Year 3 findings from Cardiff University indicate that children, regardless of their neurodevelopmental profile, can play with and potentially benefit from play with dolls in terms of their social development. Other research has shown that social processing and empathy skills are important determinants in children's future emotional, academic, and social success.

Dr. Catherine Jones said: "The study reinforces how it is important that we acknowledge and value neurodiversity. This means recognising and valuing the diverse ways in which children's brains work and approaching social development in a way that is inclusive and accommodating for all children,

regardless of their neurodivergence. By embracing all ways that children choose to play, we can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for their development."

Since the landmark publication of Piaget's theory of cognitive development, the effects of play have been thought to be positive for kids' social skills and creativity, but this has never been scientifically evidenced at the brain level. This multi-year long-term study commissioned by Barbie is the first time that key Piaget theories on play have been scientifically evidenced via brain imaging and the first to use neuroimaging evidence with natural doll play, meaning there was no prescribed storyline to show how the brain is activated during doll play.

"We are proud to know that when children, regardless of their neurodevelopmental profile, play with Barbie, their playtime may benefit their development," said Michael Swaisland, Head of Insight and Analytics EMEA, Mattel. "As Barbie continues to inspire the limitless potential in every child, we are delighted to know, through neuroscience, that playing with Barbie may encourage the development of social skills such as empathy in children, including those who display neurodivergent traits commonly associated with autism."

We look forward to uncovering even more benefits of doll play through our long-term partnership with Cardiff University as we look to shine a light on the benefits the play pattern has towards development, that parents might not have been aware of."

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# Turkish film festival threatened by censorship accusations

ISTANBUL, Sept. 28, (AP) — Turkey's oldest film festival has been thrown into turmoil after jury members resigned and filmmakers withdrew their work from the competition over accusations of censorship.

The producers and directors of 27 entries at the Antalya Golden Orange Film Festival on Wednesday announced they were pulling out, days after 20 members of the festival jury quit over the organizers' removal of a documentary.

"Kanun Hukmu," or "The Decree," focuses on a teacher and doctor dismissed from their jobs under the state of emergency imposed in Turkey following an attempted coup in 2016.

Festival director Ahmet Boyacioglu said the documentary had been removed from the national documentary film category because of ongoing legal proceedings against one of the people featured.

"For this reason, it has been decided to exclude the film from this year's selection in order not to affect the judicial process and impartiality," he said.

However, the film's director, Nejlâ Demirci, said that was an "excuse" and "outright censorship."

The festival, which has been run since 1963 in the Mediterranean city of Antalya, is a highlight of the Turkish cultural calendar. This year it is due to run from Oct. 7-14.

Demirci has received support from across the arts world in Turkey. The Free Art Assembly, which represents artists across many fields, described the film's exclusion as "an assault on artistic expression and creativity and a move to normalize censorship across artistic fields."

The filmmakers who withdrew from the festival called for respect for the freedom of expression.

"We see it as a clear threat," they said in a statement. "We think that

it is unacceptable for festivals, which essentially belong to society, to submit to censorship."

More than 130,000 people were fired from their jobs through emergency decrees following the July 2016 coup attempt. The authorities said they were linked to the group behind the coup, but critics have alleged a general crackdown against anyone viewed as opponents by the government.



With the Hollywood writers strike over, actors will now get a shot at cutting their own deal with studios and streaming services.

The Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Radio and Television Artists announced Wednesday night that strike negotiations with studios would resume Monday. The guild said several studio executives will attend, much as they did during marathon sessions last week that helped bring the nearly five-month writers strike to an end.

Monday is the same day that network late-night hosts will return to the air.

**Bill Maher** led the charge back to work by announcing early Wednesday — hours after writers became free to work again — that his HBO show "Real Time with Bill Maher" would be back on the air Friday. By mid-morning, the hosts of NBC's "The Tonight Show Starring **Jimmy Fallon**" and "Late Night with **Seth Meyers**," ABC's "Jimmy Kimmel Live," and "The Late Show With **Stephen Colbert**" on CBS had announced they'd also return, all by Monday. "Last Week Tonight" with **John Oliver** was slated to return to the air Sunday.

Comedy Central's "The Daily Show," which had been using guest hosts when the strike hit, announced Wednesday that it would return Oct.

16 "with an all-star roster of guest hosts for the remainder of 2023." The plans for "Saturday Night Live" were not immediately clear.

The strikes have had a "catastrophic" impact on late-night television viewing, according to the research firm Samba TV. Without Colbert, Fallon and Kimmel proving fresh, topical material, the broadcast networks have seen late-night viewership declines of 40% and 50%. **Ashwin Navin**, Samba TV co-founder, "It remains to be seen how late night will rebound to its previous relevance," he said.

Fallon, Meyers, Kimmel, Colbert and Oliver spent the latter part of the strike teaming up for a popular podcast called "Strike Force Five" — named after their personal text chain and with all proceeds benefiting their out-of-work writers. On Instagram on Wednesday, they announced "their mission complete."

Scripted shows will take longer to return due to the actors strike, which showed its first signs of a solution with the renewed plans to talk. There had previously been no official contact between SAG-AFTRA and the alliance of studios that negotiates contracts since their strike began July 14.

The first resumption of talks in the writers strike last month went poorly, and it was another month before the two sides tried again. But when the talks resumed last week it was just five days before a deal was reached.

Board members from the writers union approved that contract agreement with studios on Tuesday night, bringing the industry at least partly back from a historic halt in production that stretched nearly five months.

Maher had delayed returning to his talk show during the ongoing strike by writers and actors, a decision that followed similar pauses by "The Drew Barrymore Show," "The Talk" and "The Jennifer Hudson Show."

Film

Variety



This image released by 20th Century Studios shows a scene from 'The Creator.' (AP)

Film

Visuals upstage story and actors

## AI takes lead role in sci-fi epic 'Creator'

LOS ANGELES: Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band's 2023 tour will be postponed until 2024, citing doctor's advice.

The Boss, who last week celebrated his 74th birthday, is "steadily recovering" from peptic ulcer disease, a press release read. "Out of an abundance of caution," the remainder of this year's tour has been pushed to next year.

Earlier this month, Springsteen announced that he would be postponing all of his September 2023 dates while he was treated for symptoms related to the disease, which causes ulcers to form in the stomach or small intestine that can cause heartburn, nausea and stomach pain.

Those postponed shows included stops in **Baltimore, Philadelphia, Albany and Syracuse in New York, Pittsburgh, Washington, and shows in Connecticut and Ohio.**

The newly postponed shows include Canadian dates and a West Coast run of **Phoenix, San Diego, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.**

Rescheduled concerts will be announced this week and will take place at the original venues.

Peptic ulcer disease can be dangerous, leading to bleeding and emergency situations such as perforation of the ulcer through the stomach. Typical treatment uses common drugs called proton pump inhibitors, such as Prilosec, which can help heal the ulcers within four to six weeks. People who are treated "recover completely from peptic ulcer disease," **Dr. Lawrence Kosinski** of the American Gastroenterological Association told AP.

"Thanks to all my friends and fans for your good wishes, encouragement, and support," Springsteen said in a short statement. "I'm on the mend and can't wait to see you all next year."

News of Springsteen's illness first emerged in May of this year, when he postponed three dates. (AP)



**BERLIN:** Christian Thielemann has been chosen as the new general music director of Berlin's Staatsoper, months after **Daniel Barenboim** ended his three-decade reign, the city government said Wednesday.

The 64-year-old German conductor will take the job at the

LOS ANGELES, Sept. 28, (AP) — The artificial intelligence in Gareth Edwards' "The Creator," a visually magnificent if by-the-books epic, is not the AI making headlines at the moment. This is AI in the classic sci-fi mold — the Roy Batty of "Blade Runner," the Avas of "Ex Machina," the ones whose sentience we question and debate endlessly. Will the machines kill us? Take our jobs? Or do something that the movies haven't dreamed possible yet?

As the retired special forces guy cleaning up nuclear debris, Joshua (John David Washington), flatly tells a fellow worker when she posits that the AIs were indeed after their jobs: "They can have this one."

Regardless, for now, artificial intelligence is more allegory for the other than aspiring screenwriters, filmmakers or trash collectors. And, for Edwards and his co-writer Chris Weitz, they might even have more capacity for humanity and goodness than humans, which is not exactly part of the ChatGPT conversation either, though that would be an interesting twist.

In the world of "The Creator" they're welcomed by society at first as an unambiguous good — a helpful servant class that have the ability to make our human lives better. But as they so often do in sci-fi dystopias, they turned on us. Actually, more specifically, they turned on the US when they dropped a nuclear weapon on downtown Los Angeles. Naturally, that means war.

Washington's Joshua lost his family in the attack and when we meet him, he's undercover in New Asia to try to find the creator of these advanced AIs, a shadowy, elusive figure they call Nimrata. Joshua got busy with other pursuits though. He fell in love with, married and is about to welcome a baby with his on-the-ground source Maya (Gemma Chan), taken from him in an unexpected raid by his peers — one of many truly sublime sequences in which a hovering death star-like aircraft called NOMAD scans the lush landscape with ominous blue lasers. Edwards, who had a complicated journey making "Rogue One," does not deny himself the pleasure of riffing on "Star Wars" iconography.

Allison Janney's hardened Colonel later attempts to recruit him for one last shot at finding Nimrata and the ultimate weapon he's suspected of building, but a jaded

Joshua demurs that he doesn't care about going extinct: "I've got TV to watch." Of course he eventually says yes and ends up travelling with a Very Special Child, a wide-eyed AI whom he names Alphie (Madeleine Yuna Voyles), who might be able to help him find what he's looking for. Voyles is a captivating presence and undeniably compelling. Unfortunately, the script denies her the edge and nuance that would make her more believable as a person as well as a machine. Even Grogu is a little sassy sometimes.

But this is also a film where the visuals upstage the pretty predictable story and even the actors, including the likes of Washington and Ken Watanabe. The lush landscapes of Southeast Asia are stunningly photographed by Edwards and co-cinematographers Greig Fraser ("Dune") and Oren Soffer, who shot on location in eight countries with an unusually low-cost camera for a Hollywood studio film (the Sony FX3, which goes for under \$4,000).

### Concept

Speaking of cost — "The Creator" was made for around \$80 million and looks a thousand times better than movies (mainly of the superhero variety) that cost three times as much. This was part of Edwards' design and could be revolutionary for filmmaking. In addition to using a camera any hobbyist could buy at a local store, instead of pre-determining the concept art and visual effects and forcing the actors to look at little silver balls or tracking markers, they added them in after the fact. It makes a huge difference.

"The Creator" is an original movie too, and even if it is a somewhat convoluted and silly mishmash of familiar tropes and sci-fi clichés, it still evokes the feeling of something fresh, something novel, something exciting to experience and behold — which is so much more than you can say about the vast majority of big budget movies these days. And it's worth taking a chance on it at the cinemas.

"The Creator," a 20th Century Studios release in theaters Friday, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for "strong language, some bloody images, violence." Running time: 132 minutes. Three stars out

of four.

### Also:

**LOS ANGELES:** Gary Sinise will receive an honorary AARP Award for his work through his foundation that supports military members and first responders.

The organization announced Tuesday that Sinise will receive the honorary AARP Purpose Prize awards during a ceremony on Oct. 25. The Emmy and Tony award winner will be recognized for his work through his Gary Sinise Foundation.

Sinise's foundation — which launched in 2011 — honors military members, veterans, first responders, their families and those in need. Some of his charitable efforts include building adapted homes for severely wounded veterans and first responders, uplifting military members and families through entertainment, mental wellness programs and financial support in crucial moments.

Sinise co-starred in "Apollo 13" and "Forrest Gump," playing a seriously wounded Vietnam War veteran, and led the cast of "NCIS: NY" for nine seasons.

Five individuals will be awarded the AARP Purpose Prize, which honors people ages 50 and older who are making a difference through their "knowledge and life experience." Each of their organizations will receive \$50,000.

The recipients include: AARP said 10 named Purpose Prize fellows will also be honored. Each of them will receive a \$10,000 award to further the mission of their organization.

AARP CEO **Jo Ann Jenkins** said the recipients are "shining examples of a simple, yet profound truth."

"When we find our sense of purpose — that certain something that gives us a reason to get up and get going every day — we not only give meaning to our own lives; we make the world a better place for everyone," Jenkins said.

AARP also announced the return of its Inspire Award for a third year. The general public can vote for the AARP Purpose Prize winner they want to win the award, which grants the recipient an additional \$10,000 for their organization.

Staatsoper, or State Opera, on Sept. 1, 2024.

"With him, we are ensuring the highest musical excellence for our city," said Berlin state culture minister **Joe Chialo**, who described Thielemann as "the logical successor to the great maestro and Berlin citizen of honor, Daniel Barenboim."



Springsteen



Thielemann

Thielemann, a Berlin native, trained as an assistant to **Herbert von Karajan** and Barenboim, worked in smaller German houses and was music director of Nuremberg's State Theater from 1988-1992.

He moved on to serve as music director of Berlin's Deutsche Oper from 1997-2004 and of the Munich

Philharmonic from 2004-11. He has been chief conductor of the Staatskapelle Dresden since 2012-13, a role that already was scheduled to end after the 2023-24 season.

Thielemann also has conducted over 150 Vienna Philharmonic concerts and led more than 180 performances at the Richard Wagner Festival in **Bayreuth**, where

he also was the music director.

Thielemann said in a statement Wednesday that the Staatsoper "can look back on a long and glittering tradition" and that he is looking forward to returning to his home city and "leading the house into the future" together with its incoming overall manager, **Elisabeth Sobotka**. (AP)

Features

ARABO TIMES

FRIDAY-SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29-30, 2023



People & Places



Undercover



Undercover

**PARIS:** At Paris Fashion Week, designer **Olivier Rousteing**, the creative mastermind behind **Balmain**, put on a defiant runway display Wednesday, just days after garments from his collection were stolen from a truck loaded at Charles de Gaulle airport. Rousteing poured his woes into a show that radiated opulence through a floral lens amid rebellious and haunting melodies. The celebrity applause - including from **Cher** and **Kim Cattrall** - also may have helped buoy him a little.

**Balmain**

When **Gertrude Stein**, a close confidant of house founder **Pierre Balmain**, penned "a rose is a rose is a rose," she likely never envisaged its metamorphosis into a Paris runway's guiding theme. Yet, Rousteing, embracing this iconic friendship, orchestrated a floral ode for Balmain's Spring 2024 show. Rousteing channeled the essence of Balmain's couture from the late 1940s and early 1950s, celebrating Pierre's architectural wizardry. With every fold, cut and stitch, he echoed the legacy of the maison, fused with his own brazen touch. Sprinklings of the petit pois (polka dot), a staple from Monsieur Balmain's era, added whimsy amid the blossoming rose narrative.

With haunting vocals by **Björk** setting the mood - a reminder of the designer's recent woes - the runway flourished with sheeny sheaths, jeweled appliques, and rose pink boleros. The rose, in its myriad avatars - crafted from materials as eclectic as latex, porcelain, and recycled plastic - took center stage, a fragrant nod to Pierre's couture designs.

Though the vibrant array of garments sparkled, it was no groundbreaking feat of originality. But in light of the recent theft debacle, the show's execution was surely valiant. Vibrant shades played alongside strict monotones, Parisian precision met flowing contours, and age-old couture traditions fused with contemporary touches.

The recently concluded Balmain Paris fashion show was marked by challenges as a van transporting 50 outfits destined for the runway was hijacked days prior to the event. The robbery took place between one of Paris' main airports and Balmain's headquarters, adding to the tension of the showcase.

**Dries Van Noten**

In a season where the '70s reigns supreme, Belgian maestro **Dries Van Noten** took a dive into the era with elongated silhouettes and a deliberate art of mismatch. Banking on his forte in men's designs, the runway boasted models flaunting androgynous cuts and gelled dos, blurring the lines between yesteryears and today's sartorial zeitgeist. Entitled the "unfamiliar familiar," it drew from retro sporting vibes, with rugby stripes adorning asymmetric dresses, and tennis scarves cleverly reimagined as tops. The essence was



Undercover



Balmain

unmistakably Van Noten - honoring tradition with a spontaneous, fresh pulse.

Standouts included a historic flared trench, cheekily paired with a bikini top - Van Noten's playful take on fusing the then and now. Layering made a statement too. Picture an open striped shirt, layered with a bikini, all under a

Dries Van Noten

Style

Above and below: Models wear creations for the Undercover, Balmain and Dries Van Noten Spring/Summer 2024 womenswear fashion collections presented Sept 27, in Paris. (AP)



Dries Van Noten



Balmain



Fashion

Undercover

PARIS

transported fashion aficionados back to the '70s - with a nod to the space age. It was minimalism with a retro twist for the iconic house of Courrèges.

Known for its structural and futuristic designs since **André Courrèges'** time, the fashion house has been synonymous with innovative wear. The founder's engineering background had once crafted trapezoidal lines and audacious whites that defined a new era in design. Cut to today, and di Felice, while keeping the brand's essence alive, is introducing his own narrative.

The runway showcased tunic-like garments that effortlessly floated, hinting at the signature sportswear vibe Courrèges is famed for. Retro features like center-parted hair and '60s heels took onlookers on a nostalgic journey.

**Marni**

Marni, under the guidance of **Francesco Riso**, made quite an entrance into Paris - helped by a host of celebrities including **Usher** and **Erykah Badu**. The collection was a treat, walking us through a tapestry of craftsmanship and innovation. Marni's signature checks took a bold stand through cutting-edge, waste-free knitwear. These patterns weren't just confined to apparel. Shoes and knee socks dazzled with the same checkered design, hinting at the work's meticulousness. The designer has said that the technology required to achieve this is so advanced that only a handful of firms in Italy can replicate it.

But Marni's story didn't stop at checks. Intricate leatherwork showcased patterns interwoven with the brand's well-known stripes. There was great attention to detail: Some pieces featured multiple types of checks, showcasing craftsmanship that borders on couture. (AP)



Undercover



Balmain



Balmain

muted beige jacket. Paris has been parading cargo and khaki, and Van Noten didn't miss the memo. His rendition? A commanding

oversized beige trench, jazzed up with utilitarian flair and a surprise peek of red stripes from a hidden zippered jacket. Dipping into his scholarly fashion

roots, a cetacean blue gown waltzed down, with 18th-century ripples and bows, jazzed up by a split in the leg that led all the way down to classic menswear brogues.

But amid the curated chaos of old meets new, whispers arose: Is Van Noten playing it too safe this time around? While his design genius showed through, the collection's cautious undertone was palpable.

On a pristine white runway Wednesday morning, Paris Fashion Week witnessed a harmonious blend of past and future as **Nicolas di Felice**



Climate

Activists sue EU govts

Swiss glaciers lose 10% of their volume in 2 years

GENEVA, Sept 28, (AP): A Swiss Academy of Sciences panel is reporting a dramatic acceleration of glacier melt in the Alpine country, which has lost 10% of its ice volume in just two years after high summer heat and low snow volumes in winter.

Switzerland - home to the most glaciers of any country in Europe - has seen 4% of its total glacier volume disappear in 2023, the second-biggest decline in a single year on top of a 6% drop in 2022, the biggest thaw since measurements began, the academy's commission for cryosphere observation said.

Experts at the GLAMOS glacier monitoring center have been on the lookout for a possible extreme melt this year amid early warning signs about the country's estimated 1,400 glaciers, a number that is now dwindling.



Huss

"The acceleration is dramatic, with as much ice being lost in only two years as was the case between 1960 and 1990," the academy said. "The two extreme consecutive years have led to glacier tongues collapsing and the disappearance of many smaller glaciers."

Matthias Huss, head of GLAMOS, which participated in the research, said in an interview that Switzerland has already lost up to 1,000 small glaciers, and that "now we are starting to lose also bigger and more important glaciers."

"Glaciers are the ambassadors of climate change. They make it very clear what is happening out there because they respond in a very sensitive way to warming temperatures," he said. "The study underlines once again that there is big urgency to act now if you want to stabilize (the) climate, and if you want to save at least some of the glaciers."

The team said the "massive ice loss" stemmed from a winter with very low volumes of snow - which falls on top of glaciers and protects them from exposure to direct sunlight - and high summer temperatures.

All of Switzerland - where the Alps cut a swath through most of the southern and central parts of the country - was affected, and glaciers in the southern and eastern regions melted almost as fast as in 2022's record thaw.

System

"Melting of several meters was measured in southern Valais (region) and the Engadin valley at a level above 3,200 meters (10,500 feet), an altitude at which glaciers had until recently preserved their equilibrium," the team said.

The average loss of ice thickness was up to 3 meters (10 feet) in places such as the Gries Glacier in Valais, the Basodino Glacier in the southern canton, or region, of Ticino, and the Vadret Pers glacier system in eastern Graubunden.

The situation in some parts of the central Bernese Oberland and the Valais was less dramatic - such as for the Aletsch Glacier in Valais and Plaine Morte Glacier in the canton of Bern, because they enjoyed more winter snowfall. But even in such areas, "a loss of over 2 meters of the average ice thickness is extremely high," the team said.

Snow depths measured in the first half of February were generally higher than in the winters of 1964, 1990 or 2007, which were also characterized by low snowfalls, the team said. But snow levels sank to a new record low in the second half of the month of February, reaching only about 30% of the long-term average.

Over half of automated monitoring stations above 2,000 meters that have been in place for at least a quarter-century tallied record-low levels of snow at the time.

After that, an extremely warm June caused snow to melt two to four weeks earlier than usual, and mid-summer snowfalls melted very quickly, the team said.

Swiss meteorologists reported in August that the zero-degree Celsius level - the altitude where water freezes - had risen to its highest level ever recorded, at nearly 5,300 meters (17,400 feet), which means that all the Swiss Alpine peaks faced temperatures above freezing.



Six young adults and children argued that governments across Europe aren't doing enough to protect people from climate change at the European Court of Human Rights on Wednesday in the latest and largest instance of activists taking governments to court to force climate action.

Legal teams for the 32 nations - which includes the 27 EU member countries, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Norway, Russia and Turkey - questioned the admissibility of the case as well as the claim that the plaintiffs are victims of climate change harm.

But lawyers representing the group from Portugal said the nations they're suing have failed to adequately address human-caused warming and therefore violated some of the group's fundamental rights. They insisted on the need for further and rapid action to meet climate targets that have been set for the end of the decade.

Responsibilities

"Today's case is about the young. It is about the price that they are paying for the failure of states to tackle the climate emergency. It is about the harm that they will suffer during their lifetimes unless states step up to their responsibilities," said Alison Macdonald, pleading on behalf of the young people.

Barrister Sudhanshu Swaroop, a counsel for United Kingdom, said national governments understand the threat of climate change and its challenges and are determined to tackle it through international cooperation. He said the plaintiffs should have gone through national courts first, and stressed that since they are not nationals of the countries they are attacking, other than Portugal, the European Court of Human Rights cannot have jurisdiction.

Afterward, some of the plaintiffs said they were dismayed by the nations' arguments.

"It's very sad what we've just heard," Claudia Duarte Agostinho said. "The governments have just said that what is happening all around us is not important. They are minimizing the impact that climate change has on our human race."

"I am shocked by the countries' attempt to ignore the evidence that we've put in front of them, and trivialize the current state we are facing," said 15-year-old Andre Oliveira. "But I remind hopeful that the court will understand the urgency of this situation and will side in favor of our case."

During the hearing, Macdonald urged the judges to show urgency in tackling the "biggest crisis that Europe and the world" have perhaps faced, and said that countries should play a bigger role in helping control planet-warming emissions.

"It cannot be within a state's discretion whether or not to act to prevent catastrophic climate destruction," she said.

Although there have been successful climate cases at national and regional levels - young environmentalists recently won a similar case in Montana - the activists' legal team said that because national jurisdictions did not go far enough to protect their rights, the group felt compelled to take the matter to the Strasbourg-based court.

Arguing that their rights to life, to privacy and family life, and to be free from discrimination are being violated, the plaintiffs hope a favorable ruling will force governments to accelerate their climate efforts.



A plant is photographed on a cracked earth after the water level has dropped in the Sau reservoir, about 100 km (62 miles) north of Barcelona, Spain, on April 18, 2023. Six young people from Portugal are arguing on Wednesday, Sept. 27, that governments across Europe aren't doing enough to protect people from the harms of climate change at the European Court of Human Rights. (AP)



Endangered Rothchild's giraffe Sifa settles into his new home in Blair Drummond Safari and Adventure Park, after traveling from Dublin Zoo, becoming the first male giraffe to call the park home in a decade, near Stirling, Scotland, Sunday, Sept. 24. (AP)



Amisshah

Von Uexkull

Discovery

4 activists win 'Alternative Nobel':

The Right Livelihood Award - known as the "Alternative Nobel" - was awarded Thursday to environment activists from Kenya and Cambodia, a human rights defender from Ghana and a humanitarian group that rescues migrants in the Mediterranean Sea.

The 2023 laureates "stand up to save lives, preserve nature and safeguard the dignity and livelihoods of communities around the world," the award foundation said, adding that they "fight for people's right to health, safety, a clean environment and democracy."

This year's prize went to Phyllis Omido from Kenya and the groups Mother Nature Cambodia and SOS Mediterranee. They will share a cash prize but for security reasons its size cannot be disclosed, the award foundation said. The 2023 honorary award was given to Eunice Brookman-Amisshah from Ghana.

"They care for their land and each human life connected to it: be it Indigenous communities or people risking their lives to get to safety," Ole von Uexkull, the head of the Stockholm-based Right Livelihood foundation, said in a statement.

The Cambodian advocacy group was cited for its "fearless and engaging activism to preserve Cambodia's natural environment in the context of a highly restricted democratic space," while the non-profit charity that operates in international waters north of Libya was credited with carrying out "life-saving humanitarian search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean Sea."

Kenyan grassroots environmental activist Omido received the award "for her groundbreaking struggle to secure land and environmental rights for local communities while advancing the field of environmental law," it said.

The foundation said Brookman-Amisshah was honored "for pioneering discussions on women's reproductive rights in Africa, paving the way for liberalized abortion laws and improved safe abortion access."

This year there were 170 nominees from 68 countries, the foundation said. It said the laureates will be recognized at an award presentation in Stockholm on Nov. 29.

Created in 1980, the annual Right Livelihood Award honors efforts that the prize founder, Swedish-German philanthropist Jakob von Uexkull, felt were being ignored by the Nobel Prizes. To date, 190 laureates from 74 countries have received the award. Ole von Uexkull is a nephew of the prize founder.

Previous winners include Ukrainian human rights defender Oleksandra Matviichuk, Congolese surgeon Denis Mukwege and Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg. Matviichuk and Mukwege received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2022 and 2018, respectively. (AP)

Giant panda leaves zoo: Giant panda Fan Xing began a long journey home on

Health

Treatment has not been shown effective

FDA rejects promising ALS therapy

WASHINGTON, Sept 28, (AP): Federal health advisers voted overwhelmingly against an experimental treatment for Lou Gehrig's disease at a Wednesday meeting prompted by years of patient efforts seeking access to the unproven therapy.

The panel of Food and Drug Administration experts voted 17-1 that drug-maker Brainstorm's stem cell-based treatment has not been shown effective for patients with the fatal, muscle-wasting disease known as ALS, or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. One panel member abstained from voting.

While the FDA is not bound by the vote, it largely aligns with the agency's own strikingly negative review released earlier this week, in which staff scientists described Brainstorm's application as "scientifically incomplete" and "grossly deficient."

"Creating false hope can be considered a moral injury and the use of statistical magic or manipulation to provide false hope is problematic," said Lisa Lee, a bioethics and research integrity expert from Virginia Tech, who voted against the treatment. The lone positive vote came from a panel member representing patients.

Mobility

Wednesday's public meeting was essentially a longshot attempt by Brainstorm and the ALS community to sway FDA's thinking on the treatment, dubbed NurOwn.

Brainstorm's single 200-patient study failed to show that NurOwn extended life, slowed disease or improved patient mobility. But FDA agreed to convene the panel of outside advisers after ALS patients and advocates submitted a 30,000-signature petition seeking a public meeting.

In the last year, the FDA has approved two new drugs for ALS, after a nearly 20-year drought of new options. The approvals followed intense lobbying by advocacy groups.

FDA leaders have recently emphasized a new level of "regulatory flexibility" when reviewing experimental treatments for fatal, hard-to-treat conditions, including ALS, Alzheimer's and muscular dystrophy.

But the agency appears unwilling to overlook the failed study results and missing information in Brainstorm's submission, including key details on manufacturing and quality control needed to establish the product's safety.

"It really is a disease that needs a safe and effective treatment and there

FDA announces formal support for voluntary improvement program

SCHAUMBURG, Ill., Sept 28: The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has announced its support of the Voluntary Improvement Program (VIP) through final guidance published Sept 14. VIP, which transitioned from a pilot to a fully operational program in 2021 and then was formally recognized by the FDA last year, delivers improved organizational and product performance with the ultimate goal of increasing the pace and quantity of providing safe treatments to patients.

The Case for Quality collaborative community VIP was developed in collaboration with the medical device industry, FDA, the Medical Device Innovation Consortium (MDIC) and ISACA. VIP leverages ISACA's Medical Device Discovery Appraisal Program (MDDAP), a tailored version of the Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI) framework and appraisal methodology, to help medical device manufacturers better understand, measure and improve their capabilities to deliver high quality products. VIP, which is facilitated through MDIC, is the first Case for Quality Program recognized by the FDA that offers participants regulatory opportunities to help accelerate improvements to device quality and manufacturing.

These FDA opportunities include those related to risk-based inspection planning and Pre-market Approval submissions for manufacturing, such as 30-Day change notices, site changes and manufacturing modules:

"VIP has demonstrated that fo-

cus on quality and continuous improvement has impactful results for patients and drives significant value for participating manufacturers. With the release of the final guidance for VIP, CDRH has published policy leveraging the third-party maturity appraisal in its day-to-day operations," said Cisco Vicenty, Case for Quality Program Manager, FDA CDRH, in an FDA statement. "This milestone establishes our commitment to VIP, enables the program to grow, and provides CDRH a foundation to implement additional improvements in our goals to improve the quality and safety of medical devices. There is a very exciting opportunity ahead for us."

"Supporting manufacturers in their pursuit of continuous improvement is foundational to the MDIC mission," said Andrew Fish, President & CEO of MDIC. "The VIP program's impact has been growing steadily as more and manufacturers see how they can use this FDA-recognized program to systematically improve quality, improve operational efficiency, and even enhance patient safety. This program is for companies of all sizes and we are excited to see its continued expansion."

Through VIP, participating manufacturers engage in a discussion-driven appraisal approach, which involves conversations with individual contributors, systems demonstrations, and site tours. Evidence collected from the discussions is evaluated against the CMMI model of best practices, which identifies the organization's strengths and areas for improvement.

are a lot of other prospects out there that we need to encourage. Approving one like this would get in the way of that," said Dr. Kenneth Fischbeck of the National Institutes of Health.

ALS destroys nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord needed to walk, talk, swallow and - eventually - breathe. Most people die within three to five years of their first symptoms.

More than a dozen people spoke during a public comment session Wednesday, including ALS patients, their family members and physicians

who implored FDA to grant approval. Several speakers presented before-and-after videos showing patients who participated in Brainstorm's study walking, climbing stairs and performing other tasks that they attributed to NurOwn.

"When Matt is on NurOwn it helps him, when he's off of it he gets worse," said Mitze Klingenberg, speaking on behalf of her son, Matt Klingenberg, who was diagnosed with ALS in 2018.

The FDA is expected to issue a decision on the therapy by Dec. 8.

Wednesday - to a country she has never visited.

The 3-year-old was given a ceremonial send off Wednesday from Ouwehands Zoo in the Netherlands, where she was born, for the first leg of her journey to China, where

she will join a breeding program that is helping preserve the vulnerable species.

Wouter Jurgens, director Asia and Oceania at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said he hoped the panda would be an ambassador for relations between the Neth-



People enjoy the view at the Aletsch Glacier near Goms, Switzerland, June 14, 2023. (AP)

erlands and China.

Those links have been strained in recent months by the Dutch decision to limit sales of advanced semiconductor processor chips. The government called the move "country neutral," but it was seen as part of a U.S. policy aiming at restricting China's access to materials used to make such chips, which can be used in military technology.

Jurgens said Fan Xing represented "a sign of the special relationship between the Netherlands and China in the field of nature conservation, but of course also much broader."

"So today I would also like to express the hope that this Dutch-born panda, Fan Xing, will contribute ... not only to the protection of nature, the protection of a species and of biodiversity, but also continue to contribute to the relationship between the Netherlands and China."

Fan Xing was born on May 1, 2020, the first cub born in the Netherlands as a part of what was once known as China's "panda diplomacy" program. At the time, a quick check determined that the cub was male, but a test late last year that was part of meticulous preparations for her trip to China established that Fan Xing is female.

For decades, China gifted friendly nations with its national mascot. The country more recently has loaned pandas to zoos on commercial terms. (AP)



## Milan catch city rivals atop Serie A

## Inter's unbeaten start ended by loss to Sassuolo

MILAN, Sept 28, (AP): Inter Milan saw its perfect start to the Serie A season come to an end as it fell to a surprise 2-1 loss at home to Sassuolo.

Denzel Dumfries fired Inter in front on the stroke of halftime but two goals in nine second-half minutes - including a stunner from Domenico Berardi - gave Sassuolo another impressive win, following its 4-2 victory over Juventus at the weekend.

The result left Inter level on points at the top of the table with city rival AC Milan after United States international Christian Pulisic helped the Rossoneri to a 3-1 victory over Cagliari.

Inter was looking to make it six wins out of six in an impressive start to the season and was also the only unbeaten side remaining in Serie A.

Matters appeared to be going to plan when it took the lead in first-half stoppages. Dumfries cut inside from the right and befuddled one defender before firing a shot between the legs of another and into the bottom left corner.

However, the warning signs had been there and Sassuolo equalized in the 54th minute when Berardi picked out Nedim Bajrami and his shot squirmed between Inter goalkeeper Yann Sommer and his near post.

Berardi got on the scoresheet himself nine minutes later when he cut inside and curled a magnificent strike into the bottom left corner.

Victor Osimhen put his off-the-field drama behind him as he scored to help



Sassuolo's Domenico Berardi, (right), is challenged by Inter Milan's Alessandro Bastoni during the Serie A soccer match between Inter Milan and Sassuolo at the San Siro Stadium, in Milan, Italy. (AP)

Napoli beat Udinese 4-1.

The 24-year-old Osimhen scored Napoli's second goal of the night with a precise shot into the far bottom corner near the end of the first half.

Osimhen, who was cheered by the fans before the match in a show of support, is considering legal action against his club after it posted a video mocking his penalty miss at the weekend.

Napoli was awarded another penalty on Wednesday, in the 19th minute. This time Piotr Zielinski stepped up

and converted.

Khvicha Kvaratskhelia netted his first goal of the season in the second half and Giovanni Simeone also scored for Napoli, seconds after Lazar Samardžić had pulled one back for Udinese.

Noah Okafor and Ruben Loftus-Cheek netted their first Serie A goals, both set up by Pulisic, as the new signings took charge. Zito Luvumbo gave Cagliari a surprise lead in the 29th minute but Milan turned the match around shortly before the interval.

Cagliari goalkeeper Boris Radunović fumbled the ball badly after Pulisic had got away from his marker and pulled it back from the byline, allowing Okafor

## SOCCER

to tap in the rebound in the 40th minute.

Radunović also got a finger to a cross from another one of Milan's summer signings, Tijjani Reijnders, but it came through to Fikayo Tomori, who bundled it in from point-blank range to give the Rossoneri the lead on the stroke of halftime.

Milan extended its lead on the hour mark. Pulisic's cross was blocked but it came back to him and he cut it back to the edge of the area for former Chelsea teammate Loftus-Cheek to smash into the bottom left corner.

Promoted Empoli got its first points

## Kuwaiti athletes set sights on World Half Ironman

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28: (KUNA): Kuwaiti Triathlon Club athletes Abdullah Al-Rifai and Saleh Al-Muhaini achieved a significant milestone by securing their spots in the upcoming World Half Ironman Championship, scheduled for December 2024 in New Zealand. Their qualification came as a result of their outstanding performance in the recent championship held in the

Sultanate of Oman, where they finished fourth and seventh, respectively.

Rashid Al-Kandari, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the club, extended his heartfelt congratulations to these accomplished Kuwaiti athletes. He emphasized that their achievement is a testament to the excellence of triathlon players from Kuwait on the international stage, as well as a testament

to their consistent success in representing Kuwait in various sporting events.

Al-Kandari attributed this remarkable accomplishment to the dedicated efforts of the athletes themselves, as well as the unwavering support from the club's technical and administrative staff. He also acknowledged the invaluable backing and attention provided by the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Triathlon Club.

Furthermore, Al-Kandari expressed the club's commitment to preparing

## TRIATHLON



Abdullah Al-Rifai and Saleh Al-Muhaini celebrate after achieving a significant milestone.

back in Serie A with its first goal as Tommaso Baldanzi's strike helped it beat Salernitana 1-0.

Empoli was the first side in Serie A

history to be pointless and goalless after the opening five rounds.

Atalanta won 1-0 at Hellas Verona, and Lazio beat Torino 2-0.

its athletes for future tournaments and competitions. He underscored their determination to proudly wave the Kuwaiti flag at every international event they participate in.

He also commended the General Sports Authority and the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee for their continuous support in nurturing the sport and overcoming the challenges it encounters. Their efforts have been crucial in ensuring that Kuwait is well-represented on the global sporting stage, consistently achieving top positions and recognition.

## Without Messi, Inter Miami lose to Houston in US Open Cup final



Houston Dynamo players and head coach Ben Olsen (left), raise the trophy after winning the U.S. Open Cup final soccer match against Inter Miami in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (AP)

## Whitecaps hold Rapids

## Lingard training with Saudi Arabian club

MANCHESTER, England, Sept 28, (AP): Former Manchester United player Jesse Lingard could be the next Premier League star to join the Saudi Arabian league.

The England international, who is a free agent, is training with Saudi club Al-Ettifaq after leaving Nottingham Forest at the end of the last season.

Al-Ettifaq is coached by Liverpool great Steven Gerrard and signed England midfielder Jordan Henderson in the off-season.

"I've watched him for many years so I'm aware of the talent," Gerrard told Al Arabiya's sports program FilMarma. "Jesse is out of a club at the moment, he is not contracted, so he's free to train with anyone else. So he's coming to use our facilities, he's coming to train with our players, to maintain

his fitness.

"Jesse knows there's an opportunity for him to try to convince us to come to the club."

The Saudi league has embarked on a spectacular spending spree this year by luring some of soccer's biggest stars to the oil-rich kingdom.

Cristiano Ronaldo, Neymar, Karim Benzema and Sadio Mane have made the move from Europe's biggest leagues, and a slew of other top players have followed suit.

The 30-year-old Lingard graduated from United's academy and left the club in 2022. He signed a one-year contract with Forest and has been a free agent since that deal expired.

Lingard has also trained with West Ham this season. He had a successful loan spell at the London club in 2021.

celebrated midseason acquisitions. Alba has a leg injury and his status for upcoming matches is unknown.

The 36-year-old Messi missed Argentina's World Cup qualifying win at Bolivia on Sept. 12 and Inter Miami's 5-2 loss at Atlanta United on Sept. 16. He returned for the Sept. 20 match, but didn't even make it to halftime, then sat out Sunday.

There were downpours in the Fort Lauderdale area late Wednesday afternoon, yet thousands of fans - many

of them wearing Messi jerseys either in the blue and white of Argentina or the pink of Inter Miami - showed up long before the gates opened for the Cup final, if for no other reason than to watch the team buses arrive.

They might have seen the buses. They didn't see Messi on the field, and it might have led to some expensive disappointment for some fans. Ticket prices on the secondary markets, with links to sales posted on the team's social media channels as re-

cently as Tuesday, ranged from \$145 to nearly \$4,000 about an hour before the match.

Brian White scored his 13th goal of the season in the 78th minute and the Vancouver Whitecaps tied the Colorado Rapids 2-2.

Vancouver (11-10-9) played its seventh straight away match, going 3-2-2. The Whitecaps, who haven't played a home match since Aug. 20, host D.C. United on Saturday.

White headed in Sebastian Berhalter's corner kick to cap the scoring and set a career-high in goals. He is just the second player in Whitecaps MLS history to record multiple 12-goal seasons, joining Camilo Sanvezzo.

Vancouver defender Mathias Laborda opened the scoring in the 11th minute with his first MLS goal. The Whitecaps nearly made it 2-0 three minutes later, but Colorado goalkeeper Marko Ilic denied White's point-blank header.

Colorado forward Diego Rubio tied it at 1-1 in the 47th. Rubio mishit a cross from Calvin Harris, but he stuck with it and poked it home. Rubio, who recorded a goal and an assist against Portland on Saturday, moved into third place in club history with 38 goals.

Cole Bassett headed in Connor Roman's corner kick in the 67th to give Colorado a 2-1 lead. It was Bassett's fifth goal of the season.

## Al-Arabiya 'suffer' defeat against Zamalek in Doha

DOHA, Sept 28: In the International Doha Basketball Championship hosted in Qatar, the basketball team of Al-Arabiya faced a tough loss to Egypt's Zamalek, with a final score of 89-63.

During the opening quarter of the match, Al-Arabiya showcased a commendable performance, managing to keep pace with Zamalek and even leading at certain points. However, Zamalek eventually gained control

## BASKETBALL

of the game, securing a significant lead and ultimately resulting in Al-Arabiya's second consecutive loss. In their previous match in the tournament, Al-Arabiya had experienced defeat at the hands of Libya's Al-Ahly, with a score of 63-86, whereas they had emerged victorious against the Philippines' Meralco Bolts, with a score of 90-82.

The tournament brings together eight teams representing seven dif-



Al-Arabiya player dribbles the ball.

ferent nations.

The first group comprises Fath Al-Rabat from Morocco, Hekme Beirut, Beirut from Lebanon, and Dijlah University from Iraq. Meanwhile, the second group consists of Al-Arabiya, Meralco Bolts from the Philippines, Zamalek from Egypt, and Al-Ahly from Libya.

## Italy defender Bonucci hopes Union success will lay path for Euros finale

BERLIN, Sept 28, (AP): Italy defender Leonardo Bonucci is hoping his "crazy decision" to join Union Berlin pays off at the European Championship next year.

The 36-year-old Bonucci, who joined Union from Italian giant Juventus on the last day of the summer transfer window, aims to end his international career on a high when Italy defends its title at Euro 2024.

Germany will host the tournament and Bonucci has arrived in the country a whole season before his potential teammates after choosing to leave Italy's Serie A for the first time.

It wasn't his first choice. Bonucci initially wanted to see out the remaining year of his contract at Juventus, where he made more than 500 appearances, but coach Massimiliano Allegri told the player he was no longer wanted. Bonucci sent a legal notice to the club after being excluded from pre-season training.

Union and Italian club Lazio offered a way out. Bonucci opted for the former - a team that was only promoted to the Bundesliga for the first time in 2019 - despite the difficulties of learning another language and leaving his family in Turin. He said he wants to broaden his perspectives.

## SOCCER

"I know this is a crazy decision," Bonucci told journalists this week. "But I need to put myself out of my comfort zone. I played 20 years in Italy."

Bonucci said he wants become a coach after his playing career, and the move to Germany will help him experience a different lifestyle, style of play, training methods and outlook.

Union's Swiss coach Urs Fischer played a role in Bonucci's decision to join the Köpenick-based team.

"We spoke in Italian, this is the most important," Bonucci joked. "No, we spoke principally about my situation because in Juventus I did 50 days' training with two or three players. It's completely different to do training with the whole team. I told him I needed three to four weeks to be ready and we're now in the fourth week and I hope to be fit very soon."

Bonucci made his Union debut in Real Madrid's last-gasp 1-0 win in the Champions League last week, then conceded a penalty on his Bundesliga debut, a 2-0 loss to Hoffenheim, on Saturday.

It was Union's second consecutive loss at home, where it previously had a 24-game unbeaten run. Altogether the



Leipzig's Xavi Simons, (right), and his teammate Emil Forsberg, (left), celebrate their side's third goal during the German soccer cup first round match between SV Wehen Wiesbaden and RB Leipzig in Wiesbaden, Germany. Leipzig defeated Wiesbaden by 3-2. (AP)

team has lost its last four games.

"It's difficult, but I know we'll improve," said Bonucci, who said defending in the Bundesliga is "completely different" than in Serie A because defenders need to cover more space in Germany.

"This is the most difficult thing for defending because you need to attack the striker. Otherwise, you need to cover. You need to read the situation very well because you have opponents like (Bayer Leverkusen forward Victor) Boniface who are very, very speedy," Bonucci said.

Union finished fourth in the Bundesliga last season - a remarkable achievement given the team's limited resources - to reach Europe's premier competition for the first time. It's playing its Champions League home games at Olympiastadion, traditionally the home of city rival Hertha Berlin, to cater for increased supporter and corporate demand.

Olympiastadion has more than three times the capacity of Union's Stadion An der Alten Försterei, but the decision to move has been criticized by some Union supporters.

Union fans value performances over results and Bonucci was surprised to see them celebrating the team even after losing at home to hated rival Leipzig, ending its long unbeaten run.

Bonucci said he turned to teammate Robin Knoche and told him, "But they are crazy. We lost the game." Robin said it's always the same. Our supporters are like this. It's too important for them that we give all we have on the pitch. They're happy if we win but the most important (thing) is FC Union Berlin."

## FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., Sept 28, (AP): Lionel Messi couldn't play, and the Houston Dynamo took full advantage to win a trophy on his home field.

Griffin Dorsey and Amine Bassi scored first-half goals and Houston - with NBA star James Harden, part of the team's ownership group, looking on from the stands - topped Messi-less Inter Miami 2-1 on Wednesday night to win the U.S. Open Cup.

Josef Martinez scored in second-half stoppage time for Inter Miami, but it wasn't enough as Messi could only look on from the team bench area.

Messi was not on Inter Miami's active roster for the match because of a leg issue, marking his fourth absence in a span of his last five games combined for club and country. And it's unclear if Messi will continue to be sidelined when Inter Miami resumes its push to make Major League Soccer's playoffs this weekend.

## SOCCER

Inter Miami coach Gerardo "Tata" Martino said Wednesday night that "it wasn't prudent" to consider playing Messi against Houston, though he indicated the team expects him to play on Saturday when MLS contests resume for the club. Messi will continue to be evaluated until then.

The seven-time Ballon d'Or winner was subbed out of a match against Toronto on Sept. 20 in the first half because of a leg issue, and did not play in the team's 1-1 draw at Orlando on Sunday. That was the third match he missed in its entirety - two for club, one for country - in the last two weeks, and missing a final on Wednesday suggests the problem could be worse than the team has suggested.

Also out for Wednesday: Jordi Alba, another of Inter Miami's cel-



Inter Miami forward Leonardo Campana (9) vies with Houston Dynamo defender Franco Escobar (2) for the ball in the first half of the U.S. Open Cup final soccer match in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (AP)



# Al Arabi rediscover winning form

Khaitan suffer first defeat of season

**KUWAIT CITY, Sept 28:** In an exciting match at Jaber International Stadium, Al Arabi rediscovered their winning form by defeating Khaitan 4-0 during the opening of the third round of the Zain Premier League. This victory marked Khaitan's first defeat of the season.

The "Green" team's impressive performance elevated their total points to 7, while Khaitan remained at 4 points.

Khaitan, managed by coach Ibrahim Obaid, adopted a balanced approach in the first half, focusing on defensive organization and launching counterattacks. Their efforts posed a threat to Al Arabi's goalkeeper, Suleiman Abdel Ghafour. Notably, advanced defender Fawaz Al Khalidi's header narrowly missed the post.

Al-Arabi, despite possessing the ball more than their opponent, struggled to convert this advantage into on-field success. Their missed opportunities included Abdul Rahman Al-Dhafiri's free-kick that sailed over the crossbar and a dangerous header by Senegalese player Mamadou Thiam, skillfully saved by Khaitan's goalkeeper Ali Fadel.

At the start of the second half, German coach Thomas Bradewicz made strategic substitutions, bringing in Ali Khalaf and Moroccan player Walid Sabbar in place of



Al Arabi and Khaitan players battle for the ball.

Al-Dhafiri and Dhahi Al-Shammari. Al-Arabi's offensive performance noticeably improved, with Ali Khalaf's shot hitting the post without a follow-up. Fadel managed to

save a dangerous shot from Khaba but he couldn't stop Ali Khalaf's missile, which found the net, marking Al-Arabi's first goal. Despite Khaitan's efforts to adjust,

Al-Arabi maintained control. They added the second goal through a coordinated attack involving Mamadou and Khaba, with Sabar finishing it into the net. Jumaa

Abboud added the third goal with a beautiful shot into the far corner.

Nayef Hamid, a substitute, concluded the quartet with a wonderful backheel pass from Sabbar.

## Spanish police raid federation 'offices'

**BARCELONA, Spain, Sept 28:** (AP) Spanish police raided the offices of the country's soccer federation on Thursday as part of an investigation into the payment of millions of dollars over several years by Barcelona to a former vice president of Spain's refereeing committee.

The Guardia Civil confirmed to The Associated Press that its police had searched the offices of the refereeing committee at federation headquarters near Madrid. Police said they had not made any arrests and were acting on the orders of judge Joaquin Aguirre, who is investigating the case for a court in Barcelona.

In March, state prosecutors formally accused Barcelona of corruption in sports, fraudulent management, and falsification of mercantile documentation. Prosecutors said the club paid José María Enríquez Negrera, a former referee who was a part of the federation's refereeing committee from 1994-2018, 7.3 million euros (\$7.7 million) from 2001-18.

### SOCCER

The raids come after the federation has been rocked by a sexism scandal after its former president kissed a player on the lips without her consent during the Women's World Cup awards ceremony last month.

Also Thursday, Aguirre formally added a new accusation to the probe, saying there are indications that bribery occurred between Barcelona and Negrera. The accusation of bribery replaces the previous accusation of corruption in sports.

The payments were initially investigated as part of a tax probe into a company run by Negrera.

Barcelona has denied any wrongdoing or conflict of interest, saying it paid for technical reports on referees but never tried to influence their decisions in games.

## Bilbao draw 2-2 against Getafe at home

# Madrid back to winning ways as Girona take top in La Liga

**MADRID, Sept 28, (AP):** Real Madrid got back to winning ways by beating Las Palmas 2-0 on Wednesday while Girona is top of the Spanish league after its sixth straight victory.

Brahim Díaz and Joselu scored for Madrid, which was coming off a 3-1 loss at city rival Atletico Madrid after opening the season with five straight league victories.

The win at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium moved Madrid to second place, one point behind Girona, which came from behind to win 2-1 at Villarreal.

Girona, which is enjoying its best-ever start to the league with six wins and a draw in seven games, hosts Madrid on Saturday.

"It's not easy to win six in a row in the first division," Girona coach Michel said. "We have to enjoy this moment. The game against Madrid will be precious, against one of the best teams in the world."

Girona is two points ahead of fellow Catalan club Barcelona, the defending champion that had its five-game winning streak halted by a 2-2 draw at Mallorca on Tuesday.

Madrid was in control from the start at the Bernabeu and missed chance after chance until Díaz finally opened the scoring with a high shot from near the penalty spot three minutes into first-half stoppage time.

The hosts had 18 attempts in the first half alone, with eight of them on target. Las Palmas had no shots on target until after halftime.

### SOCCER

Newly arrived striker Joselu grew increasingly frustrated after failing to capitalize on several good scoring opportunities until finally finding the net with a header in the 54th.

Díaz started in place of new signing Jude Bellingham. The 20-year-old England midfielder started on the bench for the first time this season after scoring six goals in his first seven matches with Madrid in all competitions.

Forward Vinícius Júnior, returning from injury, also started on the bench. He replaced Joselu early in the second half.

"The players are well aware how important it is to rotate," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said. "I try to manage the squad and we have to do that the best we can in the coming games. That will be the case until the next international break because fatigue does play a big part and there are lots of injuries in this period."

Madrid endured yet another injury setback when defender David Alaba was substituted in the first half because of an apparent muscle problem. The club has been playing without goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois and defender Éder Militão because of long-term knee injuries.

It was the fourth loss for promoted Las Palmas, which beat Granada in the previous round for its first win of the season.

Girona rallied to beat Villarreal and extend its stunning start to the season.

Dani Parejo put the hosts ahead by converting a 49th-minute penalty kick, but Artem Dovbyk and Eric García gave Girona the lead with goals in the 56th and 61st minutes.

Khan leads Afghan's strong spin trio

## Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Afghanistan's spin bowlers could create some Cricket WC upsets

**NEW DELHI, Sept 28, (AP):** They might not be Cricket World Cup contenders or even make the semifinals, but Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Bangladesh all have the potential to beat many of the top teams because of their skillful spin bowlers.

The Asian heavyweights - host India and regional foe Pakistan - are the top two south Asian contenders for the semifinals, mainly because of experienced batters in their side. But both lack depth in their spin departments and could hardly match the spinners of at least Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, with Bangladesh not far behind.

Mercurial leg-spinner Rashid Khan leads Afghanistan's strong spin trio that also include other impact spinners -- Mujeeb Ur Rahman and Mohammad Nabi - while left-arm spinner Noor Ahmad could also prove to be a surprise package.

Rashid's experience of playing Indian Premier League should come in handy for Afghanistan and his wizardry on expected slow surfaces during the World Cup could turn the tables in Afghanistan's favor.

Mujeeb and Nabi also could lend Rashid ideal support in the middle overs to stem the flow of runs. Afghanistan, which had direct qualification for the World Cup, also recalled fast bowler Naveen-ul-Haq to his ODI team after two years as it left out experienced all-rounder Gulbadin Naib, who put on an impressive show in the recent Asia Cup, but couldn't win selectors' confidence.

Along with Naveen, fast bowler Azmatullah Omarzai also returns to the side after being ruled out of the Asia Cup due to injury and got the nod ahead of Karim Janat.

Despite a formidable bowling base, it could all come down to the Afghan batters and how well they support their bowlers. Can Rahmanullah Gurbaz provide them with an aggressive start against lethal pace attacks? Can Ibrahim Zadran, captain Hashmatullah Shahidi and Rahmat Shah consolidate in the middle overs? That is a question that won't be answered until they face the likes of Jasprit Bumrah, Shaheen Afridi, Mark Wood and Pat Cummins.

As expected, leg-spinning all-rounder Dushan Hemantha has come in for injured Wanindu Hasaranga in Sri Lanka's squad. Hasaranga played a pivotal role in getting Sri Lanka through to the qualifiers in Zimbabwe, but had been sidelined since picking up a hamstring injury during the Lanka Premier League. The 26-year-old Hasaranga has taken 67 wickets at an average of 28.77 in 48 ODIs.

In Hasaranga's absence, Dunith Wellalage impressed everyone at the Asia Cup with his left-arm wrist spin that even baffled the star-studded Indian batting lineup during the Super 4 part of the tournament. Offspinner Maheesh Theekshana, whose bowling in the powerplay could prove vital against big nations, is expected to regain fitness ahead of Sri Lanka's opening game against South Africa on Oct. 7.

Dasun Shanaka will captain Sri Lanka despite his poor form with the bat. He has scored only 150 runs in his last 17 one-day innings. Bangladesh had some late controversy when key batter Tamim Iqbal said he opted out of the team after a dispute with a member of the Bangladesh Cricket Board. The opening batsman on Wednesday described the situation as "a dirty game." "Someone called me from the top level of the board who is very involved with our cricket. He said that if you go to the World Cup you have to play the matches by managing your (back) injury. So, you better do one thing, don't play the first

### CRICKET

match against Afghanistan (on Oct. 7)," Tamim said on a video posted on his official Facebook account.

Tamim, Bangladesh's all-time top scorer in ODIs with 8,357 runs in 240 innings, returned to the squad after recovering from back pain which led him to quit the one-day captaincy.

New captain Shakib Al Hasan is the mainstay of Bangladesh hopes just as the all-rounder was during the last World Cup when he topped the batting charts before the team made an exit after the first round.

There were mixed performances in the recent Asia Cup as Bangladesh looked to find the right combination for the World Cup. They lost to Sri Lanka and Pakistan in their Super 4 games before beating India in its last game which pleased head coach Chandika Hathurusinghe.

"It is huge for us to go into the World Cup," Hathurusinghe said soon after Bangladesh beat India in a game in which Hadrik Pandya and Virat Kohli were rested. "We go (into the World Cup) with a lot of confidence, especially with what happened in this tournament."



Khan

Girona, controlled by City Football Group, the parent company of Manchester City, opened the season with a 1-1 draw at Real Sociedad.

Villarreal is winless in three matches in all competitions.

Fourth-place Athletic Bilbao drew 2-2 against Getafe at home, while

Cadiz and Rayo Vallecano finished 0-0.

Valencia lost 1-0 to visiting Real Sociedad.



Real Madrid's Vinicius Junior (right), fights for the ball with Las Palmas' Saul Coco during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Madrid and Las Palmas, at Santiago Bernabeu stadium, in Madrid. Real Madrid won 2-0. (AP)



Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan plays a shot during the Asia Cup cricket match between Bangladesh and India in Colombo, Sri Lanka. (AP)

## Kuwait edge Egypt in padel

**DUBAI, Sept 28:** In a remarkable display of skill and teamwork, the Kuwaiti padel team secured a resounding 2-1 victory against their Egyptian counterparts in a match held at the ongoing Arab Championship in Dubai. This prestigious competition is set to continue until the first of October, featuring top-level padel matches.

Next on Kuwait's agenda is a match against the Sudanese national team,

scheduled for 10:00 AM today at the "Nad Al Sheba Sports Complex" stadium.

Omar Al-Zanki, President of the Kuwait Padel Club, commended the exceptional performance of the Kuwaiti team during their match. He emphasized that their high technical level sends a strong message to all participating teams, signaling fierce competition for the championship title.

## Injured Naseem's absence could hamper Pakistan's title bid at WC

**ISLAMABAD, Sept 28, (AP):** It's been 31 years since Imran Khan's "cornered tigers" - without injured Waqar Younis - roared at the right moment and Pakistan won the Cricket World Cup in Australia.

After seven unsuccessful attempts over three decades since that famous 1992 victory in the final against England at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, the script is quite similar for Pakistan skipper Babar Azam for the Oct. 5-Nov. 19 tournament in India.

Young fast bowler Naseem Shah was believed to be the key weapon in Babar's pace armory to conquer the batters on cricket pitches across the border in company with pace duo of Shaheen Shah Afridi and Haris Rauf.

### CRICKET

But too much workload over the last year - that included playing in the Lanka Premier League just before the Asia Cup - finally took its toll on the 20-year-old Naseem.

Naseem injured his right shoulder during the Super 4 stage game against archrival India in the Asia Cup which now requires surgery and could delay his return to international cricket for three to four months.

Energetic Hasan Ali, who hasn't been part of Pakistan's white-ball cricket for over a year, got a surprise recall to fill in for Naseem after several other in contention like tall fast bowler Ihsanullah and Mohammad Hasnain were also ruled out because of various injuries and the selectors preferred to keep another young pacer Zaman Khan on the list of travelling reserves.

"We have been struggling to pick fast bowlers because of injuries, it was not just Naseem's injury," said chief selector Inzamam-ul-Haq. "We fo-

ocused on choosing experienced players as we wanted someone familiar with the conditions and could take the pressure of a big event like the World Cup. That is why we picked Hasan Ali."

While Babar continues to blossom at the top of ICC batting rankings by scoring plenty of runs in white-ball cricket, there are several cracks in his bowling department which could hurt Pakistan's chances to qualify for the semifinals.

Naseem has showed his ability to choke runs not only in the batting powerplay and in the middle-overs, but also conceded less than run-a-ball during the final overs when the batters normally push the scoring pedal with their big hitting.

However, neither the fast bowlers nor the spinners could make any impact during the Asia Cup which saw Pakistan losing to India by a hefty margin of 228 runs and then Sri Lanka's inexperienced side overhauled the target of 252 runs which knocked out Pakistan from the final spot.

The form of Babar's deputy - all-rounder Shadab Khan - is also not impressive this year with the leg-spinner picking up only 13 wickets in 11 ODIs and scoring 138 runs at an average of 19.71.

The silver lining for Babar's Team Pakistan is that Afridi and Rauf could dis-

mantle any top order in the World Cup as they showed during the abandoned group game against India in the Asia Cup.

But it is the lack of spinners' ability to pick up wickets in the middle overs which is worrying Inzamam. "The three spinners (Shadab Khan, Usama Mir and Mohammad Nawaz) have been with the team and are good players," Inzamam said when he announced the squad. "They need to work harder to be effective in the middle overs because it is very important for the spinners to play their role."





A Kuwaiti boxer punches an opponent during a bout in China.

# Sports

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## Kuwaiti shooters continue to make history

Al-Tarqi and Al-Shamaa secure silver at Asian Games

**HANGZHOU, China, Sept 28:** Kuwait's shooting champions continue to make history at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, which run until October 8. Shooter Abdullah Al-Tarqi and shooter Iman Al-Shamaa secured the silver medal in the mixed skeet shooting competition, marking Kuwait's first-ever medal in mixed doubles at the Asian Games.

Al-Tarqi and Al-Shamaa excelled by breaking the world record for clay pigeon hits, achieving an outstanding score of 149 out of 150.

The pair faced extreme fatigue due to their previous participation in individual skeet shooting, where Al-Tarqi won the gold medal. Additionally, the high humidity on the day of the final directly affected their performance. Despite these challenges, the champions clinched a silver medal, adding to Kuwait's medal tally at the 19th Asian Games, which now stands at 3 (1 gold, 1 silver, and 1 bronze).

### ASIAN GAMES

Abdullah Al-Tarqi commented after winning the silver medal, "The final wasn't difficult, but our energy was depleted. If not for that, we could have beaten them, and today should have been a day of rest after yesterday's competitions."

He continued, "Yesterday was very exhausting due to the competitions and the high humidity. Weak sleep and yesterday's fatigue affected our performance in today's final, and I didn't have the proper energy. The delay in starting the final drained my energy to almost zero."

He added, "My daughter Iman Al-Shamaa and I achieved a new world record (149 out of 150) in the initial rounds. We hope to have a good showing in the upcoming championship in South Korea, which is a qualifier for the Olympics, in about 25 days."

Iman Al-Shamaa remarked, "I performed excellently in the first three rounds, scoring 75 out of 75 targets. We did our best in the final and secured the silver. Honestly, I expected to reach the final, and we are delighted to win the silver medal. I dedicate this medal to the Kuwaiti people and sports fans."

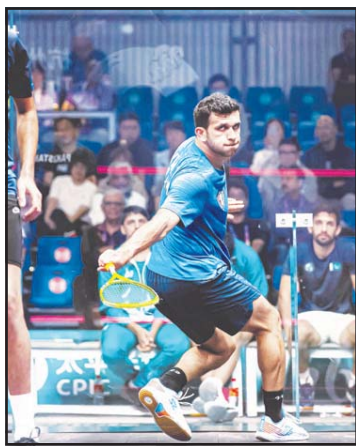
In chess, Kuwait's Amina Al-Awadi and Badr Al-Hajri were eliminated from the preliminary rounds, each earning 1.5 points. In pistol shooting at 25 meters, Amira Awadh exited the competition with a 41st-place finish. Hamad Al-Namashan, representing Kuwait in 10-meter pistol shooting, finished 34th out of 56 participants in the preliminary rounds. In swimming, Saud Al-Shamrook did not advance from the preliminary rounds in the 800m freestyle race, while Walid Abdulrazzaq exited the 50m butterfly preliminary rounds.

In boxing, Kuwait's Noura Al-Mutairi was eliminated from the quarter-finals with a 0-5 loss to her Indonesian opponent in the 60 kg weight category.

The sabre fencing team of Yusuf Al-Shamlan, Mohammed Al-Fadhli, and Mohammed AbdulKarim ended



Shooting heroes and heroines take a photo to commemorate their victory.



A squash player in action.

their competition in the team event, reaching the quarter-finals but being defeated by Kazakhstan 4-5.

Kuwait's squash national team also exited the team event with a 0-3 loss to Pakistan, securing third place behind Pakistan and India.

Today's Competitions: Our national handball team will face the Iranian team in the main round at 7:00 AM. Kuwait's triathlon team begins its Asian Games journey today, with Abdalaziz Alduaij competing in the men's individual event at 3:00 AM. Swimmer Saud Al-Shamrook will compete in the 400m freestyle qualifiers at 6:00 AM. Kuwait's fencing team (Abdulraziz Al-Shatti, Ali Al-Nakhas, Abdulrahman Al-Mani) will face the Korean team in the round of 16 in the epee team event at 7:00 AM. Young golfer Salem Al-Akool (15 years old) will participate in the second round of golf, marking Kuwait's first official participation in golf at the Asian Games.

### Kuwait pip Qatar in T20 qualifier



A Kuwaiti bats during the cricket match against Qatar.

**DOHA, Sept 28. (KUNA):** Kuwait's team defeated Qatar 124-123 on Thursday in the ICC Men's T20 Asia Qualifiers in Doha, as part of the qualifications for the 2024 ICC Men's T20 World Cup due in the US. Speaking to KUNA in a statement, the team's head Mahmoud Abdullah said Kuwaiti players managed to win the game against Qatar after making great efforts, expressing his satisfaction

about the players' performance.

He noted that the winner of the first position will cruise into the second qualification to be held in Nepal. The team, that wins the highest points, will qualify for the next qualifications, he elaborated. The competition, which includes Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the Maldives, kicked off Thursday in Doha and will last until October 5.

## India clinch gold

### Hosts China continue dominance by surpassing 150 medals

**HANGZHOU, China, Sept 28. (AP):** China blew past the 150-medal mark Thursday on Day 5 of the Asian Games, more than double the number of second-place South Korea as the home nation continued its decades-long domination of the event. Kazakhstan won two golds and a silver in shooting events on Thursday, while North Korea earned a gold, silver and bronze.

Kazakhstan won gold in both the women's 10-meter running target and the skeet mixed team competition. It took silver in the women's team 10-meter running target as well.

North Korea won gold in the women's team 10-meter running target, and silver and bronze in the individual version of the same event.

In other shooting competitions, India won gold in the men's team 10-meter air pistol event, and Vietnam won gold in the individual version of the same event.

The hosts were bolstered by multiple golds in a home sport on Thursday, as Chinese athletes won the men's 70-, 60- and 56-kilogram finals in Wushu martial arts, as well as the women's 60- and 52-kilogram finals.

He Feng, who took gold in the 70-kilogram final by beating former

### ASIAN GAMES

Asian Games gold medalist Mohsen Mohammadsseifi of Iran, was trailing in the first round and credited his coaches for helping him adjust.

Host nations traditionally get a homefield "medal bump," and He said the crowd also helped keep him going.

China won almost 300 medals - 132 gold - five years ago at the Asian Games in Indonesia, with South Korea and Japan the main challengers.

Similarly, the two countries were in second and third place for overall medals on Day 5 this year with another 10 days to go.

The Asian Games feature 12,500 participants from 45 nations and territories - more than the 10,500 from about 200 delegations expected at next year's Paris Olympics.

Despite its early dominance, China will have to settle for a battle for bronze in the popular League of Legends online video game after falling Thursday to the strong South Korean team led by Lee Sang-hyeok.

Lee, better known in the online gaming world as "Faker," is commonly called the League of Legends GOAT - Greatest Of All Time - and the South Korean team has yet to lose a game.

## City out of Cup after loss at Newcastle

### Liverpool, Arsenal and Chelsea advance

**LONDON, Sept 28. (AP):** Manchester City seems to win every competition it enters these days except the English League Cup.

Newcastle beat Man City 1-0 on Wednesday in the third round of the

League Cup which also eluded Pep Guardiola's team during its storied treble last season. Guardiola's agitation showed by getting a yellow card in the closing minutes for dissent to the match officials.

"No problem, I accept everything," Guardiola told the BBC of his booking. "Congratulations to Newcastle for the victory."

Newcastle's reward in the fourth-round draw made 30 minutes after the final whistle is a trip to Manchester in the fourth round to face United. It's a rematch of last season's final won by Man United.

Guardiola left star starters Erling Haaland, Kyle Walker and Phil Foden on the bench, yet Man City still dominated the first half without making its possession count with a goal.

Alexander Isak struck in the 53rd for Newcastle which also made sweeping lineup changes to rest key players for another midweek fixture sandwiched between two Champions League challenges.

The goal was created by Joelinton's dribble into and across the penalty area past four City defenders before squaring a pass that found Isak alone at the far post.

Foden and Jeremy Doku came on in the second half but could not find a leveler as Haaland stayed on the bench among the unused substitutes.

Man City won the League Cup five times in six seasons through 2021 and now has been eliminated in three



Liverpool's Diogo Jota, (right), fights for the ball with Leicester's Harry Souttar during the English League Cup third round soccer match between Liverpool and Leicester City at the Anfield stadium in Liverpool, England. (AP)

China was thought to be a challenge in the closely-watched match, but South Korea was able to win the best-of-three series 2-0.

As the global games market continues to boom in numbers of players and revenue, esports takes its place this year at the Asian Games as a competition sport for the first time and so far it has been an audience

favorite.

It joins other "mind games" like bridge and chess.

League of Legends is one of the most popular games, where two teams of five face each other in a bid to destroy the other's base.

China plays Vietnam on Friday for the bronze, while South Korea and Taiwan will battle for gold.



Gold medalist Team China celebrates during the victory ceremony for the women's 4x200m freestyle relay swimming at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, China. (AP)

### SOCCER

straight seasons.

Guardiola's team already won the UEFA Super Cup last month, still has Premier League, Champions League and FA Cup trophies to defend, and there is a first Club World Cup to play for in December in Saudi Arabia.

Liverpool is making a habit of conceding the first goal in games but is still unbeaten this season after beating Leicester 3-1 with three second-half goals.

A third-minute goal by Leicester's Kasey McAteer made it five times in eight games that Liverpool trailed 1-0, and the second time it fell behind in the opening minutes at Anfield.

It would be Leicester's only shot on target as Liverpool rallied with 29 goal attempts, 10 of them on target, and goals for Cody Gakpo, Dominik Szoboszlai and Diogo Jota.

Szoboszlai's was the pick in the 70th, a rifled shot from 20 meters that glanced off the underside of the crossbar on its way to the net.

Arsenal and Chelsea came through games against Premier League opposition as all nine matches on Wednesday were won in regulation time and did not go directly to a penalty shootout.