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Fitch downgrades US credit rating



The supermoon rises behind a minaret of a mosque in Beirut, Lebanon, Tuesday, Aug. 1, 2023. The moon appears slightly brighter and bigger than normal because it is closer than usual, just 357,530 kilometers (222,159 miles) away, thus the supermoon label. (AP)

Opinion

Politicians, when they quarrel they spoil the planting and when they reconcile they eat the crop

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

SOME countries are victims of elegant lies wrapped in elegant suits and ties. For this reason, such countries fail and plunge into crises as a result of the genius of stupidity. This happened because of relying on the aides who the ruler considers as intelligent or wealthy due to which he makes them advisors.

Through this, such a ruler fails to realize that they are failures who do not see beyond their noses, or they are profiteers who embellish failure as success.

In this regard, there is an old story known in most of the Levant about a small village where there was a cow on whom the inhabitants depended for its milk. One day the cow was drinking from a large cask of water, and her head got stuck in it.

Villagers tried to get her head out of the cask, but for the safety of the cow and the cask, they couldn't break the cask in fear of damaging it and harming the cow.

They hence resorted to the mayor of the village to solve the problem, because they assumed he was wise.

The mayor came and assessed the situation, and after deep reflection, he said to them, "Cut off the cow's head." After they did it, they said, "O mayor, the cow's head is still in the cask. What should we do?"

The mayor told them to break the cask. After that, the mayor went and sat a few distance away from the villagers, appearing to be sad.

The villagers then gathered around him to console him, and said, "O mayor, don't be sad. The cow is a sacrifice for you and so is the cask."

The mayor looked at them and responded, "I am not sad for the cow or for the cask, but I am sad because I wonder what the villagers will do without me!"

There is no doubt that some Arab countries have fallen into the trap of these leaders and advisors, and that is why crises have multiplied in them, whether with regard to their economic and financial situation or the failure of their plans, such as Lebanon or Iraq, because they have been plagued by militia leaders or advisors who do not know what state administration means.

They believe that the institutions were their farms where they wreaked havoc, and that no one held them accountable, so they plundered the national wealth, and burdened their people with debts dozens of times greater than the national product, and they did not realize that their continuity depended on the extent of the development projects of the state as a whole.

They followed the popular proverb - "The miser's money is eaten by the slick one". They sucked the udder of a cow until her head got stuck in a cask when she wanted to drink from it, and so they decided to cut her head off and then break the cask, even though one of them was a source of their wealth, but they eventually lost both.

They did not realize that the globe is capable of feeding the world, not just their countries.

The miser, who is supported philosophically, religiously, doctrinally, politically, and in the media, sets up war criminals and corrupt people as heroes and saints, as they are the source of his strength in dominating the people. So when some people revolt, they first eliminate those responsible violently, like the way the Libyan people did with Muammar Gaddafi.

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Zahed Matar

'Debt ... divisions'

WASHINGTON, Aug 2, (AP): Fitch Ratings has downgraded the United States government's credit rating, citing rising debt at the federal, state, and local levels and a "steady deterioration in standards of governance" over the past two decades.

The rating was cut Tuesday one notch to AA+ from AAA, the highest possible rating. The new rating is still well into investment grade.

The decision illustrates one way that growing political polarization and repeated Washington standoffs over spending and taxes could end up costing U.S. taxpayers. A lower credit rating, over time, could raise borrowing costs for the U.S. government.

It's only the second time in the nation's history that its credit rating has been cut. In 2011, the ratings agency Standard & Poor's stripped the U.S. of its prize AAA rating after a prolonged fight over the government's borrowing limit. The Government Accountability Office, in a 2012 report, estimated that the 2011 budget standoff raised Treasury's borrowing costs by \$1.3 billion that year.

At the same time, the huge size of the U.S. economy and historic stability of the federal government has

kept its borrowing costs low. Global investors often flock to U.S. Treasury securities during periods of economic turmoil, lowering the interest rate paid by the U.S. government.

Fitch had warned May 24 that it could remove the government's triple-A rating as Congress again struggled to raise the borrowing limit. A deal was reached nearly a week later that suspended the limit and cut about \$1.5 trillion from the government deficit over the next decade.

Fitch cited the worsening political divisions around spending and tax policy as a key reason for its decision. It said U.S. governance has declined relative to other highly rated countries and it noted "repeated debt limit standoffs and last-minute resolutions."

Biden administration officials strongly criticized Fitch's move. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said it was "arbitrary" and "based on outdated data."

Yellen noted that the U.S. economy has rapidly recovered from the pandemic recession, with the unemployment rate near a half-century low and the economy expanding at a solid 2.4% annual rate in the April-June quarter.

Fitch informed Biden administration officials that the Jan. 6, 2021 insurrection was a factor in its decision to downgrade because it indicated an unstable government, according to a person familiar with the discussions between the administration and the rating agency.

Volume to rise

Egypt, Turkiye consider use of own currencies for trade

CAIRO, Aug 2, (KUNA): Egypt and Turkiye announced Tuesday they discussed using their respective national currencies in trade exchanges, and agreed to increase trade volume from USD 10 to 15 billion in the next five years.

This came during a visit paid by Egypt's trade minister Ahmad Samir to Turkiye upon an invitation from his Turkish peer Omar Bolat, the first visit between the two ministries in 10 years, Egypt's Trade and Industry ministry said in a statement.

The two sides agreed on holding a meeting of the joint committee in the near future to expand the standing free trade deal between the two sides, it added.

In addition, they agreed on boosting cooperation to provide required facilitation to investors, with the aim of increasing their investment, it noted.

They further had the same points on intensifying joint activities through their business organizations, in addition to encouraging firms to partake in the organized forums and exhibitions, it stated.

NewsWatch

Kuwait & US eye defense coop 'boost'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2, (KUNA): Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received a telephone call Wednesday from his US counterpart Lloyd Austin, discussing means of boosting joint action and cooperation.

The two ministers also shared views on several issues of common concern and reviewed the latest developments on international and regional arenas, Kuwait's Ministry of Defense said in a statement.

Austin congratulated Sheikh Ahmad Fahad on his new post, wishing him every success, and the ties between the two countries further progress and development, it added.

Sheikh Ahmad Fahad, meanwhile, thanked Austin for the call, which included good sentiments, recalling the key and pivotal role of the United States in backing the Kuwaiti stance and its fair issues during partaking in the liberation of Kuwait, the statement noted.

This shows the deep-rooted relations between the two friendly countries, it said.

SANAA: A suspected militant attack early Tuesday in southern Yemen killed at least five troops loyal to a secessionist group, in the latest such assault blamed on an affiliate of al-Qaida, a military spokesman said.

The attack took place in Wadi Omran in Abyan province and also wounded four troops from the Southern Armed Forces, which is loyal to the secessionist Southern Transitional Council, spokesman Mohammed al-Naqib said in a statement.

The separatist council is backed by the United Arab Emirates and controls much of Yemen's south. It is at odds with the internationally recognized government.

Al-Naqib said suspected militants attacked their forces using mortars and rocket-propelled grenades. He said their forces were chasing the assailants, who fled to a mountainous area between Abyan and neighboring Bayda province. (AP)

DOHA: Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced Tuesday resuming the air bridge of humanitarian assistance to Sudan as of Wednesday (tomorrow).

The 12th aircraft carrying varied relief items will take off to Port Sudan, as part of Qatar's support to Sudanese people to help them overcome this plight, Majid Al-Ansari, advisor to Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, and the Ministry's spokesman, said in a briefing.

On aid to Ukraine, Al-Ansari said that Qatar pledged USD 100 million humanitarian assistance to Kiev to help rehabilitate its education and health infrastructure, and provide potable water and services, he added. (KUNA)

TUNIS: Tunisia's president has sacked the country's prime minister, who was the first woman to hold that job in an Arab League nation.

A brief statement from the presidential office late Tuesday did not give reasons for the dismissal of Najla Bouden Ramadhane. President Kais Saied had appointed the engineering school professor as Tunisia's first female prime minister in September 2021.

Her replacement is retired central bank director Ahmed Hachani, who was sworn in Tuesday night. (AP)

LONDON: Britain's government on Tuesday formally declared that atrocities committed by the Islamic State group against the Yazidi people in Iraq were acts of genocide.

The U.K. Foreign Office said the government's official acknowledgement came after a recent landmark ruling by the German Federal Court of Justice, which found a former member of IS, also known by its Arabic acronym Daesh, guilty of genocide and crimes against humanity. (AP)



A girl enjoys a water fountain at the Ebrahim Park while temperature reaches 38 C (100.4 F) in Tehran, Iran, Tuesday, Aug. 1, 2023. Iran announced a nationwide two-day, Wednesday and Thursday, holiday because of increasing temperatures. (AP)

US military presence grows

Iran runs drill on disputed islands

Shooting wounds local employee at Swedish Consulate in Turkiye

ISTANBUL, Aug 2, (AP): A Turkish employee of the Swedish Consulate in Izmir in western Turkiye was recovering in a hospital on Wednesday after being injured in a gun attack at the office in the port city.

The lone gunman, a Turkish citizen from the eastern province of Agri, was arrested shortly after the attack on Tuesday

afternoon, according to a statement from the Izmir governor's office. The statement described the assailant as "mentally impaired."

The consular officer was seriously injured in the shooting, state broadcaster TRT reported. A police investigation is ongoing.

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Day by Day

THE culture of understanding and a pure soul advises, "Do not dwell on the past, as it can bring pain; avoid being consumed by the present, as it may disturb your peace; and don't obsess about the future, as it can be exhausting. Instead, look up and seek the Lord's mercy."

When dealing with hardened swindlers and thieves, who indulge in forbidden activities like stealing planes and real estate, should we act with prudence and caution? Cancer has spread to their intestines.

... Yet tomorrow in another day.



Israeli police inspect the body of a Palestinian attacker at the site of a shooting attack in the West Bank Israeli settlement of Maale Adumim, Tuesday, Aug 1, 2023. (AP)

TEHRAN, Aug 2, (Agencies): Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard launched a surprise military drill Wednesday on disputed islands in the Arabian Gulf, just as the U.S. military increase its presence in the region over recent ship seizures by Tehran.

The drill focused primarily on Abu Musa Island, though the Guard also landed forces on the Greater Tunb Island as well, Iran's state-run IRNA news agency reported. Swarms of small, fast boats took part, along with paratroopers, drones and truck-launched surface-to-sea missile systems, footage aired on state television showed.

"We always try for security and tranquility; it is our way," the Guard's chief, Gen. Hossein Salami, said in a televised address during the drill. "Our nation is vigilant, and it gives harsh responses to all threats, complicated seditions and secret scenarios and hostilities."

Salami later told state TV: "There is absolutely no need for the presence of America or its European or non-European allies in the region."

The drill comes as thousands of Marines and sailors on both the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan and the USS Carter Hall, a landing ship, are on their way to the Arabian Gulf. Already, the U.S. has sent A-10 Thunderbolt II warplanes, F-16 and F-35 fighters, as well as the destroyer USS Thomas Hudner, to the region.

The Pentagon has said the deployment is "in response to recent attempts by Iran to threaten the free flow of commerce in the Strait of Hormuz and its surrounding waters." Some 20% of the world's oil passes through the narrow waterway connecting the Arabian Gulf to the wider world and the U.S. views it as crucial to both its national security and keeping global energy prices stable.

Meanwhile, Iran now enriches uranium closer than ever to weapon-grade levels after the collapse of its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

The use of Abu Musa and Greater Tunb in the drill also provides another message to the region. Those two islands remain claimed by the United Arab Emirates, home to Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Iran's late shah seized the islands in 1971 just before the UAE became an independent country and Tehran has held the islands since. Lesser Tunb Island was also seized.

Seizing those islands reminds Iran's neighbors of its military might as Tehran's diplomats have been trying to convince Gulf Arab countries allied with the U.S. that "foreigners" aren't needed to secure the region.

Iran has been trying to signal its displeasure over recent comments about the islands made by Russia, which Tehran has supplied with bomb-carrying drones for their war in Ukraine.

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Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:40 Asr 15:30
 Sunrise .. 05:08 Maghrib .. 18:40
 Zohr 11:54 Isha 20:06

Local

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

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

By Day: Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind with speeds of 15-50 km/h causing rising dust over open areas.

Weather

By Night: Hot to rather hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind with speeds of 08-40 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec			
Kuwait City	49	37	Abdaly	51	33
Kuwait Airport	51	33	Jahra	52	35
			Salmiyah	45	37
			Ahmadi	45	39
			Nuwaisib	47	33
			Wafra	50	32



View of the exhibition of the most 'Precious Homeland', held by the Martyr's Office.

Martyr's Office commemorates Iraqi invasion to honor martyrs

Martyr's Office Director General Salah Al-Awfan, stressed Wednesday, the importance of commemorating the Iraqi invasion, in honor of the sacrifices of the martyrs in confronting the aggression.

In a statement to KUNA, Al-Awfan said, on the occasion of the office's exhibition at the Avenues Mall titled (Precious Homeland), this event comes to commemo-

rate the martyrs and learn about their sacrifices, adding that it continues until next Saturday.

The office is also holding another exhibition in Mall 360 that includes images and names of 1,317 martyrs from the State of Kuwait and 14 other nationalities. It also deals with the role of Kuwaiti women and their sacrifices during the Iraqi invasion, as the number of



Pictures of those who died during the invasion and other terrorist activities in the State of Kuwait.

Leadership condoles over China flood

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Wednesday a cable of condolences to Chinese President Xi Jinping after heavy rain and floods left casualties.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir expressed his sorrow, wished a speedy recovery for the injured and hoped China would overcome the consequences of this natural disaster.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has addressed a cable of condolences to the Chinese President Xi Jinping after heavy rain and floods left casualties.

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His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has addressed a cable of condolences to the Chinese president Xi Jinping after heavy rain and floods left casualties.

National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Sa'adoun sent a cable of condolences to Chinese counterpart Zhao Leji over victims of floods due to the heavy rains that hit Beijing, leaving many casualties and destroying public utilities.

Chinese authorities declared death of 11 people, in addition to 27 others reported missing due to Typhoon Doksuri along with rainstorms South of Beijing since last Sunday.

Kuwaitis observed civil disobedience in face of 1990-1991 Iraqi occupation

Whole nation stood up against the aggressors in unity

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2, (KUNA): The civil disobedience observed by the people of Kuwait during 1990-1991 was not merely a demonstration against the Iraqi occupation but also implied the patriots' message of their ardent adherence to Kuwait as the homeland, its independence and faithful loyalty to the sagacious leadership.

The Kuwaitis, in the wake of the black Thursday, August 2, 1990, made their voice heard to all corners of the world, demonstrating no compromise, no negotiations and no cession of the State of Kuwait sovereignty, independence and its territorial sanctity.

Their civil disobedience in the face of the heavily armed occupiers carved out a road map and created great hope to liberate the homeland of the occupiers' desecration.

On the occupation 33rd painful anniversary, falling today (Wednesday), the sentiments of pride are renewed regarding the heroic stand by the steadfast Kuwaiti people and the honest residents of the country who observed civil disobedience, joining hands in keeping State utilities running and maintaining social solidarity.

Dr. Ayed Al-Manna', a researcher, historian and media figure, said in an interview with KUNA that the civil disobedience against the Iraqi occupation had no leadership and was not very organized; however the movement was driven by the nationals' belief in justice of their cause.

The Kuwaitis, since first hours of the occupation, engaged in a wide scale confrontation against the occupation despite repression, Al-Manna' said, adding that the confrontation that had lasted for seven months isolated the enemy.

Farhan Al-Farhan, a researcher and historian, told KUNA that the civil disobedience constituted an internal front that paralyzed the occupiers and obstructed their schemes. Citizens in the first day of the aggression removed houses, streets and districts' public numbers to make it difficult for the occupiers in their movements.

Kuwaitis when asked by occupation troops about directions and locations used to give them wrong tips and the word "I do not know" had been uttered whenever they sought to inquire about some persons.

A large number of Iraqi intelligence agents spread in the residential districts seeking to collect information about State officials and citizens, however they were misguided and given false information.

The citizens held meetings at mosques and served as guards in the districts on shifts' basis, he recounted.

Hussein Abdulrahman, a media personnel, said the plight of the aggression revealed solidarity of the internal front and support of the Kuwaiti people for their legitimate government and leadership, thus foiling the enemies' plot to erase identity of the State of Kuwait and plunder its resources.

At the time, there were no social media and the daily newspapers had to stop publishing, prompting the citizens to print leaflets to guide the activists and publicizing resistance action. Moreover, statements were recorded in cassettes and communications with the abroad was conducted via radio signals.

Furthermore, the resistance activists painted graffiti against the occupation on public walls and at public locations.

He also recounted with delight when the Kuwaitis one month after the aggression jointly ascended their houses' roofs chanting "Allah Akbar" against the occupiers.

Catch sees decrease as 'shrimp fishing' begins

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: With the resumption of shrimp fishing in the Kuwaiti waters on Wednesday, Kuwaiti shrimps have returned to the markets. The cost of a basket of local shrimps ranged between KD 45 and KD 65 on the first day of resumption of fishing. The price for one kilogram of local shrimps is KD 3.5, reports AlJarida daily.

With a weak turnout witnessed on the first day, the auction proceeds in the Fahaheel market were about 100 baskets of Kuwaiti shrimp, and in the Sharq market 56 baskets.

It is expected that the Sharq and Fahaheel markets will witness fall of larger quantities in the coming days, as fishing boats were delayed in their trips to catch shrimp because their owners did not obtain their quotas of the required diesel.

Head of the Kuwait Union of Fishermen Dhafer Al-Soyyan explained that, despite the challenges and obstacles facing the fishing sector, many fishermen moved their boats to supply the local market with shrimp.

The amount of catch decreased in the current season compared to the first day of last season as a result of the decrease in the number of licenses granted to enter the country's territorial waters.

US reminisces role in liberation

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2, (KUNA): The US embassy in Kuwait on Tuesday reminisced about Washington's contributions towards the liberation of Kuwait in 1991 after it was invaded by neighboring Iraq, saying the event was an epoch of closer bilateral relations.

"On August 2nd, we mark 33 years since the United States led a coalition of 35 nations to launch Operation Desert Shield and stand against the occupation of Kuwait," said an embassy statement on the occasion.

"When President George H.W. Bush learned of the invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, he quickly announced that the United States considered Saddam Hussein's aggression and violation of internationally recognized borders unacceptable, saying the unjustified invasion 'would not stand'."

Nearly 700,000 American service members deployed to the region to help liberate Kuwait and 299 service mem-

bers lost their lives, the statement noted, adding "We remember and honor our American, Kuwait, and coalition service members who died and were wounded fighting for freedom."

The statement quoted President Bush in this regard as saying, "Let no one doubt our staying power. We will stand by our friends."

More than 30 years later, carried on the statement, "we continue to stand together with Kuwait. The US-Kuwaiti partnership has never been stronger, and our work together is helping shape a more peaceful and prosperous Middle East."

"The liberation of Kuwait is a reminder to all around the world today of the importance of standing up for our values and defending nations against aggression. The United States continues to uphold these values and support our friends and allies around the world," it concluded.

Other Voices

Beginning of the dark tunnel

By Ahmad alsarraf

"Any malicious idiot can make things look bigger, more complex and more violent, but we need a touch of genius and a lot of courage to walk in the opposite direction ... !" (Bernard Shaw)

As anticipated by most observers, the majority of the members of the National Assembly, with the exception of only nine, voted to reject the amendment proposed by the enlightened powers to Article 16 of the Election Commission Law.

Instead, they approved a worse version of the government's amendment, which indirectly prohibits non-Muslim citizens and at least partially veiled Muslim citizens from running in future National Assembly elections.

Passing this flawed law in the second deliberation marks a concerning development, signaling that the state is entering a dark tunnel led by obscurantist and religious forces. It raises suspicions about potential unannounced agreements between certain deputies and specific factions within the government.

Undoubtedly, this law will not remain unchanged forever, and there is hope for positive changes in the future. However, its adoption has already dampened enthusiasm, hindered progress, and slowed down the nation's development.

This law represents a significant turning point in Kuwait's political history. It is troubling that the recent parliament election failed to elect even one liberal deputy for the first time since the beginning of parlia-

mentary life.

Particular attention is drawn to the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood over several decades, seeking to Islamize society, with the complicity or silence of most successive governments in Kuwait.

Neglecting educational facilities and outdated curricula, turning a blind eye to cheating, and maintaining deteriorating conditions reveal a semi-official desire to keep things as they are.

As a result, the current legislators seem focused solely on furthering an agenda of Islamization, transforming Kuwait into an entirely different state. This new direction is in stark contrast to the beautiful and prosperous nation it once was, resembling a Gulf branch of the Taliban.

They advocate preventing women from taking on positions in the judiciary or even leaving their homes, and suggest establishing companies focused on "Islamic" energy and Sharia-compliant pharmaceutical factories. Additionally, they push for granting the state's nationality to an excessive number of individuals annually, causing concerns about potential demographic, political, and economic impacts on the citizens of Kuwait.

Those who are not invested in Kuwait's well-being, prosperity, and progress have wreaked havoc and promoted unjustified extremism in the name of democracy. They aim to change the identity of society and seize control from its people, introducing proposals and positions that are strange and detrimental to the nation's interests.

We have to expect dozens of dark laws that restrict freedoms, and many miserable Kandhari laws proposals that will gradually make us lose faith in our democracy, our homeland, and our institutions, and this is what the enemies of the nation wish to see.

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The Peace Palace Museum.

KUNA photo



The son of the martyr Abdul Wahid Al-Sairafi and his family.

KUNA photo

Film showcases Kuwaitis' role

'Liberation' marks Iraqi invasion

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: The Peace Palace Museum commemorated the devastating Iraqi invasion of Kuwait with a film titled "Liberation" on the occasion of its 33rd anniversary. The film depicted the gripping narrative of the invasion and the heroic liberation led by the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his Crown Prince and Prime Minister at that time, Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, both of whom are fondly remembered.

The film not only showcased the pivotal role played by Kuwaitis in their liberation but also highlighted the contributions of the coalition forces and the United Nations. Additionally, it explored the Kuwaiti government's efforts to garner international support for the liberation leadership. The film powerfully portrayed the widespread devastation and the immense human, environmental, and economic losses suffered during that time.

To honor the martyrs, the Peace Palace Museum scheduled screenings of the film from August 1st to 3rd. Morning sessions were reserved for the families of the fallen heroes, while the afternoons were open to the general public. Reservations for the screenings could be made through the museum's website.

The film premiered in the hall dedicated to the 13th Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber

Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and was a product of the Center for Historical Documents and the museums and offices of the Amiri Diwan.

The families of the martyrs, who attended the screenings, expressed a mix of emotions. They felt joyous at the liberation and victory achieved through perseverance and resistance, yet also mourned the treachery Kuwait endured and the sacrifices made by their beloved ones.

The film holds particular significance as it solidifies Kuwait's history for future generations, paying tribute to the martyrs and fostering a deep sense of national pride.

The Peace Palace, which was entirely destroyed during the 1990 Iraqi occupation, has since been restored and transformed into the Peace Palace Museum. It houses multiple museums, including one that chronicles the history of the Peace Palace and another dedicated to Kuwait's rulers. The latter museum also delves into the history of the civilizations that once thrived in Kuwait.

The Palace of Peace Museum was inaugurated on April 29, 2019, with the late Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, in attendance. It stands as a remarkable historical and architectural monument, preserving and documenting Kuwait's rich history and instilling a profound sense of national pride for generations to come.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Shame on those who turn blind eye to women's achievements'

"IT IS disheartening to witness how some have chosen to turn a blind eye and remain silent, forgetting the essence, significance, and patriotism behind the amendment. Shame falls upon those who agreed to pass the amendment, those who stayed silent, those who succumbed to fear, and those who acted irresponsibly with their newfound freedom," columnist **Iqbal Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Shame also upon those who successfully pushed for the amendment, disappointing Kuwaiti women who have always been committed to their rights and responsibilities towards their homeland.

"It is a shame on those who contributed to this, forsaking the memory of the day when Kuwaiti women displayed strength, determination, love, and patriotism, standing with courage even surpassing some men who might have voted for the amendment.

"It is unfortunate that such fatwas and opinions were not issued when Kuwaiti women were at the forefront of the resistance, confronting the enemy, facing torture, and even death while defending their homeland.

"Now, more than 33 years later, the Kuwaiti woman's worth seems to be reduced solely to her appearance, and her rights are being judged based on what she wears on her head and face. This is a colossal disappointment, as we had hoped for our representatives in the National Assembly to protect her political rights regardless of her attire.

"The Kuwaiti man is also to be blamed for casting doubt on constitutional rights stipulated in the constitution, introducing legal controls that have left us trapped in a vague and uncertain situation.

"Who is the Kuwaiti man not subject to these controls? Is it one's appearance or attire that defines their eligibility for rights and freedom?"

"It is regrettable to see Kuwaiti women's capabilities, excellence, achievements, and contributions at the national level and across various fields being forgotten and overlooked.

"To the deputies of disappointment, thank you for the 'gift' you've presented to your sisters, mothers, and daughters on the anniversary of the invasion.

"On that day, you spoke of pride and admiration for Kuwaiti women, yet now you limit them only to their choice of hijab, disregarding their intellectual and mental depth.

"Shame on those who have turned a blind eye to the vast potential and accomplishments of the Kuwaiti women; it is time for a wake-up call, for the people of Kuwait to recognize the true worth and capabilities of their women, who are far more capable and accomplished than they are given credit for.

"To the women of Kandahar, take heart, for we stand with you. Today it's about the veil, and tomorrow it might be something else entirely, as legal controls seem to be subject to the whims and decisions of those in positions of authority. The future remains uncertain, and it's time for us to awaken and take a stand.



Iqbal Al-Ahmad

Also:

"In the present day, women's issues have resurfaced, concerning an antiquated garment confined by Sharia controls. The government faces a critical choice: will it yield to the opposing trend within the parliament that hinders women's rights, or will it spearhead transformative change, enabling empowerment, development, and the effective implementation of electoral reform?" columnist **Dr Nada Suleiman Al-Mutawa** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily

"This issue gained renewed prominence due to the High Commission's recent project, which sparked a crisis regarding Sharia controls, reminiscent of the atmosphere in 2005 when the battle for women's political rights raged on, aiming to secure parliamentary representation and leadership roles.

"Back then, the government promoted the fight for rights while parliamentary negotiations used several issues as leverage against the government. These included military voting, constituency changes, and voter age, all becoming coexisting initiatives for change.

"While Kuwaiti women were fortunate to obtain their political rights eighteen years ago, their luck diminished when it came to holding high leadership positions or securing seats in parliament.

"The parliamentary environment proved unwelcoming to women, with committees, laws, and representatives showing little enthusiasm for addressing women's concerns. Instead, they objected to women's participation in various activities, even going as far as criticizing their involvement in yoga. Additionally, objections arose when women sought official roles in areas like the Ministry of Defense, leading to the interrogation of the then Minister of Defense and reinforcing the influence of individuals with reactionary views within the legislative institution.

"Today, the issue of women's rights is tied to an outdated garment constrained by Sharia controls. The crucial question remains -- will the government succumb to the prevailing parliamentary opposition or will it take the lead in bringing about transformation, opening the door to empowerment, development, and the successful implementation of electoral reform?"

"Aug 2 is the anniversary of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 with all the events it bears whose bitterness was tasted by those who lived through them and the Arab world is still suffering the consequences," columnist **Hussein Al-Nasser** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"On this anniversary, the Kuwaiti people set the most wonderful examples of confronting aggression in response to the 'Saddam invasion', which constituted an ordeal and an epic that confirmed the strength of the Kuwaiti political will. We remember the role of loyal men among the righteous sons of Kuwait and the most wonderful examples they set in sacrificing for the homeland, as there are epic stories of giving and redemption. We must tell our children and grandchildren what the Kuwaiti heroes did to protect this country.

"One of the lessons learned that must be inherited by generations is the loyalty of the people of Kuwait. All of them and their sects defended the truth and stood with the legitimacy of the honorable Al-Sabah ruling family. Therefore, the aggressor did not get sympathy from any Kuwaiti who loves his country.

"We saw the men and heroes of the resistance who bravely defended Kuwait, as it happened with the 'Qurain House' group, which represents a painting and a national epic. Some of them left the homeland due to the circumstances, yet they actively played their role in defending Kuwait. Also, the Arab brothers stood beside Kuwait, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. Perhaps, the Jeddah Conference is the best example and witness. It was held on the land of the big brother -- the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, bringing together all the spectrums of the Kuwaiti people.

"Kuwaitis are inspired by the memory of the importance of trusting the leadership that struggled until the completion of liberation and loyalty, as evident in the people rallying around His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, and their continuous efforts to maintain the stability of Kuwait and achieve prosperity for its people."

"Although 33 years have passed since the invasion of Kuwait, we are still living through its painful events and repercussions, which led to a major split in the Arab position and the destruction of infrastructure and economic achievements by a reckless ignorant whose policy was characterized by aggression, contrary to international norms," columnist **Major General Mesaed Khuzam Al-Hamdan** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"Much had been written on this inauspicious anniversary, but we shed light on the post-war preparation of the State, and the strategy on transformation and construction of our armed forces.

"Returning to the pre-war situation is a difficult task. It requires a map for planning the path of development in order to specify the vision and objectives to reach the ultimate goal.

"The strategy on transformation and construction of our armed forces towards the achievement of goals is in line with plan that is based on the aspirations of the people. All measures and procedures were taken in order to achieve and rebuild our armed forces to be the same as the previous era, as well as to develop their capabilities according to a comprehensive plan in construction and organization.

"Studies were conducted to evaluate all operational plans in line with the lessons learned, in addition to the defensive re-evaluation and the military strategic position.

"The strategy also focused on preparing and qualifying leaders, raising combat efficiency to the highest level of professionalism, and learning about advanced armament technology that has an impact on the balance of power and in line with the latest strategies applied in developed countries.

"Much attention was given to human resources and activating their employment in all fields to renovate damaged facilities, remove mines, explosives and unexploded ordnance in the field, and secure borders to prevent the infiltration of weapons and terrorists into the country.

"The strategy also highlighted the importance of military cooperation with brotherly and friendly countries in achieving the goals and maintaining the coherence of joint defense work among the GCC countries."

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary



KUNA photo
The medical director of the Blood Transfusion Services Department, Dr. Hanan Al-Awadi, and representatives of the military corps.



KUNA photo
Women police contingent came out in big number to donate blood.



KUNA photo
Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Lieutenant General Anwar Al-Barjas, with the Chief of Army Staff of the Republic of Bangladesh and his delegation.

Al-Barjas meets B'desh Army chief

Ways eyed to exchange expertise

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2, (KUNA): Lieutenant General Anwar Al-Barjas, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, held discussions with the Bangladesh Chief of Army Staff General S M Shafiuddin Ahmed, SBP (BAR), OSP, ndu, psc, PhD, covering several matters of mutual interest, with a particular focus on security-related aspects.

The General Department of Relations and Security Media at the Ministry of Interior issued a press statement, confirming that on Wednesday, Lieutenant General Al-Barjas warmly received

General S M Shafiuddin Ahmed and his accompanying delegation during their official visit to the country. During the meeting, they emphasized the profound ties between their two nations.

Furthermore, the discussion included exploring ways to exchange experiences between Kuwait and Bangladesh, particularly by utilizing Bangladeshi technical workers in various sectors of the Ministry of Interior. This move aims to facilitate cooperation and foster a beneficial relationship between the two countries in this regard.

MoH underscores need to promote blood donation culture to save lives

'Campaign revives memories of brutal invasion'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2, (KUNA): The Ministry of Health stressed the need to promote a culture of blood donation to save lives, and to recognize the value of voluntary blood values by preferring others over oneself.

In a statement to reporters Wednesday, on the sidelines of the inauguration of the blood donation campaign, "Together forever, wall of the homeland 8," the Assistant Undersecretary of MoH for External Health Services Affairs **Dr. Yaqub Al-Tamar** underlined the need to promote a culture of blood donation by urging citizens to follow this behavior, which is crucial for saving the lives and the development of health services.

The ministry has always supported services related to blood transfusion and strives to raise awareness about the need to donate and organize campaigns throughout the year, he said, indicating that the ministry is represented by the Blood Transfusion Services Department, working on assessing Kuwait's needs for blood annually according to international standards and drawing plans and strategies for the country's future projects in this regard.

Such campaigns are only a continuation of the year-round campaigns carried out by MoH to activate community partnership, promote the principle



Dr. Al-Tamar

of social solidarity, and promote awareness about the importance of blood donation to enhance the strategic stock of the blood bank, **Dr. Al-Tamar** added.

He pointed out that this campaign comes out of remembrance of the memory of the brutal invasion of Kuwait and the role of righteous martyrs who sacrificed their blood and to encourage community participation with various institutions.

Statement

In a similar statement, the medical Director of the Blood Transfusion Services Department **Dr. Hanan Al-Awadi** confirmed that the campaign is witnessing, since the early morning, an excellent turnout, especially from members of the military institutions.

Evoking the memory of the brutal Iraqi invasion of Kuwait means giving, and there is no better way than donating blood to save lives that are in dire need of every drop of blood, she pointed out.

Dr. Al-Awadi referred to the need for blood banks with all its types, especially since the expiry date of

Summer to lose heat from Aug 11

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: The Al-Ujairi Scientific Center announced that the summer season will enter its final stages with the entry of the klebin season on August 11, which is considered the last season in which temperatures rise and intensify, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

The center said in a press statement, Tuesday, that the klebin season lasts 13

days, which is the boundary between high temperature and moderate weather.

He pointed out that this season is characterized by intense heat from the rays of the sun, but at the same time the humidity increases in the atmosphere, which contributes to a decrease in temperatures with the blowing of the south and southeast winds.

blood is only one month, pointing to the constant need to donate on an ongoing basis, calling on every person who is able to donate blood to donate. The doors of the blood bank are always open and on all days to receive donors on a regular basis, she noted.

Regarding the quantities of blood donations this year compared to last year, she explained that this is better than last year, as the rate of increase during the period from January to July of this year ranged between 59 and 60 percent compared to last year for the same period.

In turn, the Head of the Public Relations Department in Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) Colonel Yousef Ghuloom said that today KFF is participating in the national campaign to donate blood organized by MoH.

He explained that this participation comes from the national and societal role of KFF to unite the concept of social solidarity and humanitarian work by supporting and strengthening the strategic stock of the blood bank, in a way that contributes to treating patients and saving lives, pointing to the presence of a wide participation of firefighters who come throughout the day.

117 illegal expats caught in continuous 'Mol' raids

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: The Residency Affairs Investigation General Department in the Ministry of Interior continued its security campaigns in Ahmadi, Hawally and Farwaniya governorates, resulting in the arrest of 117 individuals of various nationalities who violated the Residency and Labor laws, including four delivery company employees, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

The officers also arrested a person who impersonated an embassy official and then smuggled domestic workers whom he provided a shelter and made them work on hourly basis.

All those arrested were referred to the concerned authorities.

One hurt in mishap: The Public Relations and Media Department of the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD) said one person was injured following a collision between two cars on a road in Salmi, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

Acting on information, firefighting teams from the Shagaya Center rushed to the site of the accident and handed over the injured person to the emergency medical personnel.



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'Audit' criticizes MPW for failing to collect KD 127m from contractors

Bureau demands reasons for postponing collection of fines

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: The Audit Bureau criticized the Ministry of Works' continued failure to collect the sums due to it from contractors as a result of their delay in executing tenders according to the contracts concluded with the ministry. The bureau said in a letter, of which Al-Qabas obtained a copy, that the to-

tal amounts owed by 27 companies amounted to 127 million dinars, and criticized the ministry's failure to collect these amounts after the violation was proven, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The bureau indicated that the ministry's continuation of recording these amounts in the account of the debts owed to the government

Don't believe your ears – Kaspersky's experts share insights on how to spot voice deepfakes

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Kaspersky experts shared insights on distinguishing voice deepfakes. Deepfake ("deep learning" + "fake") artificial intelligence has been growing at a rapid rate over the past few years. Machine learning can be used to create compelling fakes of images, video, or audio content. To determine whether some audio piece is a fake or a speech of a real human, there are several characteristics to consider: the timbre, manner and intonation of speech. For example, a voice deepfake will give out an unnatural monotony of speech. Another feature that should be considered is the sound quality. So, illegible speech and strange noises should be alerted while listening to an audio message or a call.



Audio deepfake technology featured.

Deepfake technology in itself is harmless, but in the hands of scammers it can become a dangerous tool with lots of opportunities for deception, defamation or disinformation. Fortunately, there haven't been any mass cases of scams involving voice alteration, but there have been several high-profile cases involving voice deepfakes. In 2019, scammers used this technology to shake down a

UK-based energy firm. In a telephone conversation, the scammer pretended to be the chief executive of the firm's German parent company, and requested an urgent transfer of 220,000 euros to the account of a certain supplier company. A year later, in 2020, scammers used deepfakes to steal up to \$35,000,000 from a Japanese company.

"Currently the technology for creating high-quality deepfakes is not available for widespread use. However, in the future, it may become freely open, which could lead to a surge in related fraud. Most likely, attackers will try to generate voices in real time – to impersonate someone's relative and lure out money, for example. Such a scenario is not realistic for now: creating high-quality deepfakes involves a lot of limited resources. However, to make a low-

quality audio fake, fewer resources are required, and fraudsters can use this. These signs can be helpful to spot this fraud," comments Dmitry Anikin, Senior Data Scientist at Kaspersky.

To protect yourself from deepfakes, Kaspersky experts recommend:

- pay attention to suspicious calls. You should be alerted by poor sound quality, unnatural monotony of voice, unintelligible speech, extraneous noise;

- don't make decisions based on emotions, don't share your details with anyone, and don't transfer money, even if the interlocutor sounds convincing. It is better to stop the call and double-check the information received through several channels;

- use reliable security solutions like Kaspersky Premium on your devices, which will further secure the use of gadgets.

without deducting them led to inflated amounts despite the bureau's previous requests to collect those debts first. The bureau demanded to know the reasons for postponing the collection of fines due for each contract separately, and a statement of the desired goal of the postponement.

Postponed

In its response to the Diwan letter, the Ministry of Public Works said that the fine was applied in most of the contracts mentioned in the letter and its application was postponed in some of those contracts based on Ministerial Resolution 26 of 2018, and the delay fine is now being applied to these contracts.

The source pointed out that the fine in the contracts will be deducted in the final payment certificates being issued for some other contracts, noting that the amounts mentioned in the note represent the indebtedness and not the value of the delay fine.

In turn, the Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport clarified, in its response to the same note, that postponing the application of the fine is a discretionary authority for the employer according to the circumstances of each case separately, provided that dues or guarantees are available to the contractor with the ministry.

The authority indicated that the reason for postponing the fine is to provide liquidity to the contractor and to ensure that the project does not falter and delay. The authority stated that some contracts have no scope for applying the delay fine in their regard, given the issuance of an extension for them after the date of contractual completion until the date of initial receipt.

Wa'ed trains young people

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Youth, Meshaal Al-Subaie, said that the Youth Empowerment for the Future (Wa'ed) project is a unique space for training young people and qualifying them for practical life by employing them in field work that will give them important skills, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Al-Subaie said during the closing ceremony of the project, which was held yesterday, that the authority supports all ideas and initiatives that develop youth capabilities and invest their time, especially in the summer period.

He explained that "Wa'ed" constituted an important window for young people to see the future, especially since the study stage that the trainee lives in is different from the work stage, praising the efforts of the Voluntary Work Department and their cooperation with "Wa'ed" officials, which resulted in achieving its goals.

For her part, Project Director Sharifa Al-Bannai said the project was managed by a volunteer Kuwaiti youth team and witnessed the training of 148 Kuwaiti youth from high school students in 50 workplaces with the participation of 40 employees in the public and private sectors.

Al-Bannai added that the training period lasted 20 working days, including 80 training hours, and included engaging the trainees in three training courses.

She noted the youth's keenness to benefit from this unique experience in "Wa'ed", which is the result of the partnership and cooperation of a large number of state institutions and national companies that contributed to its success and the achievement of its goals, appreciating the support of the Youth Authority and the Namaa Charitable Foundation for the project.



Al-Rai photos

Above: Some photos from the celebration.

Moroccan envoy hails Kuwait's support

Embassy marks 24th 'versary of King Mohammed VI's ascension to throne

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: The Moroccan Ambassador to Kuwait Ali Ibn Issa praised the noble and steadfast position of the State of Kuwait in support for the territorial integrity of Morocco, reports Al-Rai daily.

He stressed that the position has been affirmed in various regional and international forums, and embodies the depth and strength of the exceptional relations that bind the two countries under the leadership of King Mohammed VI and His Highness the Amir of the country Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad, who have been giving wise directives to advance the cooperation of the two countries to the highest ranks.

He affirmed that the strong and rooted ties that unite Morocco and Kuwait have marked their relations for decades.

Speech

Ambassador Ibn Issa said the above in a speech he delivered on Monday during the celebration of the 24th anniversary of King Mohammed VI's ascension to the throne, in the presence of the Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and Acting Minister of Education Dr. Jassem Al-Ustad, and with the participation of a large crowd of diplomats.

He revealed that the Moroccan embassy is working in coordination with the Kuwaiti authorities to prepare for the organization of two events - economic and cultural - in Kuwait before the end of the current year in order to activate the agreements, memorandums of understanding and executive programs between the two countries.

The ambassador said the opening of direct Kuwait Airways flights between Kuwait and Casablanca at the beginning of June 2022 was only an embodiment of this trend towards strengthening relations between the two countries.

In a statement to reporters, Ambassador Ibn Issa assured that Kuwaiti investments in Morocco have lasted for a long time, and that Kuwait is considered the third Arab

country, in terms of investments in Morocco, as it contributed to several infrastructure projects, especially in the fields of roads and railways, and the provision of drinking water and electricity in villages.

Investments

He said, "Investments are still present and continuous, and we look forward to pushing more investments to a higher level. Morocco has made great strides in the industrial field and encouraged the increase of foreign investments. The Moroccan government provides facilities in the field of business in terms of laws and legislation, which have become simpler than they were previously, as it allows the investor to quickly and safely enter the Moroccan market.

A Kuwaiti tourist does not need an entry visa, and he is welcome in his second country.

The joint committee between the two countries will soon be held in Morocco."

Ambassador Ibn Issa explained that Morocco is a candidate for the participation of Spain and Portugal in organizing the World Cup in 2030. His country is ready to host this event, as it has the required infrastructure.

On a different note, the British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis revealed that a meeting of the joint steering committee between the United Kingdom and Kuwait is scheduled to be held in October in Britain.

She described her country's Foreign Minister James Cleverly's visit to Kuwait as "very successful and distinguished," affirming that, "He met senior officials, led by His Highness the Crown Prince, and concluded his visit with an acquaintance with Kuwaiti culture. He looks forward to repeating his visit to Kuwait again. The visit of three British officials to Kuwait during a period of four weeks confirms the extent of the United Kingdom's interest and keenness to strengthen friendly relations and work to develop the horizon of cooperation with Kuwait."

grading the bilateral relations in all domains.

The two leaders also shared, over the telephone, views on the issues on regional and international arena, Iranian presidency said on its website.

Sultan Haitham visited Tehran late May upon an invitation from President Raisi, and issued a joint communique, at the end of the visit, on preparing a document of strategic collaboration in different fields.

Shooting wounds

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, Sweden plans to step up border controls and identity checks at crossing points as its security situation deteriorates during a Quran burning crisis that has shaken the country as well as neighboring Denmark in recent weeks.

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said the measure is expected to be approved by his government on Thursday.

It is meant to prevent "people with very weak connections to Sweden" to come to the country "to commit crimes or to act in conflict with Swedish security interests," he said at a news conference in Stockholm on Tuesday.

A recent string of public Quran desecrations in Sweden and Denmark conducted by a handful of anti-Islam activists has sparked angry demonstrations in Muslim countries. Among other incidents, protesters attacked the Swedish Embassy in Iraq and set it on fire in July.

Awqaf stretches internal transfer to July, August

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: The Minister of Information and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Abd al-Rahman al-Mutairi, has issued a ministerial decision allowing delegation and internal transfer between and to the departments of the Holy Quran Affairs and Islamic Studies sector and its affiliated centers during the months of July and August and during the spring break, after it was limited to only the month of June each year, reports Al-Rai daily.

The official spokesman for the Minis-

try of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, Salman Al-Kandari, said in a statement, Tuesday, that the submission of transfer requests will be available through the electronic portal of the Ministry of Endowments on an ongoing basis, provided that transfer decisions are issued and delegated during the two periods specified by the decision.

Al-Kandari explained this decision is consistent with the vision of the Ministry of Endowments to develop the administrative system in this vital sector and to ensure the effective and efficient

workflow to achieve achievements in the studies sector in terms of legal education in jurisprudence, interpretation and the biography of the noble Prophet (PBUH).

He affirmed the ministry's keenness, under the directives of Minister Al-Mutairi, to provide an attractive and enabling environment for all employees and dealers with the ministry, to improve the services provided to them, and to adopt creative initiatives in order to achieve the ministry's vision of leadership in Islamic work.

عمليات الخفجي المشتركة



AL-KHAFJI JOINT OPERATIONS

الشركة الكويتية لنفط الخليج
KUWAIT GULF OIL COMPANY (K.S.C.)

ارامكو لأعمال الخليج
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TENDER ADVERTISEMENT

Aramco Gulf Operations Company Limited ("AGOC") and Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (K.S.C) ("KGOC"), (Al Khafji Joint Operations) invites intending bidders to participate for the **Tender No.: GT796IT23 - Replacement of Obsolete KJO Audio/Video Conference System**

Each intending bidder may purchase the tender documents upon payment of **Saudi Riyals Six Hundred (SR 600) or Kuwaiti Dinars Forty Eight (KD 48) only** which is non-refundable by visiting our Contracts Department at Al- Khafji, Saudi Arabia, or KGOC's Kuwait Office located in Al- Ahmadi, Tender & Contracts Section. The bidder may visit our KJO website: www.kjo.com.sa and follows the path; E- Services □ Tendering □ Contractors □ Ongoing Tenders to review part of tender documents, before purchasing.

The sale of Tender Documents will be effective from **July 30, 2023, until 10:00 AM, Aug. 14, 2023.**

A Pre-Tender meeting will be held at KJO Auditorium, Office Park Building, at Al-Khafji Joint Operations, Saudi Arabia, at **10:00 AM local time on Aug. 14, 2023.**

Attending the Pre- Tender Meeting is Mandatory

The bid proposal shall be delivered by hand-delivery or thru courier service to the Contracts Department in Al- Khafji Joint Operations, Al- Khafji, Saudi Arabia on or before the closing date **14:00 Hours, Monday, Sept. 11, 2023** of the time stipulated in the tender document.

For more Information, You May Contact The Following Nos.

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Website: www.kjo.com.sa

Child refugees live in dire conditions, without safety and security

Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development cares for refugees cause

Kuwait's 1st ever VA ECMO program

Chest Diseases Hospital treats 14 cases of 'ventricular arrhythmias'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Head of the Adult Cardiology Department at the Chest Diseases Hospital, Dr. Abdullah Al-Enezi, spoke of the hospital's success in treating 14 serious and intractable cases of ventricular arrhythmias using the "Cauterization with the Support of the Heart and Lung Device (VA ECMO)" program, which is the first of its kind in Kuwait and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, reports Al-Rai daily.

Al-Enezi said, "Some heart patients suffer from dangerous ventricular heartbeats that threaten their lives, and they are treated using the catheter technique. However, some of these patients suffer from severe weakness in the heart muscle, and cauterization cannot be performed in such cases" because of the high risk to their lives.

He went on to say that to treat these difficult cases, cooperation took place between cardiologists Dr. Fawzia Al-Kandari and Dr. Abdullah Jamaan, Dr. Khaled Al-Marri and Dr. Abdullah Al-Anzi, and doctors of the Anesthesiology

Department, and the cooperation resulted in the establishment of an integrated program to treat such difficult cases.

Al-Enezi noted that the program succeeded in treating 14 intractable cases within three years, pointing out that the program relies on the installation of a heart and lung support device (VA ECMO) by catheters, then the cauterization process is done through catheters by cardiologists, and the cauterization process is performed without high risk thanks to the use of the VA ECMO, and after the cauterization process is complete, the catheters remove the VA ECMO.

Al-Enezi stressed that this program contributes to reducing the suffering of patients by providing an alternative to traveling abroad to receive treatment, as well as reducing the financial burdens borne by the state budget, as it is a new link in the chain of achievements of the Chest Diseases Hospital, which aims to develop the medical services provided, heart patients in the country.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Amid unstable living conditions, refugees from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds spend years of their lives hoping to return to their homelands. Child refugees live in dire conditions, without safety and security.

One of the most important human rights is to live in security, to be treated with dignity, and to have access to basic needs such as: food, clean water, housing and health care. These rights must not be lost if a person becomes a refugee.

This is a cause close to the heart of the State of Kuwait, a pioneer in supporting humanitarian issues and providing relief to millions of refugees and displaced people around the world.

These efforts made them earn the recognition of "Center for Humanitarian Action" from the United Nations in 2015, as well as the recognition of "Leader of Humanitarian Action" to the late Emir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The foreign policy of the State of Kuwait aims to provide aid and relief to refugees without discrimination, and this is reflected by the initiatives of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, which is strongly determined in providing support and assistance to refugees around the world.



Young children living in refugee camps supported by Kuwait Fund, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other United Nations entities and international organizations.

The Kuwait Fund assists refugees by enhancing their quality of life, in cooperation with international organizations, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other United Nations entities and international organizations supporting the refugees cause and human rights.

The Fund's work includes projects with refugees from Syria, Yemen, Palestine, as well as the countries hosting them. A project was recently implemented in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to improve the infrastructure and living conditions in the Syrian refugee camps, which was funded by a grant of USD 2.6 million.

The Fund also financed projects in the Al Azza Refugee Camp, providing

healthcare and clean water to residents. Another project was the financing of mothers and newborns in conflict-affected areas in Yemen.

In total, the Fund has provided about 106 grants, with a total value of around USD 1.3 billion.

This highlights the mission of the State of Kuwait, represented by the Kuwait Fund, to help and assist developing countries, economically and socially.

About the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development

The Kuwait Fund For Arab Economic Development is the first institution in the Middle East that took an active role in the international development efforts.

The Kuwait Fund extends Loans on concessory term to finance development projects in the developing countries. The Fund also provides technical assistance to finance the costs of the feasibility studies of projects, as well as the training of nationals of the borrowing countries. In addition, the Fund subscribes in the capital of international and regional development institutions. Today, the Kuwait Fund forms a solid bridge of friendship and solidarity between the state of Kuwait and the developing nations.

MPs nod to 'recommendations' on salaries, employees equality

Speaker ends 1st ordinary session of 17th legislative term

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2, (KUNA): Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun announced on Wednesday the conclusion of the first ordinary session of the 17th legislative term.

The assembly's Secretary-General Khaled Abuslaib read out a decree announcing the end during the final parliament session.

The speaker and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah had addressed the final session respectively.

The National Assembly approved on Wednesday multiple recommendations regarding fair salaries, wages and employees' equality in government sectors.

This came during the Parliament's special session, in which the MPs approved laws regarding the budgets of ministries, government departments and independent agencies for the fiscal year (2023-2024).

The Parliament recommendations included one asking the Cabinet to assign chief positions in all governmental sectors within three months from the date of approving the budget for the fiscal year (2023-2024).

The Parliament also recommended that the government implement the framework of the national administrative governance issued by the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Plan-

ning and Development, which was submitted to the Cabinet in June 2019, within a period of no longer than six months from the date of approving the general budget for the fiscal year (2023-2024).

The Parliament also requested that the government complete the strategic alternative within six months from the date of approving the budget, including the re-description of all public, technical and professional jobs in government sectors, work nature, requirements and conditions of employment and its task, as well as job performance evaluations, its salary and wages and promotions, job training and the basic salary, living cost allowance in light of local and global inflations indicators. (His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad

Al-Sabah on Wednesday lauded the passage by National Assembly (parliament) of a set of draft laws bearing on reforms and development within a short period of time.

Addressing a parliamentary session on economic and financial affairs, he said the assembly has approved several bills that have contributed to completing the country's legislative structure, achieving the aspired reform, strengthening development and fulfilling citizens' expectations.

He cited laws on residential cities, health insurance, Constitutional Court, election watchdog and new state budget for the fiscal year 2023-2024, as clear-cut paradigms in this regard.

He added that the government has also submitted its program of action to

the assembly as per Article 98 of the Constitution, covering legislative aspects, projects and requirements aiming at promoting the state's future, addressing main challenges and improving living conditions.

His Highness the Prime Minister also spoke highly of the constructive dialogue at parliament during the discussion of major issues and subjects as an effective way for reaching fruitful collaboration between the government and parliament.

He also appreciated the MPs' efforts and eagerness during this legislative term to establish the pillars of parliamentary work, hoping for further fruitful cooperation and partnership for shouldering national responsibilities in the context of the constitution, internal bylaws and rule of law.



THE GUEST SHOW
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 Guest host **NADER ABDULLAH**
 English Theatre Artist
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The Guest Show poster

TGS presents Nader Abdullah

This Thursday, The Guest Show (TGS) presents Nader Abdullah, one of Kuwait's most gifted theatre artists.

Nader spent his growing up years between Britain and Kuwait, imbibing the best of both cultures. His exposure to theatre happened in Britain where he did school plays. Back home in Kuwait, he was initiated into Shakespeare first by his college professor and then by the irrepressible Alison Shan Price, MBE.

Over the years, he has acted and directed in some of the most notable English productions to grace the stage in Kuwait.

He has also worked with the popular Hamad Al Jenaei in some popular productions, including in Shakespeare's Tempest, recently.

For Nader, theatre is a passion that allows him to find his creative self.

In this episode, he speaks to Chaitali B Roy about his journey with theatre, his initiation into Shakespeare, the cultural landscape in Kuwait and the role of English theatre in that, about One World Actors Centre, his experience with Lamda and the challenges that practitioners of art navigate in Kuwait.

Chevron **JOINT OPERATIONS WAFRA**

SAUDI ARABIAN CHEVRON INC. (SAC) - KUWAIT GULF OIL COMPANY

Joint Operations (Saudi Arabian Chevron Inc. / Kuwait Gulf Oil Company), announces the under-mentioned Public Tenders for procurement of materials.

Kuwaiti and Saudi Merchants, registered with either Company wishing to participate in any of the under-mentioned Tenders are invited to collect the Tender documents from Purchasing Section, Purchasing & Logistic Division, Administration Building, Ground Floor, Joint Operations, Wafra, during the official working hours from **6 AUG 2023** up to **29 AUG 2023** for a non-refundable fee mentioned against each tender. Tender Fees to be deposited in the National bank of Kuwait (NBK) Account No. 1001132057. Saudi Suppliers can collect the tender documents from Saudi Arabian Chevron office in Al-Khobar Telephone No.: (013) 8645104 - Fax No.: (013) 8985436

The closing date for the following Tender will be on **Monday, 4 SEP 2023 @ 09:00 AM.**

S.NO.	TENDER NO.	MATERIALS	FEES (IN KD)
1	2878774	PIPE FITTINGS	5
2	2879122	S/ F FLOWSERVE PUMP	15
3	2879141	LUBRICANTS AND GREASES	15
4	2879485	INSERT SLEEVES COATED (TUBOSCOPE VECTO - CCB)	25
5	2879487	PIPES CARBON STEEL (SMLS - SAWL) COATED	15
6	2879489	PIPES CARBON STEEL AND STAINLESS STEEL (SAWL - SMLS)	25
7	2879491	SUCKER AND POLISH RODS, SINKER BARS	25
8	2879595	VALVES (BALL - CHECK - BUTTERFLY - GATE - GLOBE - PLUG)	25
9	2879703	PRESSURE REGULATORS	5
10	2880609	FLOATING TANK ROOF SEALS, MOTHERWELL NAYER PETROSEALS OR EQUIVALENT	15

Notes: Gate Passes are required for Suppliers entering JO-Wafra Administrative Offices to collect the tender document and gate pass processing time is 48 hours. Please fill request for gate pass along with legible copies of Authorization letter, Civil ID, Car Registration, Supplier Registration (KGOC or SAC) to e-mail HBJH@chevron.com and ZIQB@chevron.com at least 48 hours prior to arrival.

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For more than a year, the U.S. economy has defied predictions of a forthcoming recession. It has withstood 10 interest rate hikes in 16 months from an inflation-fighting Federal Reserve. In June, America's employers added a healthy 209,000 jobs.

Will the economy remain resilient? Can the Fed achieve a notoriously difficult "soft landing" - slowing growth just enough to tame inflation without causing a

recession?

The Associated Press spoke recently with Gus Faucher, chief economist at PNC Financial Services Group. The conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

Question: The job market is cooling but remains strong. Does that suggest a soft landing?

Answer: What we have seen in the job market so far in 2023 is consistent with a soft landing. Over

the past three months, we've added 244,000 jobs per month. That's still too high from the Fed's perspective but much better than what we had at the end of last year. Although it's consistent with a soft landing, it's also consistent with a story where job growth continues to slow, the economy continues to weaken and we get a recession at the end of 2023. We don't know what the outcome will be. It's more likely than not that we get a recession.

Q: When would a downturn begin?

A: A few months ago, we were seeing it starting in the second half of 2023. Now we're seeing late 2023 or early 2024. The labor market is still holding up. Consumers are still in decent shape. But I do think we will continue to feel the impact of the Fed's monetary tightening. By the end of this year or sometime early next year, those higher rates will be a sig-

nificant drag on economic activity and lead to recession. But the economy has held up somewhat better than we were expecting.

The economy just can't continue to add this many jobs per month. We just don't have the labor force out there.

Q: Where is inflation headed?

A: We will see slowing inflation. If you go back to 2021, 2022, a lot of that inflation was coming on the goods side. Now, the inflation is

coming on the services side. Services inflation tends to be stickier, and it tends to be more driven by what's going on in the labor market. So the tight labor market is contributing to high services inflation. That will contribute to inflation remaining higher than the Fed would like in the near term. By the end of this year, early next year, we will see a significant softening in the labor market that will help bring inflation down to the Fed's 2% target. (AP)

Market Movements

02-08-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
UAE - DFM	+0.16	4,083.71	JAPAN - Nikkei	-2.30	32,707.69
PAKISTAN - KSE 100	+1.33	48,844.12	PHILIPPINES - PSEi	-1.68	6,483.28
			SAUDI - Tadawul	-1.36	11,478.28
			EGYPT - EGX 30	-0.33	17,455.60

Business

WS falls as year's big rally loses more steam

Asian shares slip, echoing Wall Street's retreat

NEW YORK, Aug 2, (AP): Stocks are falling Wednesday as Wall Street loses more momentum following its torrid run so far this year.

The S&P 500 was 1.2% lower in midday trading and heading for a second straight loss after hitting a 16-month high. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 235 points, or 0.7%, at 35,395, as of 11:30 a.m. Eastern time, and the Nasdaq composite was 2% lower.

Prices were mixed in the bond market after Fitch Ratings cut the credit rating of the U.S. government. The repeated standoffs in Congress about whether to default on the U.S. debt were among several reasons for Fitch's cut. The downgrade strikes at the core of the global financial system because U.S. Treasuries are considered some of the safest possible investments.

Fitch's move follows a similar one by Standard & Poor's in 2011, one that coincided with a European debt crisis to help cause stocks and bonds around the world to swing violently. So far, this most recent downgrade has caused less dramatic ripples of fear.

In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year U.S. Treasury rose to 4.11% from 4.04% late Tuesday. It helps set rates for mortgages and other important loans. The two-year U.S. Treasury yield was holding steadier, ticking up to 4.92% from 4.91%.

While the downgrade highlights how much debt the U.S. government has and the big challenges it faces in how to pay for Social Security, Medicare and other expenses, none of that is news for investors.

"Fitch's downgrade is much ado about nothing," said Brian Jacobsen, chief economist at Annex Wealth Management.

"Yes, it's good to call out the fiscal situation, but when a country only issues debt in its own currency, the credit rating is irrelevant. Every investment fund I've looked at specifies that US Treasury securities are allowed investments, regardless

of what a credit rating agency might think."

The big issues for Wall Street remain whether the economy can avoid a long-predicted recession, as hoped, and what's happening with corporate profits. And reports on those questions came in mixed on Wednesday.

That offers fodder for critics who say investors were too quick to embrace the belief that a soft landing is surely ahead for the economy. They've been saying Wall Street had rallied too much, too quickly this year. Analysts said some of Wednesday's selling could be investors locking in profits made during the S&P 500's 19.5% run for the year through July.

One report suggested hiring slowed last month by employers outside the government but that it still was much stronger than economists expected.

A job market that remains solid despite high interest rates would keep a lid on worries about a possible recession. But investors also fear a too-strong reading could persuade the Federal Reserve too much upward pressure still exists on inflation.

The Fed has already yanked its federal funds rate higher at tremendous speed in hopes of undercutting inflation. High rates do that by slowing the economy bluntly, but that risks causing a recession and hurts prices of investments along the way.

Inflation has been cooling since last summer's peak, and the rising hope on Wall Street had been that the Fed won't hike rates anymore and could even begin cutting them next year.

Wednesday's stronger-than-expected jobs report from ADP could be a signal of what Friday's more comprehensive report from the U.S. government will say. Fed Chair Jerome Powell has highlighted Friday's numbers as a big influence on the central bank's next move in September.

Higher rates tend to hurt technology and other high-growth stocks in particular, and several Big Tech stocks pulled the market lower. Nvidia, Amazon and Meta Platforms all fell at least 2.3% and were some of the heaviest weights on the S&P 500.

Generac Holdings, which sells generators and other power products, tumbled 23.6% for one of the biggest drops in the S&P 500 after it reported weaker profit

for the spring than analysts expected.

Europe

France's CAC 40 fell 1.3% to 7,311.42 in early trading, while Germany's DAX dipped 1.4% to 16,007.22. Britain's FTSE 100 dropped 1.8% to 7,531.78.

Asia

Asian shares dipped Wednesday after Wall Street took a step back from its big rally as markets tried to digest a slew of earnings.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 dove 2.1% in afternoon trading to 32,768.08. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 fell 1.3% to 7,356.60. South Korea's Kospi slid 1.7% to 2,620.74. Hong Kong's Hang Seng dipped 2.1% to 19,590.86, while the Shanghai Composite lost 0.9% to 3,259.93.

Investor optimism was hurt by Fitch Ratings downgrading the United States government's credit rating, citing rising debt at the federal, state, and local levels. The rating was cut Tuesday one notch to AA+ from AAA, the highest possible rating. In 2011, the ratings agency Standard & Poor's stripped the U.S. of its prize AAA rating.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said the move by Fitch was based on outdated data, noting the U.S. economy has rapidly recovered from the pandemic recession.

Oil

In energy trading, benchmark U.S. crude rose 87 cents to \$82.24 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, also gained 87 cents, to \$85.78 a barrel.

Currencies

In currency trading, the U.S. dollar inched up to 142.85 Japanese yen from 142.83 yen. The euro cost \$1.0996, up from \$1.0982.

The Conversation

Rate hikes may have slowed inflation in US – but they have also heightened the risk of financial crises for lower-income nations

By Cristina Bodea

Professor of Political Science, Michigan State University

The conversation is an independent and non-profit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

The campaign to fight U.S. inflation by upping interest rates has been going on for a year and a half – and its impacts are being felt around the world.

On July 26, 2023, the Federal Reserve announced another quarter-point hike. That means U.S. rates have now gone up 5.25 percentage points over the past 18 months. While inflation is now coming down in the U.S., the aggressive monetary policy may also be having significant longer-term impact on countries across the world, especially in developing countries. And that isn't good.

I study how economic phenomena such as banking crises, periods of high inflation and soaring rates affect countries around the world and believe this prolonged period of higher U.S. interest rates has increased the risk of economic and social instability, especially in lower-income nations.

Ripples around the world

Monetary policy decisions in the U.S., such as raising interest rates, have a ripple effect in low-income countries – not least because of the central role of the dollar in the global economy. Many emerging economies rely on the dollar for trade, and most borrow in the U.S. dollar – all at rates influenced by the Federal Reserve. And when U.S. interest rates go up, many countries – and especially developing ones – tend to follow suit.

This is largely out of concern for currency depreciation. Raising U.S. interest rates has the effect of making American government and corporate bonds look more attractive to investors. The result is footloose foreign capital flows out of emerging markets that are deemed riskier. This pushes down the currencies of those nations and prompts governments in lower-income nations to scramble to mirror U.S. Federal Reserve policy. The problem is, many of these countries already have high interest rates, and further hikes limit how much governments can lend to expand their own economies – heightening the risk of recession.

Then there is the impact that raising rates in the U.S. has had on countries with large debts. When rates were lower, a lot of lower-income nations took on high levels of international debt to offset the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and then later the effect of higher prices caused by war in Ukraine. But the rising cost of borrowing makes it more difficult for governments to cover repayments that are coming due now. This condition, called "debt distress," is affecting an increasing number of countries. Writing in May 2023, when he was still president of the World Bank, David Malpass estimated that some 60% of lower-income countries are in or high risk of entering debt distress.

More broadly, any attempt to slow down growth to lower inflation in the U.S. – which is the intended aim of raising interest rates – will have a knock-on effect on the economies of smaller nations. As borrowing costs in the U.S. increase, businesses and consumers will find themselves with less cheap money for all goods – domestic or international. Meanwhile, any fears that the Fed has pulled on the brakes too quickly and is risking recession will suppress consumer spending further.

The risk of spillover

This isn't just theory – history has shown that in practice it is true.

When then-Fed Chair Paul Volcker fought domestic inflation in the late 1970s and early 1980s, he did so with aggressive interest rate hikes that pushed up the cost of borrowing around the world. It contributed to debt crises for 16 Latin American countries and led to what became known in the region as the "lost decade" – a period of economic stagnation and soaring poverty.

The current rate increases are not of the same order as those of the early 1980s, when rates rose to nearly 20%. But rates are high enough to prompt fears among economists. The World Bank's most recent Global Economic Prospects report included a whole section on the spillover from U.S. interest rates to developing nations. It noted: "The rapid rise in interest rates in the United States poses a significant challenge to [emerging markets and developing economies]," adding that the result was "higher likelihood" of financial

crises among vulnerable economies.

Widening the wealth gap

Research I conducted with others suggests that the kind of financial crises hinted at by the World Bank – currency depreciation and debt distress – can rip the social fabric of developing countries by increasing poverty and income inequality.

Income inequality is at an all-time high – both within individual countries and between the richer and developing countries. The 2022 World Inequality Report notes that, currently, the richest 10% of individuals globally take home 52% of all global income, while the poorest half of the global population receives a mere 8.5%. And such a wealth gap is deeply corrosive for societies: Inequality of income and wealth has been shown to both harm democracy and reduce popular support for democratic institutions. It has also been linked to political violence and corruption.

Financial crises – such as the kind that higher interest rates in the U.S. may spark – increase the chance of economic slowdowns or even recessions. Worryingly, the World Bank has warned that developing nations face a "multi-year period of slow growth" that will only increase rates of poverty. And history has shown that the impact of such economic conditions fall hardest on lower-skilled low-income people.

These effects are compounded by government policies, such as cuts in spending and government services, which, again, disproportionately hit the less well-off. And if a country is struggling to pay back sovereign debt as a result of higher global interest rates, then it also has less cash to help its poorest citizens.

So in a very real sense, a period of higher interest rates in the U.S. can have a detrimental effect on the economic, political and social well-being of developing nations.

There is a caveat, however. With inflation in the U.S. slowing, further interest rate increases may be limited. It could be the case that regardless of whether Fed policy has threaded the needle of slowing the U.S. economy but not by too much, it has nonetheless sown the seeds of more potentially severe economic – and social – woes in poorer nations. (AP)

Some regional countries already struggling

Mideast countries fear price hikes after Russia exits grain deal

CAIRO, Aug 2, (AP): Ahmed Salah grew anxious when he heard the news that Russia had suspended a crucial wartime grain deal. The bakery owner in Egypt's capital is concerned it could mean global food prices soar.

"There mightn't be immediate impact," the 52-year-old said last week as he oversaw workers baking bread in his shop in Cairo, "but if they didn't find a solution soonest, things would be very difficult."

Russia pulled out of the deal brokered by the U.N. and Turkey to allow Ukraine's grain to flow during a global food crisis. It helped stabilize food prices that soared last year after Russia invaded Ukraine – two countries that are major suppliers of wheat, barley, sunflower oil and other food to developing nations.

Egypt, the world's largest wheat importer, and other lower-income Middle Eastern countries like Lebanon and Pakistan worry about what comes next. Struggling with economic woes that have driven more people into poverty,

they fear rising food prices could create even more pain for households, businesses and government bottom lines.

Many have diversified their sources of wheat, the main ingredient for flatbread that is a staple of diets in many Mideast countries, and don't expect shortages. Pakistan has even seen a bumper crop despite unprecedented flooding last year.

But the end of the grain deal is creating uncertainty about price hikes, a major driver of hunger.

"It is an unnecessary shock for the 345 million acutely food insecure people around the world," said Abeer Etefa, a spokeswoman for the U.N.'s World Food Program.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told Russian President Vladimir Putin in a phone call Wednesday that he is pushing to extend the grain deal because the long-term cutoff of Ukrainian ports "does not benefit anyone" and low-income countries "will suffer the most," according to a statement from Erdogan's office.

Russia, meanwhile, is launching attacks on Ukrainian ports and agricultural infrastructure, leading global wheat prices to zigzag. Despite the volatility, the costs are below what they were before Russia invaded Ukraine, and there is enough production to meet worldwide demand, said Joseph Glauber, senior research fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute.

But for low-income countries like war-torn Yemen or Lebanon that are big wheat importers, finding suppliers that are farther away will add costs, he said. Plus, their currencies have weakened against the U.S. dollar, which is used to buy grain on world markets.

"It's one reason why you see food price inflation lingering in a lot of countries – because even though world prices I mentioned are at prewar levels, that's in dollars. And if you put it in, say, the Egyptian pound, you'll see that Egypt wheat prices are actually up," said Glauber, former chief economist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"They're certainly as high as they were during the high points of 2022," he said.

That packs pressure on governments, which will have to pay more to keep subsidizing bread at the same level and avoid raising costs for households, he said. With many also seeing their foreign currency reserves dwindle, it could put countries in the Middle East and elsewhere in a more precarious financial situation.

Salah, the bakery owner, fears that if wheat prices spike, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi's government could respond by hiking prices of bread.

"Such move would have heavy toll on ordinary people," he said.

El-Sissi and other leaders raised concerns about higher food prices at a summit Russia hosted for African nations last week. He called for reviving the Black Sea deal through a "consensual solution" that takes into consideration "all parties' demands and interests and put an end to the continued surge in grain prices."

Alliance to enhance client engagement

KPMG, Microsoft enter deal to put AI at the forefront of pro services

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: KPMG and Microsoft have announced a significant expansion of their global relationship that will reshape professional services across a number of business-critical areas including workforce modernization, safe and secure development, and use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) solutions for clients, industries and society more broadly.

The industry-leading collaboration between the two global organizations includes a KPMG multibillion dollar commitment in Microsoft Cloud and AI services over the next 5 years that will help to unlock potential incremental growth opportunity for KPMG of over US\$12 billion. The expanded alliance will enhance KPMG client engagements and supercharge the employee experience in a way that is responsible, trustworthy and safe.

The Microsoft Cloud and Azure OpenAI Service capabilities will empower the KPMG global workforce of 265,000 to unleash their creativity, provide faster analysis and spend more time on strategic advice. This will enable them to help clients, including more than 2,500 KPMG and Microsoft joint clients, keep pace with the rapidly evolving AI landscape and solve their greatest business challenges while positioning them for success in the future world of work.

As an early access partner for Microsoft 365 Copilot and Azure OpenAI Service, KPMG professionals will pilot the technologies with select business groups across the global organization, bringing together the increased capabilities of these tools with their experience, insights and sector expertise to enhance client engagements and accelerate digital solution development.

Majid Makki, Partner and Head of Management Consulting and Technology Advisory, KPMG in Kuwait, said, "The relationship with Microsoft is as exciting as it is promising. Through this collaboration, we intend to boost employee experience to the next level and drive accelerated innovation for clients across services in Audit, Tax, and Advisory. Microsoft Cloud and Azure OpenAI service capabilities will enable us to deliver more creativity, quicker analysis and help us provide more strategic advice, ensuring that the clients are up to speed with the rapidly evolving AI landscape while acquiring their business objectives."

Salah, the bakery owner, fears that if wheat prices spike, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi's government could respond by hiking prices of bread.

The collaboration, which spans more than a decade, underpinned by this major expansion will benefit KPMG firms' core business areas in the following ways:

Audit

By infusing data analytics, AI and Azure Cognitive Services into the audit process, through the KPMG smart audit platform KPMG Clara, 85,000



Majid Makki

audit professionals who collectively work on hundreds of thousands of audits a year will be empowered to focus more closely on higher-risk areas of the audit, sector-specific risks and challenges – to the benefit of both stakeholders and capital markets. This integration also opens up new market opportunities for KPMG professionals and their clients. For example, with the integration of Microsoft Fabric, KPMG teams will have the ability to directly point to client data instead of having to ingest it, which is a key component to helping enable KPMG professionals to perform audits on a more real time basis.

Tax

Integrating Azure OpenAI Service and Microsoft Fabric into KPMG Digital Gateway, a KPMG single platform solution, will give clients access to the full suite of KPMG Tax & Legal technologies, and allow them to gain more integrated and transparent access to their data and take a more holistic management approach to their tax functions. This was demonstrated most recently through a co-developed AI solution using the Azure OpenAI Service that helps analyze environmental, social and governance (ESG) data, establish data patterns and draft ESG tax transparency reports, all at increased speed and scale. Additionally, KPMG firms will operate a generative-AI powered "virtual assistant" to create new client service models to help tax professionals become more efficient. It will also help with revenue-generating opportunities such as product experience enhancements and knowledge management for complex tax laws.

Advisory

Developing an AI-enabled application development and knowledge platform on Microsoft Azure will expedite the creation of specialized solutions for clients, helping to enhance their competitive advantage and profitability while putting ethics and security at the very core of the offerings. The benefits and ongoing success of this continued collaboration already include a joint engagement with Coca-Cola EuroPacific Partners (CEEP) to pioneer improvements to back-office efficiency using generative AI on the Azure platform. By using this new technology, we will prepare our organization for the future, improve our employee experience and support our growth ambitions globally.

INVESTMENT STRATEGY & RESEARCH

KAMCO INVEST

GCC Markets Monthly Report July 2023

GCC markets follow global trends to report second straight month of growth...

GCC equity markets reported growth for the second consecutive month during July-2023 in line with growth in most other global equity markets. The aggregate MSCI GCC index was up 3.3% during the month reflecting positive performance in all the GCC equity markets in July-2023. Qatar was the best performing market during the month registering a gain of 8.8% followed by Dubai and Kuwait benchmarks with monthly gains of 7.0% and 3.2%, respectively. Saudi Arabia's TASI witnessed a relatively smaller gain of 2.0% during the month. On the global front, the MSCI World index was up by 3.3% mainly led by relatively higher returns for the EM index at 5.8% while Europe lagged at 2.0%. The steep monthly gains in Qatar's DSM Index during July-2023 helped to push the index in the green in terms of YTD-2023 performance that reached 2.6%. However, Dubai continued to lead in the GCC in terms of performance since the start of the year with a gain of 21.7% followed by Saudi Arabia's TASI that was up 11.6%. Bahrain's benchmark was also in the positive zone with a gain of 5.1% while the remaining three markets continue to remain in the red.

The sector trend for July-2023 showed broad-based gains with merely four sectors in the red. Consumer Durables & Apparel and Hotels, Restaurants & Leisure witnessed declines of 4.0% and 2.3%, respectively, while Telecom and Retailing sectors saw marginal slide. On the other hand, gains were led by large-cap sectors including Capital Goods and Banks with gains of 7.3% and 4.9%, respectively. Materials and Energy sectors also recorded gains, but were marginal at 0.7% and 1.7%, respectively. In terms of YTD-2023 performance, all the sectors are now in the green, barring Capital Goods, with bulk of them recording double-digit returns.

Boursa Kuwait

Boursa Kuwait was up for the second consecutive month during July-2023 with a gain of 3.2% and was the third-best performing market in the GCC during the month. However, unlike the previous month, the gains during July-2023 were mainly led by mid-cap and small-cap stocks. This was seen in the Main Market stocks with the Main 50 Index recording a gain of 3.7% outperforming the Premier Market index that recorded a slightly smaller gain of 3.2%. The broader Main Market index reported a gain of 3.0% resulting in a 3.2% monthly gain for the All-Share Index. In terms of YTD-2023 performance, the Main 50 Index was down by 2.5% followed by 0.7% decline for the Premier Market Index vs. 0.5% decline in All-Share Market Index. On the other hand, Main Market Index showed marginal gains of 0.6%.

The monthly sector performance chart favored gainers. The Consumer Discretionary index topped the monthly sector performance during July-2023 with a gain of 10.3% followed by Financial Services and Banks indices with returns of 5.2% and 3.7%, respectively. On the decliner's side, the Technology index witnessed the biggest decline of 14.6% during the month followed by Basic Materials and Energy indices with declines of 2.7% and 2.0%, respectively. Gains in the Consumer Discretionary sector came mainly on the back of 98.5% surge in shares of IFA Hotels & Resorts Co. In the Financial Services index, bulk of stocks reported double-digit gains. The performance of the Financial Services index was supported by gains of 36.1% in Intl Financial Advisors Co. and 32.7% gain in shares of Arzan Financial Group for Financial & Investment. Large-cap sectors like Banking sector was up by 3.7%. In the Banking sector, 5 out of ten Kuwaiti banks recorded healthy gains during the month, with the shares of Commercial Bank of Kuwait leading the gains with a surge of 14.9%. The gains reflected solid results for IH-2023. NBK reported a net profit of KWD 275.3 Mn for the IH-2023 compared to KWD 237.8 Mn up by 15.8%. In the telecom sector Ooredoo Kuwait recorded a net profit of KWD 64.4 Mn for IH-2023 vs KWD 20.8 Mn for IH-2022 up by 209%. Consolidated revenue of the telco increased by 4% to KWD 318 Mn in IH-2023, compared to KWD 306 Mn in IH-2022. Revenues benefited from operations in Kuwait and a y-o-y improvement in Maldives and Algeria. On the other hand, the decline in the Technology sector was led by the fall in the shares of its sole constituent Automated Systems Co.

In terms of monthly stock performance, IFA Hotels & Resorts Co. topped the chart with a gain of 98.5% followed by Intl Financial Advisors Co. and Al-Deera Holding with gains of 36.1% and 35.2%, respectively. On the decliners side, Kuwait Foundry Co. topped with a fall of 30.0% followed by Gulf Franchising Co. and Automated Systems Co. with the declines of 15.4% and 15.0%, respectively.

Saudi Arabia (Tadawul)

Saudi Arabia's TASI recorded gains for the second consecutive month during July-2023. The Index closed at 11,692.2 points, which is the highest closing since September-2022, resulting in a monthly gain of 2.0%. The performance of the index was buoyed by a combination of factors, including elevated oil prices and strong corporate profitability for Q2-2023 for companies listed on the Saudi Exchange. The monthly performance pushed the YTD-2023 gains for TASI further into the positive zone to 11.6%, the second highest in the GCC. During the month, The Saudi Central Bank increased its repo rate to 6% and its reverse repo rate to 5.5%, both by 25 bps, mirroring the US Federal Reserve's action to contain inflation.

The monthly sector performance chart favored gainers and was topped by the Commercial & Professional Service index with a double-digit gain of 17.9% followed by the Software & Services and Food & Beverages indices with a gain of 13.7% and 8.5%, respectively. Gains for the Commercial & Professional Service index was mainly led by double-digit gains of 48.2% in shares of Al Mawarid Manpower Co. further supported by gains of 25.5% and 0.2% in shares of Saudi Airlines Catering Co. and Saudi Printing and Packaging Co., respectively. The resilience of the Software & Services sector continued during the month after all the constituent stocks in the index witnessed gains barring Arab Sea Information System Co. (-2.6%). Shares of Elm Co. and Arabian Internet and Communications Services Co. reported gains of 16.9% and 13.1%, respectively. Large-cap sectors like Energy and Banking sector reported monthly gains of 0.4% and 2.9%, respectively. Within the Banking sector, all the constituent stock posted gains barring two banks and the gains were supported by solid earnings.

In earnings releases, Al Rajhi Bank posted net profit of SAR 8.3 Bn in IH-2023 compared to SAR 8.4 Bn in IH-2022 down by 1.2%. A decline in operating income by 3.5% y-o-y because of lower net financing and investment income affected results. The Q2-2023 net profit also declined 3% to SAR 4.15 Bn from SAR 4.25 Bn in Q2-2022. Saudi National Bank and Alinma Bank also reported results with relatively a higher y-o-y profit growth during the IH-2023.

The monthly gainer's chart was topped by Al Mawarid Manpower Co. with a gain of 48.2% followed by The Mediterranean and Gulf Insurance and Reinsurance Co. and Jamjoom Pharmaceuticals Factory Co. with gains of 43.8% and 34.3%, respectively. On the decliner's side, Abdul Mohsen Al-Hokair Tourism topped with a decline of 16.3% followed by Alkhaleej Training and Education Co. and Al-Baha Investment and Development Co. with declines of 15.4% and 15.0%, respectively.

Trading activity on the exchange witnessed strong monthly gains during July-2023 due to Eid holidays during June-2023. Monthly volume of shares traded witnessed a m-o-m increase of 47.8% in July-2023 to reach 6.0 Bn shares. Monthly value of shares traded increased by 41.0% to reach SAR 141.1 Bn. Al-Baha Investment and Development Co. topped the monthly volume chart with 1.5 Bn shares followed by Tourism Enterprise Co. and Anaam International Holding Group with 535.7 Mn shares and 398.2 Mn shares traded, respectively. On the monthly value traded chart, Al Rajhi Bank topped with SAR

GCC Equity Markets	Index Closing	MTD Chg%	YTD Chg%	M-Cap (USD Bn)	Monthly Val Traded (USD Mn)	P/E (x) TTM	P/B (x) TTM	Div. Yield
Kuwait - Premier Market Index	8,060.9	3.2%	(0.7%)	142.1	2,995.0	13.8	0.8	3.0%
Kuwait - Main 50 Index	5,574.1	3.7%	(2.5%)					
Kuwait - Main Market Index	5,630.1	3.0%	0.6%					
Kuwait - All Share Index	7,253.8	3.2%	(0.5%)					
Saudi Arabia	11,692.2	2.0%	11.6%	2,936.6	37,631.7	18.3	2.3	2.9%
Abu Dhabi	9,787.1	2.5%	(4.2%)	756.0	5,500.7	32.8	3.0	1.7%
Dubai	4,059.3	7.0%	21.7%	187.1	3,132.8	9.3	1.3	4.3%
Qatar	10,963.0	8.8%	2.6%	176.4	2,731.8	13.2	1.5	4.5%
Bahrain	1,992.4	1.8%	5.1%	87.4	31.2	7.1	0.8	7.7%
Oman	4,776.1	0.2%	(1.7%)	22.8	124.8	13.2	0.9	4.6%
Total GCC	4,308.3			52,147.8		18.0	2.1	2.9%



Monthly Indicators	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23
Premier Market Index	8,594.6	7,949.9	8,190.9	8,491.9	8,115.7	8,085.4	8,069.8	7,821.7	7,912.5	7,494.7	7,809.3	8,060.9
Monthly % Change	(0.1%)	(7.5%)	3.0%	3.7%	(4.4%)	(0.4%)	(0.2%)	(3.1%)	1.2%	(5.3%)	-4.2%	3.2%
Main 50 Index	6,143.7	5,511.4	5,648.8	5,829.7	5,719.0	5,725.5	5,703.1	5,593.1	5,644.1	5,365.8	5,375.0	5,574.1
Monthly % Change	(0.8%)	(10.3%)	2.5%	3.2%	(1.9%)	0.1%	(0.4%)	(1.9%)	0.9%	(4.9%)	0.2%	3.7%
Main Market Index	5,866.5	5,338.4	5,489.6	5,681.3	5,596.8	5,623.4	5,548.7	5,500.8	5,606.4	5,440.8	5,463.6	5,630.1
Monthly % Change	(0.1%)	(9.0%)	2.8%	3.5%	(1.5%)	0.5%	(1.3%)	(0.9%)	1.9%	(3.0%)	0.4%	3.0%
All Share Market Index	7,709.1	7,105.7	7,318.4	7,584.6	7,292.1	7,277.3	7,244.4	7,050.8	7,142.5	6,796.8	7,029.8	7,253.8
Monthly % Change	(0.1%)	(7.8%)	3.0%	3.6%	(3.9%)	(0.2%)	(0.5%)	(2.7%)	1.3%	(4.8%)	3.4%	3.2%
Market Cap (KWD Mn)	45,803	45,489	46,882	46,663	46,745	46,706	46,423	45,130	43,989	40,228	41,615	42,939
P/E (x) - TTM	17.46	16.20	16.34	20.39	19.66	17.99	17.94	16.72	14.10	13.10	13.41	13.85
P/B (x) - TTM	1.75	1.63	1.66	1.74	1.67	1.67	1.66	1.09	0.80	0.79	0.82	0.85
Dividend Yield (%)	2.83%	2.94%	2.86%	2.71%	2.83%	3.45%	3.46%	3.59%	2.76%	2.97%	2.88%	3.01%
Volume (Mn Shares)	6,213.0	3,618.7	3,771.0	4,763.3	2,926.4	3,668.5	2,297.8	2,553.4	2,131.3	2,986.1	3,444.8	4,354.4
Value (KWD Mn)	1,244.4	920.0	1,291.8	1,176.1	764.5	1,052.2	699.7	889.3	643.9	941.2	815.9	904.8
Trades ('000)	270.7	209.7	237.6	232.6	159.1	211.6	153.1	181.3	151.3	209.3	169.7	218.3

9.2 Bn worth of shares traded during the month followed by First Milling Co. and Aramco with trades worth SAR 6.0 Bn and SAR 5.4 Bn during the month, respectively.

Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange

The FTSE ADX index was up by 2.5% during July-2023 closing the month at 9,787.13 points and recording its second consecutive monthly gain after the 1.5% growth it witnessed in June-2023. In terms of sectoral indices, eight out of the ten sectors recorded growth during the month while the remaining two recorded declines. On the gainers' side, the Consumer Discretionary index led the way with 11% index gain to close the month at 18,174.0 points mainly due to the 60.6% share price gain of Abu Dhabi National Hotels Co. All the constituent companies of the Consumer Discretionary sector witnessed gains in share prices during the month. The Energy index followed with the second highest gain of 7.6% as all three constituent companies witnessed share price growth during the month led by Dana Gas' 13.8% share price growth during the month followed closely by ADNOC Drilling's 10.7% share price increase during the month. On the decliners' side, the Utilities index led the way with an 8.2% slide during the month to close the month at 12,844.8 points followed by the Health Care index which witnessed a 2.4% drop during July-2023. Abu Dhabi National Energy Company, the only constituent of the Utility sector index, registered a 8.2% share price slide during July-2023.

In terms of monthly stock performance, Abu Dhabi National Co. for Building Materials topped the monthly gainers chart for July-2023 with a gain of 73.9% followed by Abu Dhabi National Hotels and National Bank of Ras Al Khaimah Co. which recorded gains of 60.6% and 33.3%, respectively. Abu Dhabi National Hotels has recently appointed BHM Capital as liquidity provider for its shares listed in ADX. On the decliner's side, Foodco Holding led the way registering a 29.5% fall in its share price during July-2023 followed by Sharjah Group and Emirates Insurance Co which saw share price declines of 22.7% and 15.2%, respectively.

Trading activity increased m-o-m during July-2023 mainly led by Eid holidays during the previous month. Total volume of shares traded rose by 57.3% in July-2023 to reach 5.2 Bn as compared to 3.3 Bn in June-2023. Similarly, total value of traded increased by 20.5% to reach AED 20.2 Bn. GFH Financial Group topped the list of the most active stocks traded during the month with 615.8 Mn traded shares followed by Eshraq Investments and RAK Properties which traded 589.2 Mn shares and 476.5 Mn shares, respectively. In terms of value traded, IHC topped the table for the sixth month in a row with AED 4.2 Bn worth of shares changing hands during the month followed by Alpha Dhabi Holding Co and Multiply Group at AED 2.4 Bn and AED 1.4 Bn, respectively.

In economic news, according to the Central Bank of the UAE, the combination of lower oil output and moderate growth could decelerate UAE real GDP growth to 3.9% in 2023. The Emirates oil and non-oil GDP are forecasted to grow 3% and 4.2% respectively, during the year. This comes after the UAE recorded one of the fastest economic growth in 2022. The UAE economy expanded 7.9% in 2022 as compared to 4.4% in 2021. The economic diversification in the country continues to progress significantly illustrated by traction gained by ESG finance in the Emirates. Green debt issuances in the UAE reached AED 232.4 Bn (USD 6.7 Bn) in the past year (2022) representing 18.2% of total bond issuances during the past year.

Dubai Financial Market

The DFM General Index recorded its fourth consecutive monthly gain and the second-highest monthly gain among the GCC markets in July-2023. The index registered a growth of 7.0% to close the month at 4,059.3 points. The monthly index performance was reflected in broad-based growth during the month with all the sectors in the green. The Consumer Staples Index recorded the biggest monthly gain registering 27.3% growth to close the month at 142.7 points mainly driven by Emirate Refreshments' nearly 27.9% price gain during July-2023. The Materials sector index followed as the second largest gainer during the month with 11.4% growth after the sector's only constituent company, National Cement Company, recorded a 11.4% share price rise during July-2023. The Real Estate index was next recording an 8.1% monthly gain to close the month at 6,687 points mainly driven by a 21.8% share price jump for Union Properties. The real estate company has an-

nounced a net profit of AED 17.7 Mn for the IH-2023 period as compared to a net loss of AED 12.2 Mn during IH-2022. The Financial index also witnessed strong growth in July-2023 recording a 7.8% gain to close the month at 2,827.2 points.

According to monthly stock performance from Bloomberg, Emirates Refreshment Company led the monthly gainers table with 27.9% increase in share price followed by Al Salam Bank - Bahrain and Union Properties with gains of 23.4% and 21.8%, respectively. On the decliner's side, Ektitab Holding Company topped the table recording a share price decline of 19.8% during the month followed by Ithmaar Holding Company and Dubai National Insurance Company with share price declines of 17.4% and 10.7%, respectively.

In terms of monthly trading activity, total volume traded increased by 84% to reach 9.1 Bn shares in July-2023 as compared to 5.0 Bn shares during June-2023. Total value traded of shares traded during the month also witnessed growth recording 41% increase to reach AED 11.5 Bn in July-2023 as compared to AED 8.2 Bn during June-2023. Union Properties topped the monthly volumes traded chart recording 3.3 Bn shares which changed hands during the month followed by Deyaar Development and Ithmaar Holding which saw 766.3 Mn and 733.9 Mn of their shares change hands during the month, respectively. On the monthly value traded chart, Emaar Properties topped the list with AED 1.4 Bn worth of shares changing hands during the month, followed by Union Properties and Emirates NBD which saw AED 1.3 Bn and AED 1.0 Bn value of their shares traded, respectively.

In economic news, Dubai's economic growth in 2023 accelerated supported by strong tourism numbers and robust real estate market. The number of people visiting the Emirate reached 8.5 million for the first six months of 2023. Underlining the strong tourism growth optimism, the Dubai International Airport increased its annual passenger forecast for 2023 after surpassing 95% of its pre-pandemic levels of traffic during the first quarter of 2023. According to Emirates NBD, Dubai's economy is set to grow 3.5% in 2023 as compared to 5% in 2022. The Emirate's economic growth during 2023 is expected to be fueled by growth in its Real Estate sector. Dubai has already completed 9 real estate projects valued at AED 4.06 Bn (USD 1.1 Bn) during the first six months of 2023. Moreover, there are over 390 projects currently underway in the Emirate according to the Dubai Land Department. In addition, Dubai's resilient economic performance was supported by a debt reduction initiative by the Emirate's government. According to S&P, Dubai's debt burden as percentage GDP will decline from 78% of GDP to 51% of GDP in 2023. The rating agency also forecasted Dubai's GDP to expand 3% in 2023 as compared to an estimated 5% GDP growth in 2022.

Qatar Exchange

The Qatar Stock Exchange witnessed the best monthly returns in the GCC during July-2023 with the QE 20 Index gaining 8.8% during the month. Notably, these gains came after five consecutive months of declines this year. The Qatar All Share Index witnessed a gain of 8.4% during the month indicating investor interest across the market segments. With the gains in July-2023, the YTD-2023 growth for the QE 20 index reached 2.6% while the Qatar All Share Index registered a higher growth of 6.7% at the end of July-2023.

The sector performance chart also reflected solid gains with all the sectors in the green. The Industrials index topped during the month with a gain of 11.7% closely followed by Banks & Financial Services and Real Estate indices with gains of 10.1% and 8.4%, respectively. Gains for the Industrials index was mainly led by the shares of Industries Qatar which was up 18.7% followed by 14.0% gain in shares of Gulf International Services. Most of the constituents in the Banks & Financial Services sector witnessed gains with shares of Qatar Islamic Bank up by 19.4% followed by Doha Bank with a gain of 12.4%. In the Real estate sector shares of Mazaya Real Estate Development gained 11.6% during the month.

In IH-2023 earnings releases, QNB reported net profit of QAR 7.6 Bn in the IH-2023 up from QAR 7.0 Bn in IH-2022, driven by higher net interest income. For Q2-2023, QNB posted a profit of QAR 3.8 Bn, down by 4.1% y-o-y. Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB) posted a net profit of QAR 1.95 Bn for the IH-2023, representing a growth of 7.7% over the same period in 2022. The bank's income from financing and investing activities registered a growth of 26.3% to reach QAR 4.75 Bn for the first half of 2023 compared to QAR 3.76 Bn for the same

period of 2022. Similarly, the Commercial Bank of Qatar reported a net profit of QAR 1.55 Bn for IH-2023 compared to a net profit of QAR 1.43 Bn in IH-2022 up by 8.5%. On the other hand, net profits for Masraf Al Rayan dropped 23.5% to QAR 764.6 Mn during IH-2023 compared with QAR 999.9 Mn in IH-2022 mainly due to higher impairment charges.

The monthly stock performance chart was topped with Widam Food Company with a gain of 34.4% followed by the Qatar Oman for Investment and Qatar Islamic Bank with gains of 24.7% and 19.4%, respectively. On the decliners side, Qatar General Insurance & Reinsurance topped with a decline of 12.3% followed by Zad Holding and Djala Brokerage & Investment Holding with declines of 2.9% and 2.7%, respectively.

In terms of the trading activity, total volume of shares traded during the month increased by 20.7% to 4.1 Bn shares. Value traded also increased by 7.5% to reach QAR 9.9 Bn during July-2023. Mazaya Real Estate Development topped the monthly volume traded chart with 517.1 Mn traded shares followed by Qatar Aluminum Manufacturing Company and Salam International Investment at 394.6 Mn shares and 287.1 Mn shares, respectively. On the value traded chart, Qatar National Bank topped with QAR 1.11 Bn worth of trades during the month followed by Industries Qatar and Masraf Al Rayan at QAR 683.0 Mn and QAR 651.4 Mn, respectively.

Bahrain Bourse

The Bahrain Bourse All Share Index recorded a 1.8% growth during July-2023 to close the month at 1,992.41 points bouncing back from a marginal decline of 0.3% during June-2023. In terms of sectoral performance, the picture was mixed since three out of the seven sector indices witnessed declines during the month. However, the performance of large-weighted indices such as the Financials index, the Communications Services index and the Materials index were enough to pull the overall Bahrain All Share Index into the positive territory. The Communications Services index recorded a 2.3% gain in July-2023 to close the month at 2,638.5 points after Bahrain Telecom Company (Beyon) recorded 2.7% share price increase during the month buying up the sector despite the monthly share price slides recorded by the two other constituent companies in the sector. Moreover, the Financials index registered a 1.9% gain during July-2023 to close the month at 7,105.3 points. On the other hand, the Real Estate index registered a 0.7% drop to close the month at 2,682.2 points while the Industrials and the Consumer Discretionary Indices recorded a 0.5% fall each during the month.

In terms of share price performance, according to Bloomberg data, Al Salam Bank Bahrain topped the list of gainers with 25.5% share price gain during the month followed by Kuwait Finance House - Bahrain and National Hotels Group with gains of 8.6% and 7.1%, respectively. On the decliner's side, Ithmaar Holding topped the list recording 20% share price decline during the month followed by Bahrain Kuwait Insurance Co and Bahrain Islamic Bank with share price declines of 10% and 6.2%, respectively.

Trading activity on the exchange decreased for the second month running during July-2023. Total volume traded on the exchange fell by 12.3% to 49.8 Mn as compared to 56.7 Mn in June-2023. Moreover, total value traded on the exchange witnessed a decline of 6.3% to reach BHD 11.8 Mn in July-2023 as compared to BHD 12.6 Mn during June-2023. Al Salam Bank-Bahrain topped the monthly volumes chart with 27.8 Mn traded shares followed by Ithmaar Holding Company and GFH Financial Group at 4.7 Mn and 2.9 Mn shares, respectively. On the monthly value traded chart, Al Salam Bank - Bahrain also topped the list with BHD 4.6 Mn worth of shares changing hands during the month followed by Kuwait Finance House - Bahrain and Aluminum Bahrain which witnessed BHD 2.8 Mn and BHD 1.8 Mn values of their monthly shares traded, respectively.

In economic news, Bahrain's Q1-2023 GDP expanded 2% mainly driven by 3.5% growth in the non-oil sector. According to data from the Bahraini Ministry of Finance and National Economy, the Kingdom's non-oil sector is set to grow 2.9% in 2023 while the country's oil sector is forecasted to expand 3.5% during the year. Overall Bahrain's economy is expected to expand 3.2% during 2023. Bahraini government's Economic Recovery Plan continues to pay dividends as sectors targeted by the initiative experience positive growth. Moreover, Bahrain continues to diversify its foreign investments cementing its efforts to expand the economy. Recently the Bahraini government signed a memorandum of understanding for strategic investments and collaboration with the UK government. The deal will allow Bahrain's private sector to invest USD 1.3 Bn in the UK.

Muscat Securities Market

The MSX 30 index witnessed a marginal monthly gain of 0.2% in July-2023 following a much stronger growth of 3.1% during June-2023. The benchmark closed the month at 4,766.1 points recording the second consecutive monthly gains after falling into the red during April and May-2023. In terms of sectoral performance, all the three sector indices on the exchange recorded declines during July-2023. The Services Sector Index recorded the biggest monthly fall of 1.3% during July-2023 to close the month at 1,672.6 points mainly driven by the share price declines of bulk of the companies in the sector such as Musandam Power (-10.3%), Galfar Engineering (-12%) and Oman Fisheries (-10%) that dragged down the sector index into the red. Similarly, the Industrial Index registered a marginal 0.5% monthly fall during July-2023 to close the month at 6,117.5 points. The Financial Index witnessed a marginal dip (-0.04%) during the month closing at 7,827.35 points. The strong share price performance of companies like National Finance Co (+21.5%) kept the sector index from falling deeply into the red.

In terms of company performance, Oman Chromite Company topped the gainers list with a share price gain of 28.6% followed by Voltamp Energy and National Finance with 21.9% and 19.4% monthly share gains, respectively. On the decliner's side, Majan Glass led the league with 81.5% share price fall followed by National Aluminum Products Co and Al Madina Investment & Finance Co which witnessed a share price drop of 74.5% and 21.2% respectively.

Trading activity on the exchange increased during the month in line with most of the markets in the GCC. Total volume of shares traded in the exchange rose 68.5% 231 Mn shares as compared to 137.13 Mn in June-2023. Similarly, total value traded in the exchange increased by 52.3% to OMR 48 Mn against OMR 31.5 Mn in June-2023. Bank Muscat topped the monthly value traded chart with trades at OMR 7.2 Mn followed by Oman Telecom and Ooredoo Oman with total value traded at OMR 5.4 Mn and OMR 3.3 Mn, respectively. In terms of monthly volume traded, Bank Muscat topped the list with 25.7 Mn shares followed by Al Anwar Investment and Bank Nizwa Company with volumes at 23.6 Mn shares and 17.5 Mn shares, respectively.

In economic news, Oman's sovereign wealth fund and Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund recently signed a memorandum of understanding deal to explore investment opportunities in Oman



KfH AlRabeh Campaign flyer

KFH announces the winners of Al-Rabeh draw

Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the winners of the AlRabeh draw with 20 customers winning cash prizes worth KD1,500 each for the 27th and 28th weeks of 2023. The winners of KD 1,500 are: Anas Kandy, Duaa Al-Kandari, Dalal Al-Ajmi, Muhanna Al-Hayyani, Binoy Thomas, Ahmad Al-Shehab, Faisal Al-Faraj, Naser Buresli, Faleh Al-Mutairi, Soud Al-Otaibi, Omar Hamadash, Nawal Al-Tammar, Shorouq Al-Tannak, Nawal Al-Khershan, Ali Al-Dwaikh, Faraj Siddiqi, Dhari Al-Meshari, Adel Al-Khurayef, Abdulaziz Al-Me-

shari, Enas Al-Mathlouthi. The AlRabeh campaign provides prizes and draws that offer customers several chances of winning "weekly, monthly and quarterly". The campaign crowns 536 winners throughout the year. The draw took place under the supervision of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The campaign is part of KFH's ongoing efforts to offer exceptional products and services that meet customers' aspirations, enhance the Bank's leadership in the local and global

markets, as well as reflect its excellence in offering innovative banking solutions as per the highest quality standards. The Al-Rabeh account is a salary account available to customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Customers can open Al-Rabeh account in any of KFH branches in Kuwait, or through the Bank's online channels. The account can be opened in the Kuwaiti Dinar and is targeted for customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts.

Bank achieved a strong financial performance: Mandani

Gulf Bank holds its first half 2023 Earnings Webcast

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Gulf Bank held its investors webcast on Tuesday, August 01, 2023, to present and discuss the Bank's financial performance for H1-2023. The webcast was organized by EFG Hermes and presented by Waleed Mandani, Deputy Chief Executive Officer & Acting Chief Executive Officer of Gulf Bank, and David Challinor, Chief Financial Officer of Gulf Bank. The discussion was moderated by Dalal Al-Dousari, Head of Investor Relations at Gulf Bank.



Dalal Al Dousari

in May 2023 related to the increase of the Gulf Bank's authorized capital, by stating: "Shareholders of Gulf Bank approved the increase of its authorized capital by KD 150 million. This is an authorized increase only, that will provide the Bank with optionality in the future. The approval received reflects the trust and confidence of shareholders in Gulf Bank's growth prospects and long-term success."

Solid financial performance

Waleed Mandani summarized Gulf Bank's first half of 2023 financial performance with six key messages:

1. Net profit grew by 18% for the first half of 2023, to reach KD 35.8 million in comparison to KD 30.3 million reported in the first half of 2022.
2. Return on average equity increased to 10.1% for the first half of 2023 up from 9.1% at the same period last year.
3. Gross loans and advances reached KD 5.5 billion, which is relatively flat when compared to the first half of 2022.
4. The quality of our loan book remains resilient, as our non-performing loan ratio (NPL) for the first half of 2023 is at 1.0%, together with a strong NPL coverage ratio of 546% including total provisions and collaterals.
5. At the end of the first half of 2023, our Tier 1 Ratio was 13.9% achieving a buffer of 187 basis points above regulatory minimums of 12%, and our Capital Adequacy Ratio was 16.1% achieving a buffer of 208 basis points above regulatory minimums of 14%. These buffers will support the Bank in pursuing growth opportunities in line



Gulf Bank CFO David Challinor

with its strategy. 6. Gulf Bank remains an 'A' rated bank by major credit rating agencies. Our current position stands as follows: • Moody's Investors Service maintained the Long-Term Deposits Rating of the Bank at "A3" with a "Stable" outlook. • Capital Intelligence affirmed the Bank's Long-Term Foreign Currency Rating of "A+" with a "Stable" outlook. • Fitch Ratings affirmed the Bank's Long-Term Issuer Default Rating at "A" with a "Stable" outlook, and a Viability Rating of 'bbb-'. **Loan book growth outlook** In response to questions raised by participants on the call related to loan book and the expectations for the second half of the year, David Challinor commented: "We continued the trend of strong growth



Waleed Mandani

Operating Environment

Mr. Waleed Mandani commenced the webcast with key updates regarding Gulf Bank's operating environment for the first half of 2023. Mandani stated: "We remain optimistic about the opportunities presented by Kuwait's economy as it continues to be generally healthy. We are also witnessing a relative stability in the political landscape, which will lay the foundation for potential government reforms, and further enhancement of the operating environment and outlook of the country." He added: "We have closely monitored the banking sector performance, which has experienced a slowdown in loan growth in recent months, especially with the rising interest rate environment and inflation. We acknowledge these industry-wide challenges and have proactively taken steps to navigate this environment effectively. Our focus on prudent risk management and strategic initiatives ensures that we maintain stability and drive sustainable growth."

On Major milestones achieved by Gulf Bank during the first half of the

year, Waleed Mandani commented: "I am delighted to announce that during the first half of the year 2023, Gulf Bank achieved a strong financial performance. Our focus on operational excellence and customer-centricity has been instrumental in this achievement. One significant highlight of this period has been our relentless pursuit of our digital transformation strategy. I am proud to share that we have achieved a major milestone in our digital transformation journey. A notable accomplishment was the launch of phase 1 of our new Core Banking system, which will enhance our operational efficiency and improve the overall customer experience."

Waleed Mandani also mentioned that the Bank held an Extraordinary Annual General Assembly Meeting

Markaz: GCC, global markets positive in July despite interest rate hike by US Fed

S&P GCC composite index was up by 3.3% in July

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" released its Monthly Market Review report for the month of July 2023. Kuwait's All Share Index witnessed an increase in July, posting a monthly gain of 3.2%. Among Bourse Kuwait's sectoral indices, the Consumer discretionary sector gained the most at 10.3%, while the Technology sector lost 14.6% for the month. Among Premier Market stocks, Arzan Financial Group for Financing and Investment and National Investments Co gained the most for the month, rising by 32.7% and 18.6% respectively.

tively. Integrated Holding Co and ALAFCO Aviation Lease and Finance Co fell by 7.5% and 5.6% respectively during the month.

Central Bank of Kuwait raised its policy rate by 25 bps from 4.0% to 4.25% in July, mirroring U.S. Fed's interest rate moves. Kuwait consumer price inflation (CPI) accelerated at 3.83% y/y in June, which was higher than May's inflation figures of 3.69% y/y owing to price increases in food, clothing, and education segment. Food and beverages prices rose by 6.25% y/y while clothing prices inclined by 6.76% y/y during the month. Kuwait recorded a budget surplus of KD 6.4 billion (USD 20.86 billion) in 2022-23 supported by strong oil revenues. Revenues surged by 54.7% compared to the previous year while expenditure declined by 2.6%.

Regionally, GCC Markets ended the month in green, in tandem with global markets. The S&P GCC composite index went up 3.3% for the month. Qatar and Dubai equity indices gained the most for the month, increasing 8.8% and 7.0% respectively. Qatar's rally was driven by positive Q2 2023 earnings results for blue chip companies. Dubai extended its rally for the second month owing to lower valuation and positive earnings sentiment. Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia equity indices gained 2.5% and 2.0% respectively during the month owing to strong oil prices. Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB) gained 19.4% for the month following the earnings announcement. QIB registered a net profit of QAR 1,955 million in H1 2023, registering a growth of 7.7% over the same period in 2022.

The Central banks of UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Bahrain raised interest rates by 25 bps in line with the policy rate moves of the U.S. Fed. The UAE's GDP growth is forecast to decelerate to 3.9% in 2023 from 7.9% in 2022, primarily due to lower

oil production and moderate growth in the non-oil sector, according to the Central Bank of UAE. The oil and non-oil GDP are expected to grow by 3.0% and 4.2% respectively in 2023. Dubai's CPI slowed down to 2.05% y/y in June after accelerating at 3.05% y/y during May as food and beverages, and transport costs eased during the month. According to S&P Global, UAE's PMI grew to 56.9 in June from 55.5 in May, indicating significant improvement in business conditions and robust consumer demand. The IMF revised its GDP growth forecast for Saudi Arabia in 2023 downwards from 3.1% to 1.9% on the back of prolonged oil production cuts. Saudi's CPI accelerated at 2.7% y/y in June compared to 2.8% y/y increase in the previous month. According to MEED projects, GCC project awards surged 86% during Q2 2023, reaching USD 49.7 billion as compared to USD 26.7 billion in awards during Q2 2022. According to IMF, economic growth in MENA is projected to decline to 2.6% in 2023 from 5.4% in 2022.

Al-Hassad prize draw flyer

More success, more rewards

AUB names winner of the KD 100,000 monthly prize

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Ahli United Bank (AUB) announced the result of the monthly draw in Al Hassad Islamic prize program held on Wednesday 02 August 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 named Lames Ahmad Al-Shabab as the lucky winner of KD100,000.

On this occasion, Mr. Amresh Nandkeolyar, Head of Marketing and Product Development, Retail at AUB congratulated the winner, wishing her

the best. Nandkeolyar expressed his hope that all the Bank's customers will be lucky in the upcoming draws. He also expressed his happiness with the valued trust of the customers in the Bank.

Nandkeolyar assured that AUB is keen since the beginning of launching Al-Hassad Islamic prizes program to offer a host of exclusive prizes to contribute to making the aspiration and dreams of its clients true, and to enhance the culture of savings, stressing that the Bank is committed to provide state-of-the-art banking solutions, which are in line with the client's different requirements.

ABK receives J.P. Morgan Elite Quality Recognition Award

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: J.P. Morgan recently honored Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) with the esteemed Elite Quality Recognition Award in light of its distinguished achievement in the Straight-Through Processing (STP) of customer and financial institution transfers in US Dollars (USD) throughout 2022. STP is a method used by banks to speed up financial transactions by processing without manual (human) intervention.

This prestigious award is a testament to ABK's excellent operational performance and efficiency in financial transfers. ABK has successfully attained an impressive USD Clearing MT103 STP rate of 98.02%, positioning itself among the select few banks in the Middle East to achieve such exemplary results in the evaluation conducted by J.P. Morgan.

Therefore, ABK's achievement of processing 98.02% of the Bank's payments in 2022 as STP, without human intervention, underscores ABK's continuous pursuit of service and operational enhancement.

Originally introduced in 1997, J.P. Morgan's MT103 award category specifically focuses on debit transactions exceeding a minimum value of USD 10,000. The esteemed quality recognition accolade is conferred upon banks that display an exceptional rate ranging from 90 to 98.9%. It serves as a tribute to the institutions conducting USD clearing transactions, recognizing their outstanding operational excellence and commendable accomplishments in achieving optimal STP through robust measurement mechanisms associated with SWIFT transactions.

On this occasion, Mohammad Al Bloushi, General Manager of Opera-



ABK Receives Award From J.P. Morgan

tions at ABK, said, "ABK is proud to receive an award that reflects our excellence in customer service and affirms our constant pursuit to exceed expectations."

On her part, Nadia Qambar, Vice President, Financial Institution Group, J.P. Morgan, commented, "It is our pleasure to congratulate ABK-Kuwait for this high recognition which underpins its outstanding performance in money transfers sent through the SWIFT system during the year 2022.

We laud the Bank's commitment towards achieving the highest levels of quality in the services offered to their customers, as they have set a high standard within the financial sector in Kuwait."

Al Bloushi highlighted that winning J.P. Morgan's quality recognition award demonstrates the significant trust that ABK receives on a global level. He pointed out, "Achieving one of the highest rates in the region when evaluating clearing customers' trans-

actions in USD reflects the Bank's excellence and leading role in customer service and exemplifies our efforts to upgrade customer experience and provide simple and seamless transactions."

Al Bloushi stated that the Bank's achievement is the result of staff's training, high capabilities and expertise, coupled with regular monitoring of the latest developments in the banking sector on local, regional, and global levels.

Burgan Bank assigns marketing and 'communication' to Kholoud Al-Feeli

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Burgan Bank announced the assignment of the responsibilities for Marketing and Communication to Mrs. Kholoud AbdulRedha Al-Feeli. She will be responsible for conceptualizing, developing, implementing, and communicating the overall marketing and communication strategies and initiatives in line with the Bank's revitalized strategic vision.

This new assignment reflects the Bank's belief in the importance of human capital development as a strategic goal to drive greater business success, achieve competitive advantages, and meet customers' evolving needs. Burgan Bank remains committed to supporting, nurturing, and empowering talented individuals to continue providing an enhanced banking experience.

With over 30 years of experience, Mrs. AlFeeli joined Burgan Bank in 2021 and has since become an essential member of the Bank's team, contributing significantly to communicating the Bank's strategy, its CSR efforts as well as its products and services to a diverse customer base. Prior to joining Burgan, she held senior positions at Kuwait News Agency, EQUATE Petrochemical Company, Zain Kuwait, Turkcapital Holding, and Kuwait



Kholoud Al Feeli

International Bank. She is currently a board member of Gulfsat Communications, which is a member of the KIPCO Group.

Mrs. AlFeeli holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Kuwait University. She served as a board member of the International Public Relations Association (IPRA), representing West Asia and the Arab CSR Society based in the Kingdom of Bahrain. She has also attended The Reuter Foundation Program and received the 'Dame Violet Dickson' award from the British Council as a Chevening Scholar.

'CCDH research publications seem intended to harm Twitter's business'

Musk threatens to sue experts who documented rise in hateful tweets

WASHINGTON, Aug. 2, (AP): X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter, has threatened to sue a group of independent researchers whose research documented an increase in hate speech on the site since it was purchased last year by Elon Musk.

An attorney representing the social media site wrote to the Center for Countering Digital Hate on July 20 threatening legal action over the nonprofit's research into hate speech and content moderation. The letter alleged that CCDH's research publications seem intended "to harm Twitter's business by driving advertisers away from the platform with incendiary claims."

Musk is a self-professed free speech absolutist who has welcomed back

white supremacists and election deniers to the platform, which he renamed X earlier this month. But the billionaire has at times proven sensitive about critical speech directed at him or his companies.

The center is a nonprofit with offices in the US and United Kingdom. It regularly publishes reports on hate speech, extremism or harmful behavior on social media platforms like X, TikTok or Facebook.

The organization has published several reports critical of Musk's leadership, detailing an increase in anti-LGBTQ hate speech as well as climate misinformation since his purchase. The letter from X's attorney cited one specific report from June that found

the platform failed to remove neo-Nazi and anti-LGBTQ content from verified users that violated the platform's rules.

In the letter, attorney Alex Spiro questioned the expertise of the researchers and accused the center of trying to harm X's reputation. The letter also suggested, without evidence, that the center received funds from some of X's competitors, even though the center has also published critical reports about TikTok, Facebook and other large platforms.

Claims

"CCDH intends to harm Twitter's business by driving advertisers away from the platform with incendiary claims," Spiro wrote, using the plat-

form's former name.

Imran Ahmed, the center's founder and CEO, told the AP on Monday that his group has never received a similar response from any tech company, despite a history of studying the relationship between social media, hate speech and extremism. He said that typically, the targets of the center's criticism have responded by defending their work or promising to address any problems that have been identified.

Ahmed said he worried X's response to the center's work could have a chilling effect if it frightens other researchers away from studying the platform. He said he also worried that other industries could take note of the strategy.

"This is an unprecedented escalation

by a social media company against independent researchers. Musk has just declared open war," Ahmed told the Associated Press. "If Musk succeeds in silencing us other researchers will be next in line."

Messages left with Spiro and X were not immediately returned Monday.

It's not the first time that Musk has fired back at critics. Last year, he suspended the accounts of several journalists who covered his takeover of Twitter. Another user was suspended for using publicly available flight data to track Musk's private plane; Musk had initially pledged to keep the user on the platform but later changed his mind, citing his personal safety. He also threatened to sue the user before

allowing him back on the platform under certain restrictions.

He initially had promised that he would allow any speech on his platform that wasn't illegal. "I hope that even my worst critics remain on Twitter, because that is what free speech means," Musk wrote in a tweet last year.

X's recent threat of a lawsuit prompted concern from US Rep Adam Schiff, D-Calif., who said the billionaire was trying to use the threat of legal action to punish a nonprofit group trying to hold a powerful social media platform accountable.

"Instead of attacking them, he should be attacking the increasingly disturbing content on Twitter," Schiff said in a statement.

ME champions healthy buildings

Middle East 'leads' 24-fold increase in WELL adoption

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates, Aug. 2: The Middle East region is leading the charge in driving growth and adoption of the WELL Building Standard (WELL) globally with a 24-fold increase in WELL adoption over the last 19 months, a feat announced by the International WELL Building Institute (IWBI), the global authority for driving market transformation toward healthy buildings, organizations and communities, and the leading force behind the WELL movement.

WELL, the world's leading roadmap for creating and certifying spaces that advance health and well-being, has been adopted throughout the Middle East by projects in sectors ranging from regional public sector, educational and governmental entities to real estate developers, financial institutions and management companies. To date, more than 500 million square feet of real estate are enrolled in WELL programs across 16 countries, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Afghanistan, Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey and Yemen – representing a doubling in the number of countries represented.

"Ever since the WELL Standard first took hold in the Middle East, we have seen incredible increases in demand year-over-year for WELL's evidence-based strategies that support the physical and mental health of organizations' most valuable asset – people," said IWBI Founder Paul Scialla. "The commitments made by companies and public sector organizations across the region to prioritize the health, safety and well-being of their people is an inspiration to us all and demonstrates outstanding leadership, while proving that investments in health strategies can spark enhanced performance and increased financial returns."

Resilience

Recent uptake in the Middle East has contributed to overall WELL adoption, which now stands at more than 42,000 projects encompassing nearly 4.8 billion square feet of real estate in 127 countries. In particular, the WELL Health-Safety Rating, a framework for driving resilience into the center of business policies and operational plans through facility operations and management, has sparked considerable demand across the region that is being led by the UAE.

In a public sector-leading push, the UAE Prime Minister's Office has achieved the WELL Health-Safety Rating for its Dubai office. This fol-

lows the office's achievement of WELL Certification at the Platinum level, the first in the region to be certified through IWBI's WELL v2 pilot and the first WELL Certified government ministry office in the world. Dubai Police enrolled five buildings including its headquarters to pursue WELL Certification, and achieved the WELL Health-Safety Rating for these buildings. Its jails are also enrolled in the rating. Expo City Dubai, an IWBI member and host of COP28, is the region's first community enrolled to pursue certification through the WELL Community Standard pilot, a district scale program that sets a benchmark for healthy communities. Expo City Dubai has also enrolled 23 buildings in the WELL Health-Safety Rating. The Dubai Land Department (DLD)'s Real Estate Regulatory Agency (RERA) also officially adopted the WELL Health-Safety Rating and continues to encourage organizations to align with the program in jointly owned properties (JOs) and enhance investor confidence. DLD achieved the rating for its building to strengthen the health and safety of all employees, staff and guests.

Implement

His Excellency Sultan Butti bin Mejjren, Director General of DLD, said of the achievement: "DLD is constantly looking to implement and keep abreast of the latest global developments on the real estate and environmental levels, based on its vision to position Dubai as the world's premier real estate destination and a byword for innovation, trust and happiness. Obtaining the WELL Health-Safety Rating enhances the advancement of our objectives and plans, helping us contribute to achieving a leadership approach in prioritizing the health and safety of humans and buildings as well as to paving the way for jointly owned property management companies to follow our example in obtaining this important classification."

Private sector organizations are also leading the way in the region:

■ Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) achieved the WELL Health-Safety Rating for eight buildings, including its headquarters which stands at 1,915,975 square feet.

■ In 2023, Nakheel enrolled all 10 of their own offices in the rating. In late 2022, Nakheel Community Management was awarded the WELL Health-Safety Rating for 365 buildings, making it the first management company in the UAE to achieve the rating across its portfolio.

HYAS unveils EyeSpy

New type of polymorphic fully autonomous malware uses AI

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, Aug. 2: HYAS Infosec, whose adversary infrastructure platform provides unparalleled visibility, protection and security against all kinds of malware and attacks, has announced its EyeSpy proof-of-concept (PoC), an entirely new type of polymorphic, fully autonomous malware. The malware uses artificial intelligence to make informed decisions and synthesize its capabilities as needed to conduct cyberattacks and continuously morph to avoid detection.

The development of EyeSpy is part of HYAS Infosec's ongoing research and will ensure that the company's protection platform extends to the future of malware as well. As part of its continuing research, HYAS pioneered AI-synthesized, polymorphic malware with its recent BlackMamba PoC.

HYAS CEO David Ratner said: "We spend a lot of time modeling and theorizing what sort of attacks might hit us, and in response, what sort of defenses we need to build against them, because it's imperative that our defensive technologies evolve to keep up with how AI will affect security."

Using the current early versions of generative AI, EyeSpy is capable of:

- Selecting its intended victim independently or through a threat actor's specification
- Assessing the target environment, platform, applications and environmental footprint
- Identifying optimal vectors to extract information
- Writing malware on the fly – for example, if a target is on a specific video conference app, it will compose, test & validate the malware for that app
- Executing the attack
- Analyzing the QA result
- Self-repair and continued attack iteration until it has achieved the at-

tacker's goals

Ratner said: "What if threat actors used AI tools to create malware that could reason and act on its own, while continuously refining its code in response to its targeted environment and evading detection? We could assume threat actors were likely already doing this. To sustain and advance our adversarial detection, we had to move, and quickly."

EyeSpy catapults HYAS even further into a future where such intelligent, autonomous entities will be part of the cyber warfare landscape. EyeSpy represents a significant milestone in the potential evolution of adversary capabilities. Observers note that EyeSpy malware isn't merely a program – it is an adaptive entity with evolving strategies, making its class of malware an ever-present, dynamic threat that evades detection.

"As experts in adversary threat infrastructure, we recognize that the next generation of attack infrastructure is going to be fully AI-synthesized, polymorphic attack frameworks," explains David Mitchell, Chief Technology Officer, HYAS. "At this moment EyeSpy can enable cybersecurity professionals to train the way they'll have to fight and to engineer security stack solutions that can defend against and mitigate even the worst emerging threats – before their destructive power can be brought to bear."

Those two goals have driven our development of this technology so we can begin to defend against it."

"Analysts have speculated that smart malware is on the horizon. Well, the future is now. The nightmare scenario where malware can autonomously respond to its environment is reality," stated cybersecurity researcher Charles Kolody, Principal at Security Mindsets, formerly a senior expert with IDC and the NSA.

UAE, Aug. 2: Al Habtoor Group, a leading conglomerate in the United Arab Emirates, has raised the benchmark for luxury and comfort through a diverse array of world-class amenities and services to be offered at recently launched, state-of-the-art Al Habtoor Tower. The tower is a prime luxury project owing to its location in one of the most popular spots in Dubai and offers incredible views, including the remarkable Dubai skyline.

The luxury housing market of Dubai is poised for a robust expansion this year, with Knight Frank's 2023 Prime Prediction's report stating that the sector will register a significant growth rate of 13.5 per cent, which is the highest globally. The Emirate's premium real estate market is anticipated to expand significantly owing to the limited supply of new and high-end homes.

Al Habtoor Group aims to significantly contribute to this surge and diversify the Emirate's property portfolio through its Al Habtoor Tower, an ambitious addition to Dubai's incredible skyline. Fabricated with meticulous attention to detail and precision, this 82-storey tower, located in the upmarket neighbourhood of the city, will masterfully blend sophistication, luxury, convenience, and privacy, while also transforming perceptions of quality and excellence.

Amenities

The tower, through its unique and world-class amenities spread across three levels, is set to offer unparalleled hospitality to its residents. Scheduled to be completed within three years, this tower will further offer 360° views of the breathtaking Dubai skyline, including the iconic Burj Khalifa, Dubai Canal, Meydan and the Arabian Gulf waters.

Mohammed Al Habtoor, CEO and Vice Chairman, Al Habtoor Group stated: "Al Habtoor Tower project is one of our most ambitious projects that is set to redefine the concept of urban living. By launching this iconic tower, we expect to meet the rising demand for luxury residences in Dubai. The tower is a testament to our unwavering dedication to surpass all levels of customer expectations by creating and providing extraordinary homes and experiences. It also reflects our commitment to setting new benchmarks for opulent living as well as in quality standards, by delivering unmatched services and first-rate amenities."

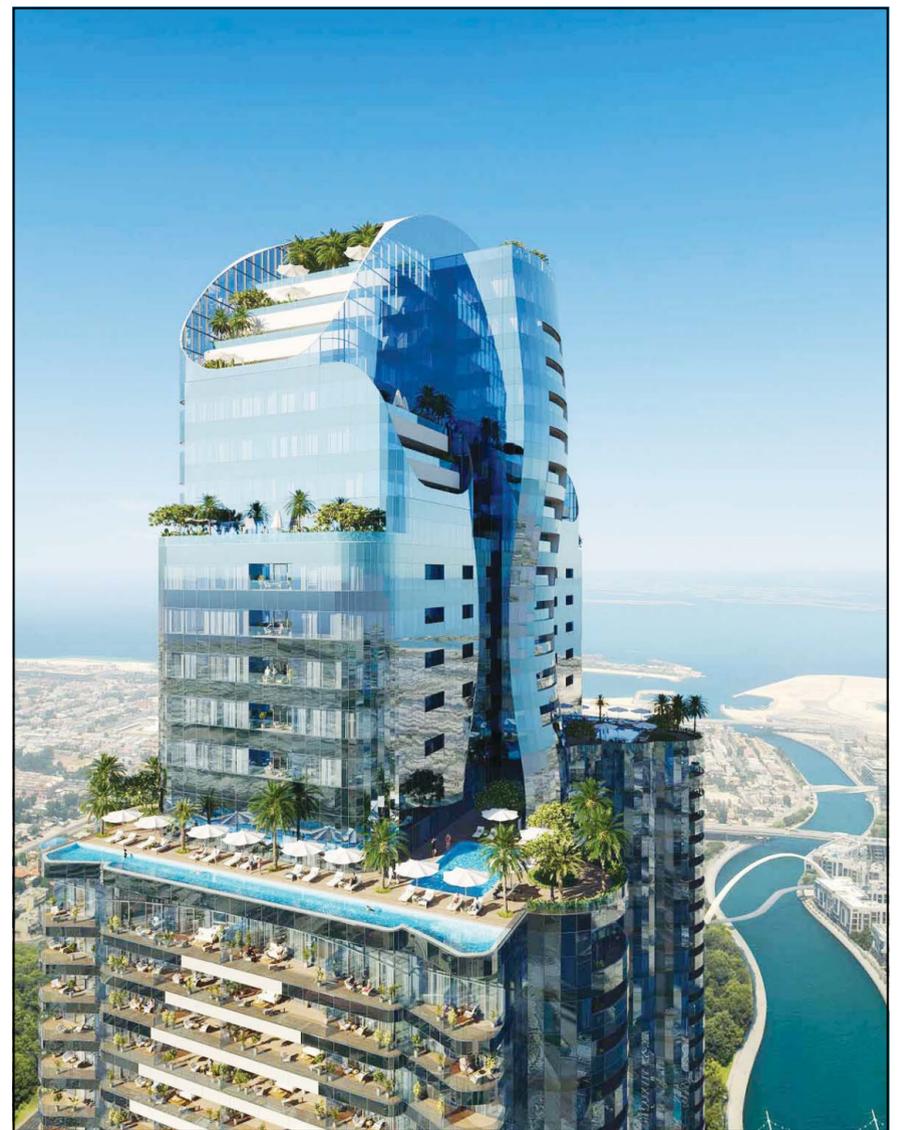
Furthermore, according to the Knight Frank's Destination Dubai 2023 report, Dubai marked a significant milestone in 2023 by achieving the top spot in the global market for luxury real estate. The city surpassed London, New York, and Paris for the first time in the first half of this year by generating around USD 850 million (AED 3.1 billion) from high-end residential units that are valued at more than USD 10 million. By launching Al Habtoor Tower, the Group aims to raise bars in real estate development and thereby make a significant contribution to this growth.

Among the numerous remarkable amenities provided within the tower will include infinity pools with 270-degree views of the Dubai skyline, indoor and outdoor relaxation areas, multiple gym and fitness facilities, paddle tennis courts, opulent spa and sauna facilities, licensed resident cafes and restaurants, library, quiet spaces, networking rooms, etc.

The tower will be situated at one of the most coveted locales of Dubai, the Al Habtoor City, which provides residents easy access to world-class shopping, dining, entertainment, and other iconic landmarks. The building is also expected to become one of the most innovative sustainable landmark buildings. Al Habtoor City is a remarkable multi-use development that offers the best investment opportunity in the area for international buyers.

Ambitious addition to Dubai's incredible skyline

Futuristic Al Habtoor Tower sets new luxury benchmark



The state-of-the-art Al Habtoor Tower in Dubai

'Dedicated cloud solution'

Fortanix, SITE to deliver data security platform to the Saudi Arabian market

SANTA CLARA, Calif., Aug. 2: Fortanix® Inc., the multi-cloud data security company and the pioneer of Confidential Computing, and the Saudi Information Technology Company (SITE), a PIF-owned, prominent cybersecurity and cloud provider and systems integrator, announced a new partnership that will bring Fortanix's revolutionary data security platform to the Saudi Arabia and Middle East market. Based on its flagship Data Security Manager (DSM) offering, Fortanix's Confidential Computing-run technology will be available exclusively as a managed SaaS offering powered by SITE, with a new data sovereignty dedicated region based in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to serve MENA clients.

Fortanix and SITE together plan to roll out a variety of data security solutions including multicloud key management, tokenization and data masking, secrets management, HSM-as-a-service etc. For enterprise and government customers that deal with sensitive data, data sovereignty issues and are subject to regulatory compliance. One of the first services to be rolled out would be with the Google Cloud External Key Manager (EKM).

"SITE is excited to partner exclusively with Fortanix to deliver world-class solutions to our clients in the region. We have had the 'secure-by-design' principle deeply embedded in all our offerings since

SITE's inception, and with Fortanix's leading-edge data security solutions, we will establish a dedicated cloud solution with even more outstanding value," said Majed Alalmri, chief business solutions officer at SITE. "We believe this solution will be compelling to our clients and help further accelerate our growth in the region."

Record

"We could not have asked for a better strategic partner than SITE to serve the customers in the Saudi Arabian and Middle East market," said Faiyaz Shahpurwala, chief product, and strategy officer at Fortanix. "We have established a strong track record with some of the world's largest enterprises and government customers with our industry-leading SaaS offering and our Data Security Manager platform. We are honored to do the same with services tailored to this highly strategic region, while fully complying with data sovereignty and security requirements."

Specifically, the localized Fortanix's DSM SaaS benefits include:

- Comprehensive data security: End-to-end data security, including cloud-friendly encryption, key management, and tokenization from a single integrated platform.
- Converged security management: A web-based user interface with enterprise-level access controls and single sign-on (SSO) support.

■ Unmatched security standards: Fortanix DSM SaaS is the first multi-cloud data security service certified to the rigorous FIPS 140-2 Level 3 security standard.

■ Locally powered Confidential Computing. The SITE Cloud-localized platform runs on Confidential Computing hardware, which provides the customers with the highest level of security.

Fortanix secures data, wherever it is. Fortanix' data-first approach helps businesses of all sizes to modernize their security solutions on-premises, in the cloud and everywhere in between. Enterprises worldwide, especially in privacy-sensitive industries like healthcare, fintech, financial services, government, and retail, trust Fortanix for data security, privacy and compliance. Fortanix investors include Goldman Sachs, Foundation Capital, Intel Capital, In-Q-Tel, Neotribe Ventures and GiantLeap Capital. Fortanix is headquartered in Santa Clara, CA.

Saudi Information Technology Company (SITE) is a national company established in 2017 and wholly owned by the Public Investment Fund (PIF). SITE contributes through its national capabilities and international partnerships to the development of secure-by-design, innovative products, services and solutions in cybersecurity, cloud computing, enterprise optimization, and human capital development.

The Amazon logo is displayed in Santa Monica, Calif. on Sept 6, 2012. Amazon is adding video telemedicine visits in all 50 states to a virtual clinic it launched last fall, as the retail giant takes a deeper step into care delivery.



Amazon adds video telemedicine visits in all 50 US states

Amazon is adding video telemedicine visits in all 50 states to a virtual clinic it launched last fall, as the e-commerce giant pushes deeper into care delivery. Amazon said Tuesday that customers can visit its virtual clinic around the clock through Amazon's website or app. There, they can compare prices and response times before picking a telemedicine provider from several options. The clinic, which doesn't accept insurance, launched last fall with a focus on text message-based consultations.

Those remain available in 34 states. Virtual care, or telemedicine, exploded in popularity when COVID-19 hit a few years ago. It has remained popular as a convenient way to check in with a doctor or deal with relatively minor health issues like pink eye. Amazon says its clinic offers care for more than 30 common health conditions. Those include sinus infections, acne, COVID-19 and acid reflux. The clinic also offers treatments for motion sickness, seasonal allergies and several sexual health

conditions, including erectile dysfunction. It also provides birth control and emergency contraception. Chief Medical Officer Dr. Nworah Ayogu said in a blog post that the clinic aims to remove barriers to help people treat "everyday health concerns." "As a doctor, I've seen firsthand that patients want to be healthy but lack the time, tools, or resources to effectively manage their care," Ayogu wrote. Amazon said messaging-based consultations cost \$35 on average while video visits cost \$75. (AP)

Mirum's prescription medicine authorized in Canada

Livmarli treats cholestatic pruritus in patients with ALGS

FOSTER CITY, Calif., Aug 2: Mirum Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (Nasdaq: MIRM) has announced that Livmarli (maralixibat oral solution) has been authorized by Health Canada for the treatment of cholestatic pruritus in patients with Alagille syndrome (ALGS). ALGS is a rare genetic disorder caused by abnormalities in bile ducts that can lead to progressive liver disease. Malformed or reduced bile ducts cause cholestasis, the accumulation of bile acids in the liver, which leads to inflammation and liver injury, and prevents the liver from working properly. Cholestasis in ALGS is associated with pruritus which is among the most common indications for liver transplant in ALGS.

in patients with ALGS three months and older and in Europe in the same indication, two months of age and older. Mirum has submitted a supplemental new drug application to the FDA for approval of Livmarli (maralixibat) in cholestatic pruritus associated with progressive familial intrahepatic cholestasis (PFIC) in patients three months and older, and to the EMA for the treatment of PFIC in patients two months of age and older. Both submissions are currently under regulatory review. Regulatory submissions outside of the US, Canada and Europe are being pursued by partners and distributors in key markets globally.

"The approval in Canada furthers our commitment to ensuring patients globally have a meaningful and effective treatment option for the unrelenting burden of cholestatic pruritus impacting patients and their families living with ALGS," said Chris Peetz, president and chief executive officer at Mirum. "We are grateful to the patients, families, clinicians and ALGS community who made this approval possible."

Livmarli (maralixibat) oral solution is an orally administered, once-daily, ileal bile acid transporter (IBAT) inhibitor and the only approved medication by the US Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of cholestatic pruritus in patients with Alagille syndrome (ALGS) three months of age and older.

"There have been meaningful advances in the treatment of Alagille syndrome with the approval of Livmarli and I am pleased that it is now available in Canada where I have seen, firsthand, the critical need for an approved therapy to address the itch caused by cholestasis. The years of data collected have shown that Livmarli can provide tremendous benefit, potentially giving many patients the opportunity to live transplant-free," said Dr. Binita Kamath, Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids), Toronto, Canada. "The statistical robustness of results seen in the Livmarli studies give confidence that this treatment has the potential to have meaningful outcomes for patients with debilitating pruritus."

Livmarli (maralixibat) is also the only approved IBAT inhibitor approved by the European Commission for the treatment of cholestatic pruritus in patients with ALGS two months and older, and by Health Canada for the treatment of cholestatic pruritus in ALGS.

"We are thrilled that patients in Canada will now have access to Livmarli as we have seen the powerful impact it can have on people living with life-altering pruritus," said Roberta Smith, president of the Alagille Syndrome Alliance. "I know from my own experience how painful it is to watch your child suffer and how disruptive this disease can be for the whole family. It is wonderful to know that patients in Canada can have a chance at a life less burdened by cholestatic pruritus."

Mirum has also submitted Livmarli for approval in the US in cholestatic pruritus in PFIC patients three months of age and older, and in Europe, in PFIC for patients two months of age and older.

The Health Canada authorization is based on data from the pivotal ICONIC study including six years of data across the Livmarli clinical program resulting in a robust body of evidence in patients with cholestatic pruritus in ALGS. Data from ICONIC demonstrated statistically significant and clinically meaningful reductions in pruritus compared to placebo, as well as significant reductions in serum bile acids, both of which were durably maintained over several years of treatment.

Livmarli (maralixibat) is currently being evaluated in late-stage clinical studies in other rare cholestatic liver diseases including biliary atresia. Livmarli has received Breakthrough Therapy designation for ALGS and PFIC type 2 and orphan designation for ALGS, PFIC and biliary atresia.

Results from these studies showing robust and meaningful improvements for patients with cholestatic pruritus associated with ALGS were featured in several publications, including The Lancet and Hepatology.

Livmarli (maralixibat) can cause side effects, including: Changes in liver tests. Changes in certain liver tests are common in patients with Alagille syndrome and can worsen during treatment with Livmarli. These changes may be a sign of liver injury and can be serious. Your healthcare provider should do blood tests before starting and during treatment to check your liver function. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get any signs or symptoms of liver problems, including nausea or vomiting, skin or the white part of the eye turns yellow, dark or brown urine, pain on the right side of the stomach (abdomen) or loss of appetite.

In addition to authorization, Livmarli is approved in the United States for the treatment of cholestatic pruritus

Stomach and intestinal (gastrointestinal) problems. Livmarli can cause stomach and intestinal problems, including diarrhea, stomach pain, and vomiting during treatment. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any of these symptoms more often or more severely than normal for you.

A condition called Fat Soluble Vitamin (FSV) Deficiency caused by low levels of certain vitamins (vitamin A, D, E, and K) stored in body fat. FSV deficiency is common in patients with Alagille syndrome but may worsen during treatment. Your healthcare provider should do blood tests before starting and during treatment. (AP)

BOSTON, Aug 2: Etiometry, the leader in clinical decision-support software, has announced its IVC02 Index™ was cleared by the Food and Drug Administration for use with neonatal ICU patients under 2kg, who are especially vulnerable to the effects of hypercapnia. This is Etiometry's 9th FDA clearance and its second this year.

Etiometry's IVC02 Index™ is a game changer in critical care, seamlessly integrating multiple data sources to provide an individualized assessment for ventilation-perfusion mismatch and detect the likelihood a patient will have a PaCO2 of greater than 50 mmHg in mechanically ventilated patients. It has been specifically designed to overcome the challenges of existing conventional monitoring, such as arterial blood gas testing and transcutaneous monitoring for tiny premature newborns.

Increases

"The IVC02 Index™ is a first-of-its-kind algorithm that increases the ability to detect hypercapnia risk without needing additional hardware attached to these fragile patients," said Dimitar Baronov, CTO of Etiometry. "It allows clinicians to prioritize care for patients who need it most."

Many NICU patients require ventilatory support and their conditions can change quickly. Vigilant monitoring for hypercapnia is critical for maximizing neurodevelopmental outcomes and preventing complications. Digital monitoring illuminates the patient's condition between routine blood gas testing, adding another layer of protection to prevent oversights that may lead to poor outcomes.

"Our proprietary algorithm's ac-

AI-based algorithm use for neonates

Etiometry's IVC02 Index alerts risk of hypercapnia in critical care patients

Bid to cut burden of devastating HIE

ReAlta Life doses first patient in drug trial for birth asphyxia

NORFOLK, Va., Aug 2: ReAlta Life Sciences ("ReAlta"), Inc., a clinical mid-stage biotech company dedicated to addressing life-threatening rare diseases by harnessing the power of the immune system, has announced dosing of the first patient in a Phase 2 clinical trial evaluating the safety and efficacy of RLS-0071 for the treatment of hypoxic ischemic encephalopathy (HIE) in newborns. RLS-0071, an investigational new drug, is the Company's lead dual action complement inhibitor and innate anti-inflammatory peptide in development for the treatment of HIE, acute GVHD and acute COPD.

therapy to reduce the burden of this devastating neurological disease on patients and their families."

Ulrich Thienel, MD, Ph.D., ReAlta Chief Executive Officer said, "This is a special day for ReAlta and the patients we hope to serve, as we announce the dosing of the first patient in the first human efficacy trial in our company's history. HIE is a disease with incredible unmet need, profoundly affecting the lives of thousands of children born each year in the U.S. and many more across the world. I am proud of the work of our team and thankful for the support from clinicians and colleagues in the patient community who have enabled this important milestone."

Efficacy

The Phase 2 clinical trial is a two-stage, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, multiple-ascending dose study to evaluate the safety, tolerability, pharmacokinetics, and preliminary efficacy of RLS-0071 in newborns with moderate or severe hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy undergoing

therapeutic hypothermia with long-term follow up (STAR). In Stage 1, approximately 40 participants will receive either ascending doses of RLS-0071 or placebo in addition to standard of care treatment, including hypothermia for 72 hours. After completion of Stage 1, participants will transition to Stage 2 of the study for long-term observation out to 24 months of age.

The primary endpoint of the study is safety. Key secondary endpoints include measures of mortality, seizure burden, and neurocognitive development.

HIE, also known as birth asphyxia, is a rare disease that affects newborns suffering an abrupt, unexpected loss of oxygenation due to placental rupture, umbilical cord problems, or other factors. The initial loss of oxygen and the dysregulated inflammatory process that follows causes damage to the brain and other organs. This acute disease often results in death or moderate-to-severe cognitive and physical disability, with life-long impacts on both the newborn and the newborn's family. (AP)

curate and continuous monitoring for hypercapnia will enable the expansion of improved outcomes achieved by Etiometry partners within cardiac

ICUs and PICUs into the NICU environment," said Shane Cooke, CEO of Etiometry.

Etiometry will showcase all of its risk indices and ways the platform helps improve outcomes by informing escalation and de-escalation decision-making at the upcoming World Congress of Pediatric Cardiology and Cardiac Surgery in Washington, D.C. later this month. Etiometry also supported the submission of five abstracts for this event.

Founded in 2010, Etiometry is the leader in clinical decision-support software designed to help clinicians in the intensive care setting make data-based decisions regarding their patients' care and treatment. The company's technologies provide valuable clinical insight and analysis to support early recognition of subtle changes in patients' conditions to avoid complications and speed recovery. Etiometry has nine FDA clearances and four Health Canada approvals and CE markings. With roots in pediatric ICUs, Etiometry is utilized by some of the world's top academic medical centers as well as leading children's hospitals ranked

Also:

REGENSBURG, Germany: The US Food and Drug Administration has cleared a Numares Health test, the AXINON® LDL-p Test System, as a new tool physicians can use to measure lipoproteins for patients at risk for cardiovascular disease. Currently, Numares is the only company in the US selling an FDA-cleared NMR test.

The FDA clearance also includes the company's core technology platform, the proprietary AXINON® System, that incorporates diagnostic testing algorithms into nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectroscopy. Numares uses this technology to develop diagnostic tests for chronic heart, kidney and liver diseases. This FDA clearance of the AXINON® technology provides a pathway for more rapid FDA clearance of other tests currently in development. (AP)

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Striking writers, studios will meet this week to discuss negotiations

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 2, (AP) — Union leaders told striking Hollywood writers Tuesday night that they plan to meet with representatives for studios to discuss restarting negotiations after the first official communication between the two sides since the strike began three months ago.

The Writers Guild of America sent an email to members saying that the head of the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, which represents major studios, streaming services and production companies in negotiations, requested a meeting on Friday to discuss the resumption of contract talks.

"We'll be back in communication with you sometime after the meeting with further information," the email read. "As we've said before, be wary of rumors. Whenever there is important news to share, you will hear it directly from us."

It was not immediately known whether a similar overture was made to union leaders for Hollywood actors, who have been on strike since July 14.

Asked about the prospect of talks with either guild, a spokesperson for the AMPTP in an email said only that "We remain committed to finding a path to mutually beneficial deals with both Unions."

An email to a representative from the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, which represents striking film and television actors, was not immediately returned.

Talks between screenwriters and their employers collapsed on May 1, and the first of the two strikes that have frozen production in Hol-

lywood began a day later. Issues behind the strike include pay rates amid inflation, the use of smaller writing staffs for shorter seasons of television shows, and control over artificial intelligence in the screenwriting process.

"I had hoped that we would already have had some kind of conversations with the industry by now," SAG-AFTRA Executive Director Duncan Crabtree-Ireland told The Associated Press earlier Tuesday, before the email was sent to writers. "Obviously, that hasn't happened yet, but I'm optimistic."

Evidence

In another development, a New Mexico judge told attorneys to "stay the course" on charges including involuntary manslaughter against movie armorer Hannah Gutierrez-Reed in the shooting death of a cinematographer by Alec Baldwin, rejecting Tuesday a request from defense counsel to dismiss charges.

The ruling from Judge Mary Marlowe Sommer during online proceedings sets the stage for lengthy evidentiary hearings, starting next week, on manslaughter and evidence-tampering charges. Gutierrez-Reed is the sole remaining defendant in the fatal shooting of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins during the rehearsal on Oct. 21, 2021.

In April, prosecutors dropped charges against Baldwin, who was pointing a gun at Hutchins when it went off, killing her and injuring

director Joel Souza. This left Gutierrez-Reed as the sole remaining defendant in the case. If convicted, she faces up to three years in prison.

An attorney for Gutierrez-Reed argued unsuccessfully Tuesday that the case had been compromised by changes in the prosecution team earlier this year, sloppiness with evidence and public statements by prosecutors that might interfere with the right to an impartial jury.

Sommer rejected the arguments and sided with prosecutors, who urged the court to move forward with a preliminary hearing that will decide whether evidence is sufficient to advance toward trial.

Prosecutors have said charges still could be refiled against Baldwin pending further investigation, including an ongoing independent examination by a firearms expert. The expert is examining the revolver fired in the fatal shooting, and other weapons and ammunition seized from the set.

Authorities have not yet determined how live ammunition found its way into the .45-caliber revolver, which was made by an Italian company that specializes in 19th century reproductions.

Baldwin has said the gun fired accidentally after he followed instructions to point it toward Hutchins, who was behind the camera. He said he pulled back the hammer - but not the trigger - and the gun fired.

In April prosecutors commissioned additional weapons testing to investigate whether the hammer of the gun may have been intentionally modified.

Film

Variety



This image released by Paramount Pictures shows, (from left), Donatello 'Donnie', voiced by Micah Abbey, Leonardo 'Leo', voiced by Nicolas Cantu, Raphael 'Raph', voiced by Brady Noon, and Michelangelo 'Mikey', voiced by Shamon Brown Jr., in a scene from 'Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem.' (AP)

Film

'Mutant Mayhem' probably the best of franchise

TMNT back and better than ever

By Jake Coyle

There are some good gags and clever innovations in the animated "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem," but there is one brilliant idea: casting Ice Cube as the voice of the movie's mutant insect supervillain Super Fly.

It might have once been hard to foresee the value of having the emcee who rapped of "dropping bombs on your moms" as the MVP of a PG-rated kids movie. But we're now up to the seventh "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" film, not counting all the series and video-games. That's a lot of movies for a bit of IP that's clung more firmly to lunch boxes than it has to pop culture. For the turtles, it was getting to be time to either, as Ice Cube would say, "chickity-check yo' self" or try something new.

"Mutant Mayhem," which was to open in theaters Wednesday, can't entirely get over the feeling of treading over well-covered turtle ground. But if we must go once more into the ooze, the film by director Jeff Rowe (co-director of "The Mitchells vs. the Machines") and co-written by co-producers Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg, is probably the best of a not-so-stellar franchise. It's certainly the one most invested with that "teenage" part of the turtles' name. Plus, it's got Ice Cube as a fly who quotes from the O'Jays.

The animation is vividly textured, the beat is persistently hip-hop (Lauryn Hill, De La Soul, Ol' Dirty Bastard and others pack the electronic score by Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross) and the New York of the film is impressively detailed. But the most important twist to this "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" iteration may be diving into the teenage-ness of its 15-year-old turtles.

If "Barbie" was balanced between Greta Gerwig's childhood memories and her adult feminism, "Mutant Mayhem" gives itself over more fully to the mindset of adolescence. That's in the gross-out humor and the comic book-like feel of the animation. But these are also recognizable teenagers who watch movies ("Ferris Bueller's Day Off"), pine for concert tickets and make goofy phone videos of themselves slicing watermelons.

What Donatello (Micah Abbey), Michelangelo (Sha-

mon Brown Jr.), Leonardo (Nicolas Cantu) and Raphael (Brady Noon) really want is to fit in and go to high school like other teens. They have been relegated to the sewer ever since Splinter, a rat voiced by Jackie Chan, happened upon them after they were exposed as hatchlings to the same ooze that spawned Super Fly - who himself was the product of experiments by scientist Baxter Stockman (Giancarlo Esposito, fated to dubious laboratories).

Splinter has much the same opinion of the majority of the rats in "Ratatouille": Humans can't be trusted. (Splinter's particular fear is that they will "milk" him.) So the turtles have grown up underground, a little like the homeschooled family of "The Wolfpack," while yearning for the wider world.

Eradicate

They find a hint of it with a high-school journalist named April O'Neil (Ayo Edebiri), who wants to document, and thus prove to humankind, their decency. At the same, the turtles meet the charismatic Super Fly (voiced with bombastic aplomb by Ice Cube) and his band of mutants. At first, they're fast-friends - "cousins," Super Fly says - but the turtles then start hearing of Super Fly's plans to turn all animals into mutants and eradicate the world of humans.

"Peoples, they got to go," chimes one mutant. Some of the thunder of "Mutant Mayhem" has been stolen by "Into the Spider-Verse" and this year's "Across the Spider-Verse" - films that likewise upend the typical look of studio animation and do it with a pulsing soundtrack; but they did it more eclectically.

Yet this "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles," while a half shell of those films, has its own low-key charms. It's goofier, grosser and mostly fun. The four turtles are never more than a hard-to-differentiate bale of overlapping dialogue of doubt and anxiety. But that first word in their name finally feels genuine. Seven films in, it's only right that Donatello, Michelangelo, Leonardo and Raphael should get a renaissance.

"Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem," a Paramount Pictures release, is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association for sequences of violence and action, language and impolite material. Running time: 99

minutes. Three stars out of four.

Also:

TOKYO: The Japanese distributor of the Warner Bros. movie "Barbie" has apologized for its US parent company's reaction to social media posts about the "Barbenheimer" blitz that combined images of Barbie and an atomic bomb mushroom cloud. The memes triggered criticisms in Japan for what many described as minimizing nuclear attacks.

The movie about the world-famous doll and Universal Pictures' Oppenheimer, a biography of Robert Oppenheimer, who helped develop the weapon, were both released on July 21 in the United States, sparking the Barbenheimer craze for watching both and prompting memes combining the two.

Some of the images, which were not created by Warner Bros., showed Margot Robbie, who played Barbie, sitting on the shoulders of Oppenheimer, played by Cillian Murphy, with an orange inferno of an atomic blast in the background.

The official Barbie account said in response to the combined Barbenheimer meme: "It's going to be a summer to remember."

In Japan, the only country to have suffered atomic attacks, the posts drew criticism for what was perceived as belittling remarks about the nuclear attacks, triggering angry messages and trending on social media with the hashtag #NoBarbenheimer.

"We apologize to those who felt uncomfortable because of these inconsiderable reactions," Warner Bros. Japan said in a statement posted on X, formerly Twitter. One critical posting said many victims who perished under the mushroom clouds were children the same age of those playing with Barbie dolls and that the memes were inconsiderate. Others called them stupid and unforgivable, and urged for a boycott of the movie.

The United States dropped the world's first atomic bomb on Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945, destroying the city and killing 140,000 people. It dropped a second bomb three days later on Nagasaki, killing another 70,000. Japan surrendered on Aug. 15, ending World War II and Japan's nearly half-century of aggression in Asia. (AP)

Features

ARABO TIMES

THURSDAY, AUGUST 3, 2023

LOS ANGELES: California's lieutenant governor and other elected officials on Tuesday urged Taylor Swift to postpone her Los Angeles concerts as a way to stand in solidarity with striking hotel workers.

Lt. Gov. Eleni Kounalakis and dozens of state and local politicians signed an open letter telling Swift that her tour makes the region's hotels money, with some properties "doubling and tripling what they charge because you are coming."

Meanwhile, the letter said, many housekeepers and other hotel workers can't afford to live close to their jobs and some sleep in their cars and risk losing their homes.

"Hotel workers are fighting for their lives. They are fighting for a living wage. They have gone on strike. Now, they are asking for your support," they wrote. "Stand with hotel workers and postpone your concerts."

Starting Thursday, Swift is scheduled to perform six sold-out shows at SoFi Stadium near Los Angeles. Her representatives didn't immediately respond to an email seeking comment on the letter.

Unite Here Local 11, which represents some 30,000 hotel workers, is negotiating for better wages, improved health care benefits, higher pension contributions and less strenuous workloads. Contracts expired last month at more than 60 hotels, including properties owned by major chains such as Marriott and Hilton.

Kounalakis, a Democrat who said she will run for governor in 2026, is the top official in the state to make the plea. She attended Swift's Eras tour in Santa Clara, California, according to Politico.

Others who signed the letter include the mayors of several cities, Assembly Majority Leader Issac Bryan and state senators Dave Min and Maria Elena Durazo. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: Lizzo has been sued by three former dancers who accuse the Grammy winner of sexual harassment and allege the singer and her production company created a hostile work

environment.

The civil lawsuit filed Tuesday in Los Angeles County Superior Court claims Lizzo pressured the dancers to engage with performers at a club in Amsterdam and shamed one of them for her weight gain before firing her.

Plaintiffs Arianna Davis,



Lizzo



Swift

Crystal Williams and Noelle Rodriguez make numerous charges including sexual, religious and racial harassment, disability discrimination, assault and false imprisonment.

The legal complaint seeks unspecified damages and names Melissa Viviane Jefferson, known professionally as Lizzo,

her production company Big Grrrl Big Touring, Inc., and Shirlene Quigley, captain of the performer's dance team.

Representatives for Lizzo didn't immediately respond to emails seeking comment on the lawsuits.

"Finally, the chorus became overwhelming, and a mortified

Ms. Davis acquiesced in an attempt to bring an end to the chants," the complaint states. "Plaintiffs were aghast with how little regard Lizzo showed for the bodily autonomy of her employees and those around her, especially in the presence of many people whom she employed." (AP)

People & Places

Books

Emotional memoir

The Slip uncovers art history in 1950s' NY

'The Slip,' by Prudence Peiffer (HarperCollins)

Group biographies are ambitious undertakings. To weave together divergent narratives, even about the most widely known figures, is a challenging feat; to make it coalesce, the writer has to find the right balance of substance and texture.

"The Slip" charts the overlapping trajectories of six visual artists, several of whom are unknown outside the art world, as they establish themselves in the late 1950s at Coenties Slip, a disused shipyard on the southern tip of Manhattan. Toiling in illegal studios that still carry the commingled smell of whale oil and builder's dust, the scrappy and enterprising subjects managed to carve out functional live-work spaces from "raw warehouses." This use anticipated the repurposing of commercial loft buildings in Soho and Tribeca as artist spaces in the 1970s.

There is a well-worn conceit that New York is more than just a place but a character in and of itself. When deployed, it runs the risk of over-romanticizing the city and flattening it to the point of abstraction. Under Peiffer's deft hand, though, this motif is anchored to a clear purpose: to make vivid how the post-industrial landscape of lower Manhattan became the material, sometimes literally, of the artists' work.

"Place is a tricky protagonist: fickle and, for too many uprooted or dispossessed, not guaranteed," Peiffer writes.

To readers with a casual interest in art, the origin stories of marquee figures like Robert Indiana, known for the "LOVE" series; Ellsworth Kelly, a seminal abstract expressionist painter; and Agnes Martin, a monastic and exacting artist, may appeal. There's more still for those with background in art history, who are already familiar with the practices of pop collagist James Rosenquist, fiber artist Lenore Tawney and hard-edged constructivist Jack Youngerman — renowned artists whose New York stories are still getting uncovered.

"A Pocketful of Happiness" by Richard E. Grant (Simon & Schuster)

The title of Richard E. Grant's memoir, "A Pocketful of Happiness," is both misleading and utterly truthful. On the one hand, the book is full of charming anecdotes which are indicative of the Swaziland-born, British actor's sunny disposition, but, on the other, it charts the grim journey of losing his wife of 35 years to lung cancer in the span of 10 months.

As iconic director Eileen Fisher asks Grant — in one of the book's anecdotes — Why would anyone write their memoir in the day and age of the internet? — he finds a cogent answer in his own. The book is not so much a memoir as it is the anatomy of a love story and partnership. The 10 chapters are each based on a month starting with December 2020 when the couple got the grim news until Joan Washington, dialect coach to the stars extraordinaire, died in September 2021.

The most career-related information is given to his awards campaign experience on "Can You Ever Forgive Me?" a film that earned him an Oscar nomination for best supporting actor in 2019 (he lost to Mahershala Ali), while the most personal is reserved to his unabashed obsession with Barbra Streisand.

The actor's lifelong habit of keeping a journal comes in handy to his retelling, especially for the minutiae of Joan's decline and the emotional turmoil engulfing the couple and their stalwart daughter, Oilly. The kind friends who look after them he names (shoutout to cooking goddess Nigella Lawson, who sent them many a dish, Gabriel Byrne, Rupert Everett and King Charles III who visited Joan's bedside). The ones who seem too uncomfortable to interact with them, he silently curses but keeps anonymous. It's hard to imagine Grant with any negative emotion but his grief and load is palpable throughout.

He doesn't dwell much on his childhood in Africa, but touches lightly on his familial traumas; so lightly, one would be forgiven for not registering it. He also misses on expanding on his lifelong love of scents and the creation of his perfume line. He keeps it lean, meandering between years, his first and breakout role in "Withnail and I," "Spice World," "Girls," "Star Wars" and "Loki."

An endearing read, "A Pocketful of Happiness," gets progressively harder to digest emotionally as the illness marches to its inevitable conclusion. But it's worthwhile all the same.

"The Weaver and the Witch Queen" by Genevieve Gornichec (Ace)

They say your second book is the hardest one to write, but Genevieve Gornichec — leaning on her Norse mythology love yet again as with debut "The Witch's Heart" — performs a magic hat trick with her sophomore novel.

Historical fantasy "The Weaver and the Witch Queen" finds its footing immediately as tween friends Gunnhild and less well-off sisters Oddny and Signy reunite for a special celebration on their Norwegian fjord, only to be horribly separated by a seeress foretelling that one of them will destroy the other two's lives without naming the culprit.

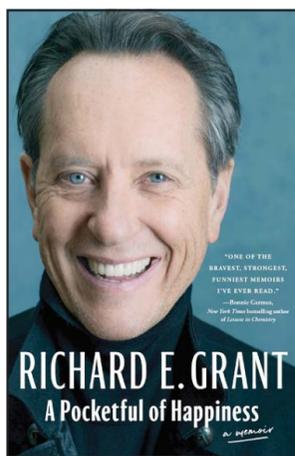
As a result, ambitious Gunnhild runs into the night with the witch in order to get away from her cruel mother and forge her own destiny, while the sisters stay at their father's farm with no prospects, until a decade later a violent raid tears them apart as well.

The now young women's journeys come together once again as cross paths with the charismatic if unwieldy Prince Eirik whose destiny also seems to be entangled in the strange vague prophecy that put the girls on their catastrophic path.

Gornichec is adept at mapping her characters' emotional whereabouts and finding their propulsion points to the next disaster or solution. Their charm is in their flaws and their determination to achieve their goals, which is mostly saving Signy from a life of slavery but also finding their own place in the world in a time when women were largely relegated to the house. (AP)



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Margot Robbie in a scene from 'Barbie.' (AP)



This cover image released by Simon & Schuster shows 'A Pocketful of Happiness' by Richard E. Grant. (AP)

Variety

LONDON: Author Sebastian Barry, who has received four previous nominations for the Booker Prize and twice been shortlisted for it, was one of four Irish writers Tuesday to make the long list of semifinalists for the prestigious award.

Barry is up this year for his novel "Old God's Time," about a retired police detective who gets dragged back into a cold case investigation of a murdered priest suspected of sexually abusing children.

Twelve other writers, including four debut novelists and two prior Booker nominees, are up for the 50,000 pound (\$64,000) prize. The authors are from seven different countries on four continents.

"All 13 novels cast new light on what it means to exist in our time, and they do so in original and thrilling ways," said Esi Edugyan, chair of the judges. "Their range is vast, both in subject and form: they shocked us, made us laugh, filled us with anguish, but above all they stayed with us."

The award recognizes the best in long fiction published in the U.K. and Ireland between Oct. 1, 2022 and Sept. 30, 2023. The nominees were chosen from 163 books submitted by publishers.

The winner is set to be announced Nov. 26 after the list is pared down to six finalists next month.

Malaysian writer Tan Twan Eng received his third nomination, this time for "The House of Doors," a book of historical fiction drawn from the life of Somerset Maugham.

Paul Murray, another Irish writer, was nominated for "The Bee Sting," a tragicomic family saga. It is his second nomination.

Viktoria Lloyd-Barlow's debut novel, "All The Little Bird-Hearts," is about a rule-bound mother whose carefully ordered life is upended when a charming couple moves next door with darker designs on her 16-year-old daughter. Like her protagonist, Lloyd-Barlow is autistic.

Shehan Karunatilaka, one of Sri Lanka's most prestigious writers, won the 2022 Booker Prize for "The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida," a satirical "afterlife noir" set during Sri Lanka's brutal civil war. (AP)

NEW YORK: The entertainment publication Variety, under fire this week for an article it published about former CNN chief Jeff Zucker's interest in his old employer, revised the piece on Friday to reflect some of the complaints about it.

None of its changes affected what was written about Zucker, however. He has called for the story to be retracted.

The article by Tatiana Siegel, which initially ran online Tuesday, depicted Zucker as badmouthing his successor at CNN, Chris Licht, while simultaneously trying to buy the news organization that fired him in early 2021. Licht's unsuccessful run atop the struggling news network ended with his firing in May.

The dispute also points to the dangers inherent in the use of confidential sources by journalists. There are at least a dozen claims made in the story that Variety did

The Conversation

A celebration — and critique — of femininity

'Barbie' at its core about motherhood

By Aviva Dove-Viebahn
Arizona State University

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

Editor's note: This article contains plot spoilers for "Barbie."

The wildly popular "Barbie" movie has been touted for its celebration — and critique — of femininity.

As a mother and a media scholar, I couldn't help but see "Barbie" through an even narrower lens: as a film that, at its core, is about mothers and daughters.

The film's plot centers on a life-size doll, known as "Stereotypical Barbie," played by Margot Robbie, who begins to malfunction: Her feet go flat, and she can't stop thinking about death. So she leaves her perfect plastic life to embark on a quest to restore the boundary between the real world and Barbieland. Along the way, she learns that the real world is nothing like her girl-power wonderland, where Barbies hold all the positions of power and influence and Kens are just accessories.

But its thematic heart rests in the film's examination of the tensions around being a mother — a role often taken for granted, even as the cultural fantasies of motherhood clash with the actual sacrifices that moms make.

I was immediately struck by the movie's funny but chilling observations about motherhood.

"Since the beginning of time," unseen narrator Helen Mirren intones sardonically in the film's first line, "since the first little girl ever existed, there have been dolls." (Cinephiles will immediately recognize this scene and its setting as an homage to Stanley Kubrick's famous "dawn of man" opening from "2001: A Space Odyssey.")

Primitive

Girls appear on screen, wearing drab, antiquated dresses and playing "house" with their dolls in a primitive setting, expressionless and practically drooping with boredom. The problem with these dolls is that girls "could only ever play at being mothers, which can be fun" — Mirren pauses meaningfully — "for a while."

Then, she adds, her tone turning cynical, "Ask your mother."

The appeal of motherhood, Mirren seems to suggest, eventually morphs into unwanted drudgery — a reality underscored moments later when the girls meet their first Barbie, who towers above them, larger than life, inspiring them to smash their mundane baby dolls.

Barbie — a doll of a young, beautiful woman — compels kids to leave the ennui of motherhood behind for the pink plastic sparkle of Barbieland, where all the Barbies live their best lives forever, embodying feminine

perfect and possibility.

The framing of motherhood as thankless and undesirable echoes mid-20th-century feminist critiques of child rearing and housework. These roles not only bound women to the home but also forced them to perform repetitive tasks that didn't reflect their abilities and derailed their ambitions.

In her 1949 book "The Second Sex," French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir argued that women, to empower themselves, needed to reject the myth that motherhood represented the pinnacle of feminine achievement. American writer Betty Friedan would echo this sentiment in her 1963 book "The Feminine Mystique," railing against the image of the "happy housewife heroine" who finds fulfillment in being a wife and mother.

It's no coincidence that these ideas overlapped with the invention of Barbie in 1959. While predating the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s, Barbie's creator, Ruth Handler, did design the toy to allow girls to imagine their future adult selves, rather than simply play-acting as mothers using baby dolls.

Resources

And yet, not only do many women enjoy being mothers, but motherhood also plays an essential role in society and life.

In her 1976 book "Of Woman Born," feminist poet Adrienne Rich draws a distinction between the fulfilling relationship mothers can have with their children and the patriarchal institution of motherhood, which keeps women under men's control.

Sociologist Patricia Hill Collins coined the term "motherwork" in the mid-1990s to highlight the experiences of women of color and working-class mothers, many of whom don't have the resources to pursue their own ambitions over caring for their families and communities. When you're just trying to navigate the day-to-day without wealth or other forms of privilege, options like hiring a nanny or paying for graduate school aren't feasible or a priority.

For these mothers, the survival of their children is not a given. Instead of tedium and oppression, motherwork acknowledges that mothering can be a radically important labor of love and a source of empowerment in its own right.

In "Barbie," the mother-daughter relationship between Gloria, played by America Ferrera, and her daughter Sasha, played by Ariana Greenblatt, contains these contradictions.

After experiencing a vision of the person whose sadness seems to be the source of her malfunctions, Stereotypical Barbie initially assumes it's Sasha's tween angst that's disturbed the perfection of Barbieland and drawn her into the real world. Instead, Barbie discovers it's Gloria's loneli-

ness — and her nostalgia for a simpler time when she played Barbies with her daughter — that has caused the rift between reality and fantasy.

Sasha and Gloria's adventure with Barbie — first escaping the Mattel executives who want to lock Barbie in a box and then journeying back to Barbieland to rescue the other Barbies from the Kens, who are trying to take over — repairs the relationship between mother and daughter.

Gloria remembers what it's like to find joy in motherhood, and Sasha realizes that her mother isn't just a bland set of values against which to rebel. Gloria is a fully fledged person with a rich inner life who, by her own estimation, is sometimes "weird and dark and crazy," which Sasha admires.

Perfect

Sasha — and all the Barbies — have something else to learn from Gloria, too.

Stunned that even someone as perfect as Barbie feels like she's not good enough, Gloria delivers a poignant monologue encapsulating, in Barbie's words, "the cognitive dissonance required to be a woman under patriarchy."

Gloria, as a mom struggling to reconcile her deep love for her child with the fear that she's constantly failing at motherhood, knows all too well how this cognitive dissonance wears women down.

In her 2018 book "Mothers: An Essay on Love and Cruelty," scholar Jacqueline Rose argues that motherhood is tied to notions of citizenship and nation and, for this reason, can become "the ultimate scapegoat for our personal and political failings."

The ending to "Barbie" rejects the notion that mothers are to blame for their children's mistakes. Instead, the film offers another perspective through the character of Ruth Handler, Mattel's founder, who's played by Rhea Perlman. Handler helps Barbie see what awaits her if she chooses to become human.

Symbolically letting go of her creation and encouraging her to forge her own path, Ruth tells Barbie that she cannot control her any more than she could control her own daughter, and that mothers should pave the way for their children, not hinder them.

"We mothers," she explains, "stand still so our daughters can look back to see how far they've come."

This sentimental and self-effacing message seems at odds with the film's nuanced portrayal of motherhood through humor and critique.

But, throughout, "Barbie" invites viewers to question even its own structure, tenets and messaging — and presents multiple perspectives on motherhood.

Mothering is hard work and sometimes may even be thankless labor. It may bore or disappoint. (AP)

not attribute to a named source that were denied on the record, either in the story or after publication, leaving it up to readers to decide who to believe.

Variety's co-editor-in-chiefs, Cynthia Littleton and Ramin Setoodeh, said in a statement Friday that they have been carefully following the conversation about the story.

"The story was heavily vetted and deeply sourced," they said. "Every-



Barry



Zucker

one included in the story was asked to comment and given the chance to respond. We stand by our reporting and our award-winning reporter."

The piece is also critical of two reporters who have covered CNN, Tim Alberta of The Atlantic and Dylan Byers of Puck. Both of those news organizations complained of inaccuracies and, in the changes made on Friday, Variety added their specific denials. (AP)



A supermoon rises over the West End Tower at Vanderbilt University, Tuesday, Aug. 1, in Nashville, Tenn. The Sturgeon moon is the second of four supermoons to appear in 2023. (AP)

The first supermoon in August rises around the world

The first of two supermoons in August graced the skies on Tuesday. A supermoon is broadly defined as a full moon that is closer to the Earth than normal. That makes it appear slightly brighter and bigger in the sky. The next one is on the night of Aug. 30. Because it's the second full moon in the same month, it will be what's called a blue moon.

culminating in a rare blue moon. On Tuesday evening as the full moon rose in the southeast, appearing slightly brighter and bigger than normal. That's because it will be closer than usual, just 222,159 miles (357,530 kilometers) away, thus the supermoon label. The moon will be even closer the night of Aug. 30 — a scant 222,043 miles (357,344 kilometers) distant. Because it's the second full moon in the same month, it will be what's called a blue

moon. "Warm summer nights are the ideal time to watch the full moon rise in the eastern sky within minutes of sunset. And it happens twice in August," said retired NASA astrophysicist Fred Espenak, dubbed Mr. Eclipse for his eclipse-chasing expertise. The last time two full supermoons graced the sky in the same month was in 2018. It won't happen again until 2037, according to Italian astronomer

Gianluca Masi, founder of the Virtual Telescope Project. Masi will provide a live webcast of Tuesday evening's supermoon, as it rises over the Coliseum in Rome. "My plans are to capture the beauty of this ... hopefully bringing the emotion of the show to our viewers," Masi said in an email. "The supermoon offers us a great opportunity to look up and discover the sky," he added. (AP)

Health

Counter infectious diseases

US launches bureau for global 'health' security

WASHINGTON, Aug 2, (Agencies): The United States launched Tuesday a global health bureau to help improve global health and counter infectious diseases. "Today the State Department is officially launching a new Bureau of Global Health Security and Diplomacy," Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced in a press release. "The Bureau's overarching mission is to fortify the global health security architecture to effectively prevent, detect, control, and respond to infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS. By leveraging and coordinating US foreign assistance," Blinken noted that the Bureau aims to foster robust international cooperation, enhancing protection for the United States and the global community against health threats through strengthened systems and policies. "The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the vital role the United States must play in addressing global health and health security issues."

Lumpy skin disease: Indonesia suspended live cattle import from four Australian facilities after finding 13 live cattle infected with lumpy skin disease, or LSD, officials said on Tuesday. LSD, a highly contagious disease found in cattle that causes blisters and reduces milk production, was found in imported live cattle from four of 60 Australian facilities allowed to export to Indonesia. The animals were quarantined before arriving at Tanjung Priok port in Jakarta, as per import regulations, when LSD was detected, said Bambang, head of Indonesia's Agricultural Quarantine Agency, who goes by a single name. Some of the live cattle showed physical symptoms of the disease as well.

Also: WASHINGTON: The State Department launched a new bureau Tuesday aimed at making the battle against global outbreaks a lasting priority of US foreign policy, even as one of its key elements — a widely acclaimed HIV program — has become caught up in the political battle over abortion. The bureau is to include the 20-year-old initiative known as the President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR. The program is relatively unknown to Americans but has succeeded beyond most early expectations in addressing the AIDS crisis and is credited with saving up to 25 million lives worldwide.

Climate

Global warming blamed

Cholera cases on the rise with more, wetter storms

NEW YORK, Aug 2, (AP): In early 2022, nearly 200,000 Malawians were displaced after two tropical storms struck the southeastern part of Africa barely a month apart. Sixty-four people died. Amid an already-heavy rainy season, the storms Ana and Gombé caused devastation across southern Malawi to homes, crops, and infrastructure. "That March, we started to see cholera, which is usually endemic in Malawi, becoming an outbreak," said Gerrit Maritz, a deputy representative for health programs in Malawi for the United Nations Children's Fund. Cholera typically affects the country during the rainy season, from December to March, during which time it remains contained around Lake Malawi in the south and results in about 100 deaths each year. The 2022 outbreak showed a different pattern — cholera spread throughout the dry season and by August had moved into Malawi's northern and central regions. By early February of this year, cases had peaked at 700 per day with a fatality rate of 3.3 %, three times higher than the typical rate. When cases finally began to decline in March, cholera had claimed over 1,600 lives in a 12-month period — the biggest outbreak in the country's history. As climate change intensifies, storms like Ana and Gombé are becoming more frequent, more powerful, and wetter.



Maritz

supplies. By one government estimate, Ana alone destroyed 54,000 latrines and about 340 wells. People displaced from their homes turned to whatever water sources were available, often ones that were highly contaminated, and transmitted the disease as they moved to new areas. While Malawi's outbreak was spreading across its borders to Zambia and Mozambique, hundreds of thousands of people in Pakistan reported cholera symptoms amid a massive monsoon season that left a third of the country fully underwater. And in Nigeria, cases spiked after over a million people were displaced by extreme flooding during the 2022 rainy season. **Vaccine** The global cholera surge drove a vaccine shortage right when countries needed it most. Malawi in the past used the cholera vaccine for prevention, but "now if you don't have an outbreak, you don't get the vaccine," said Otim Patrick Ramadan, WHO incident manager for regional cholera response in Africa. In response to the shortage, the international coordinating group for cholera vaccines changed its vaccination protocol in October from two doses to one, reducing protection from two years to about five months. Climate change doesn't only affect cholera through worsening floods and storms. Hotter temperatures and longer and drier droughts can also have an impact. "With a severe shortage of water, the remaining sources become easily contaminated, because everyone is using them for everything," Ramadan said. "We have seen that in the greater Horn of Africa." Amid a prolonged and extreme drought, which has been directly attributed to climate change, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya all saw cholera proliferate over the past year. In drought areas that have experienced crop failure, malnourishment has also reduced immunity to diseases. Johns Hopkins University infectious disease epidemiologist Andrew Azman, who specializes in cholera research, cautions against making sweeping statements about climate change turbocharging cholera globally. "We know cholera is seasonal in much of the world, but the associations between precipitation, drought, floods, and cholera are not really clear," Azman said. "In some places, more precipitation increases cholera risk. In some places, it's less precipitation." He added that destructive storms in the past have not led to massive cholera outbreaks at the scale of the recent epidemic in Malawi, so it's important to also consider other factors. "While the storms may have created good conditions for transmission, the outbreak happened after a few years of relative calm in terms of exposures," Azman said. "Immunologically, you had a much more naive population."

Conflict

The World Health Organization says that while poverty and conflict remain enduring drivers for cholera around the world, climate change is aggravating the acute global upsurge of the disease that began in 2021. According to the WHO, 30 countries reported outbreaks in 2022, 50% more than previous years' average; many of those outbreaks were compounded by tropical cyclones and their ensuing displacement of people. "It's difficult to say that (Tropical Storm Ana and Cyclone Gombé) caused the cholera outbreak," UNICEF public health emergency specialist Raoul Kamadjeu said. "What we can say is they were risk multipliers." Cholera is a diarrheal illness that spreads in places without access to clean water and sanitation, when people swallow food or water contaminated with Vibrio cholerae bacteria. "Malawi's water-sanitation indicators were already extremely bad," said Kamadjeu, "but the storms made a bad situation worse." Flash floods spread sewage into lakes and boreholes, washed away pipelines and sanitation infrastructure, and ruined roads integral to the delivery of



Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
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NOW	NOW
BHD 65.000/-net	BHD 145.000/-net

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SPORTS

Taurasi moves within 18 pts of 10,000

Aces clinch playoff spot

LAS VEGAS, Aug 2, (AP): Jackie Young scored 24 points, A'ja Wilson had 20 points and 11 rebounds, and the Las Vegas Aces clinched a WNBA playoff spot with a 93-72 victory over the Atlanta Dream on Tuesday night.

Las Vegas (24-2) has won eight straight games to become the second team in WNBA history to start a season 24-2, joining the 1998 Houston Comets. The Aces still have 14 regular-season games before the playoffs start.

Kierstan Bell made a 3-pointer on back-to-back possessions to extend Las Vegas' lead to 75-62 early in the fourth quarter. She finished with a career-high 15 points.

Kelsey Plum added 14 points and five assists for Las Vegas. Chelsea Gray moved into 13th place in WNBA history for career assists.

Las Vegas led 54-43 at halftime behind three double-digit scorers in Young (18), Wilson (13) and Plum (10). The Aces shot 63% from the field, including 7 of 11 from 3-point range.

Cheyenne Parker scored 15 of her 19 points in the first half for Atlanta (14-12). Alisha Gray, coming off back-to-back games with 25-plus points, was held to eight points on 3-of-11 shooting. Rhyne Howard also struggled from the field, scoring just six points.

Fever 72, Mercury 71

In Indianapolis, Emma Cannon had a career-high 23 points with nine rebounds, Kelsey Mitchell added 21 points and the Indiana Fever beat the Phoenix Mercury 72-71 to spoil Diana Taurasi's 29-point performance.

Taurasi, the league's career scoring leader, is now 18 points away from 10,000 points. Taurasi, who was coming off a season-high 24 points on Sunday, scored 23 of Phoenix's 43 first-half points after making 8 of 10 shots, including 4



Connecticut Sun's DeWanna Bonner (24) puts up a basket from under Minnesota Lynx's defense during a WNBA basketball game at Mohegan Sun Arena in Uncasville, Conn. (AP)

Sánchez suffers full dislocation in knee

BUENOS AIRES, Aug 2, (AP): An Argentinian defender suffered a full dislocation of his left knee on Tuesday during a Copa Libertadores match in Buenos Aires.

Luciano Sánchez, 29, suffered the serious injury after a challenge by veteran left-back Marcelo, now playing for Brazil's Fluminense. His teammates initially believed he had broken his leg, but a medical report published by the club said it was a full dislocation.

The former Real Madrid player was sent off in tears as the Argentinian screamed on the pitch, surrounded by concerned players on both teams. The incident took place in the 56th minute of the match, which finished 1-1.

Local media say doctors at the Sanatorio Finocchio hospital estimated Sánchez' recovery time between eight and 12 months due to the incident.

"I lived a very tough moment on the pitch today," Marcelo said on social media. "With no intention I injured a fellow

SOCCER

footballer. I want to wish you the best possible recovery, Luciano Sánchez."

Argentinian Juniors thanked the Brazilian club and the footballer for their concern for Sánchez.

"We are rivals, not enemies," the Argentinian club said.

Fluminense coach Fernando Diniz, who is also Brazil's national team coach until the middle of next year, said in a press conference that Marcelo did not deserve to be sent off and called the incident "an unfortunate event."

Gabriel Avalos opened the scoring with a volley for the hosts in the 14th minute of the first leg of the round-of-16 match. Argentinians later saw its goalkeeper Alexis Martin Arias sent off in the 76th minute, and be replaced by substitute midfielder Luciano Heredia until the end of the match.

Fluminense took advantage of the opportunity and equalized with Samuel Xavier in the 87th minute from long range.

The teams will play again next Tuesday at the Maracana Stadium for a place in the quarterfinals.

of 6 from distance. Taurasi finished 10 of 16, with five 3-pointers.

Mitchell extended the lead to 70-61 with 5:06 left in the fourth quarter, but the Fever would not score again until Cannon's shot in the lane with 59.5 seconds left to regain the lead.

Indiana guard Erica Wheeler was off on a 3-pointer and Phoenix took possession with 13.9 seconds left. Taurasi was short on a baseline jumper but Phoenix kept the possession with 6.8 seconds left. Moriah Jefferson got into the paint but her layup didn't fall and Aliyah Boston secured the rebound.

Indiana (7-19) won at home for just the second time this season. Phoenix (6-19) had its road losing streak extended to 10 straight

BASKETBALL

games.

Sun 79, Lynx 69

In Uncasville, Alyssa Thomas had 21 points, 20 rebounds and 12 assists for her fifth triple-double of the season and the Sun beat the short-handed Lynx.

It was Thomas' ninth career triple-double. Thomas, who also had a triple-double in an 87-83 loss to the Lynx on Sunday, became the first player in WNBA history to record a triple-double in back-to-back games multiple times in a season. She also has more triple-doubles this season than any other WNBA player has in her career.

Tyasha Harris added 17 points off the bench for Connecticut (19-7). Tiffany Hayes had 16 points and DeWanna Bonner scored 15 on 7-of-19 shooting.

Lindsay Allen scored 16 points and Kayla McBride added 15 points for Minnesota (13-14), which had a three-game winning streak snapped. Minnesota was without star Napheesa Collier, who is sidelined with a sprained ankle.

Liberty 76, Sparks 69

In Los Angeles, Courtney Vandersloot scored 20 of her season-high 23 points in the second half, Breanna Stewart added 16 points and 12 rebounds, and New York closed out its win over Los Angeles on a 10-2 run.

Vandersloot also had seven rebounds and six assists, and Stewart added four steals and three blocks. Sabrina Ionescu scored 11 points on 3-of-12 shooting and Jonquel Jones had nine points and eight rebounds for New York (20-6).

Nneka Ogumike had 20 points and eight rebounds for Los Angeles (9-17). Ogumike moved past Candace Parker (5,684) for the second-most points in franchise history, trailing Lisa Leslie (6,263). Jordin Canada added 13 points and six assists, and Layshia Clarendon scored 11 points.

MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, Aug 2, (AP): Results and standings from the MLB games on Tuesday.				
Pittsburgh	4	Detroit	1	
Tampa Bay	5	NY Yankees	2	
Atlanta	5	LA Angels	1	
Baltimore	13	Toronto	3	
Texas	2	Chicago W. Sox	0	
Houston	2	Cleveland	0	
Minnesota	3	St. Louis	2	
Kansas City	7	NV Mets 10 Inn	6	
Boston	6	Seattle	4	
LA Dodgers	7	Oakland	3	
Philadelphia	3	Miami	1	
Milwaukee	6	Washington	4	
Chicago Cubs	20	Cincinnati	9	
San Diego	8	Colorado	5	
San Francisco	4	Arizona	3	

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Baltimore	66	41	.617	—
Tampa Bay	66	44	.600	1-1/2
Toronto	59	49	.546	7-1/2
Boston	57	50	.533	9
New York	55	52	.514	11
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	55	53	.509	—
Cleveland	53	55	.491	2
Detroit	47	60	.439	7-1/2
Chicago	43	65	.398	12
Kansas City	33	75	.306	22
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Texas	61	46	.570	—
Houston	61	47	.565	-1/2
Los Angeles	56	52	.519	5-1/2
Seattle	55	52	.514	6
Oakland	30	78	.278	31-1/2

National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	68	37	.648	—
Philadelphia	58	49	.542	11
Miami	57	51	.528	12-1/2
New York	50	56	.472	18-1/2
Washington	45	63	.417	24-1/2
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Cincinnati	59	50	.541	—
Milwaukee	58	50	.537	-1/2
Códon	54	53	.505	4
Pittsburgh	48	58	.453	9-1/2
St. Louis	47	61	.435	11-1/2
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	60	45	.571	—
San Francisco	59	49	.546	2-1/2
Arizona	57	51	.528	4-1/2
San Diego	53	55	.491	8-1/2
Colorado	42	65	.393	19

Valdez throws no-hitter as Astros shut out Guardians



Philadelphia Phillies first baseman Alec Bohm throws to first base but is late with the out against Miami Marlins shortstop Jon Berti during the ninth inning of a baseball game in Miami. (AP)

Orioles remain unbeaten in Toronto this season

HOUSTON, Aug 2, (AP): Framber Valdez threw the 16th no-hitter in Houston Astros history in a 2-0 victory over the Cleveland Guardians on Tuesday night.

Valdez (9-7) allowed just one baserunner on a walk in the fifth inning, but still faced the minimum thanks to a double play in that frame. He's the first left-hander to throw a no-hitter for Houston.

Gabriel Arias grounded out to start the ninth before Myles Straw lined out to center field. Cam Gallagher then lined out to Jeremy Pena to end it and set off the celebration.

Kyle Tucker provided the offense with a two-run single in the third inning.

Cleveland's rookie starter Gavin Williams (1-3) allowed four hits and two runs in five innings for the loss.

Braves 5, Angels 1

In Atlanta, Michael Harris II ended a homer drought with two blasts, including a go-ahead shot in the fifth, Spencer Strider added to his majors-leading total with nine strikeouts and the Atlanta Braves beat the Los Angeles Angels 5-1 on Tuesday night.

Strider (12-3) allowed one run in 6 2/3 innings in his first victory since July 8. He has nine or more strikeouts in 17 of 22 starts, giving him 208 for the season.

Patrick Sandoval (6-8) allowed two runs on three hits and four walks in five innings for Los Angeles.

Harris hit his first homer since July 3 by lining an 0-2 pitch from Sandoval 445 feet to right field with one out in the fifth.

The Angels began the day three games behind the final AL wild card and 4 1/2 games behind AL West leader Texas.

Orioles 13, Blue Jays 3

In Toronto, Anthony Santander hit his second career grand slam, Gunnar Henderson homered for the second straight game and AL-leading Baltimore remained unbeaten in Toronto this season.

Santander went 3 for 4 with a walk and four RBIs. He cleared the bases with his 19th home run, a deep drive off Tate Pearson in the eighth.

Henderson went 3 for 5 with two RBIs, and Ryan Mountcastle reached base four times and drove in two runs as the Orioles won for the fourth time in five games and improved their league-best record to 66-41.

Right-hander Kyle Bradish (7-6) allowed three runs and four hits in seven innings, snapping a two-start losing streak. Bradish walked one and struck out seven.

Blue Jays catcher Danny Jansen hit a two-run home run and Brandon Belt added a solo shot, but Toronto fell to 1-7 against the Orioles, including 0-5 north of the border.

Hyun Jin Ryu made his season debut after having Tommy John surgery in June 2022 and allowed allowed four runs and nine hits in five-plus innings. He walked one and struck out three.

Rays 5, Yankees 2

In New York, Zach Eflin pitched six shutout innings of three-hit ball to become the American League's first 12-game winner, Randy Arozarena hit a two-run homer off Carlos Rodón and Tampa Bay beat New York.

Yandy Díaz also connected for the Rays, who won their third straight game and have gone deep six times in the last two nights at Yankee Stadium.

Eflin (12-6) set a career high for wins, surpassing his previous best in 2018 for Philadelphia. After leaving his previous start due to knee discomfort, Eflin struck out five and walked none.

He got nine outs on the ground in his fourth scoreless start this season.

Rodón (1-4) struggled in his fifth start for New York after missing three-plus months with forearm and back injuries. The left-hander gave up four runs and four hits in four innings.

Dodgers 7, Athletics 3

In Los Angeles, Lance Lynn gave up three home runs in his Dodgers debut, Mookie Betts hit his 28th homer and Los Angeles earned its 60th victory of the season.

Traded last week by the Chicago White Sox, Lynn retired the first seven batters he faced. But he soon surrendered his 29th, 30th and 31st homers of the season.

Lynn (7-9) allowed three runs and five hits in seven innings. The right-hander struck out seven and walked one while eating up precious innings for a team that needs its starters to go deep to preserve the bullpen.

Kiké Hernández's three-run double highlighted a four-run fourth. Freddie Freeman singled leading off before Ken Waldichuk (2-7) struck out Will Smith and Amed Rosario.

Waldichuk gave up four runs and one hit in 3 2/3 innings, struck out five and walked three.

Rangers 2, White Sox 0

In Arlington, Andrew Heaney struck out 11 without a walk while throwing two-hit ball over six innings, Mitch Garver and Adolis Garcia hit solo homers and the AL West-leading Texas shut out Chicago.

Josh Sborz and Aroldis Chapman each pitched an inning before Will Smith's perfect ninth for his 18th save in 20 chances to wrap up the Rangers' eighth shutout this season.

Garver put the Rangers ahead with his sixth homer when he went deep off White Sox rookie right-hander Jesse Scholtens (1-4) in the fifth inning of the game that took only one hour, 58 minutes to play. Scholtens struck out six, walked one and hit a batter over his six innings. The starter and two relievers limited Texas to four hits.

Garcia's 26th homer, and AL-leading 85th RBI, came in the seventh.

Heaney (8-6) won his third consecutive decision over his last four starts.

Cubs 20, Reds 9

In Chicago, Dansby Swanson homered twice and drove in five runs, and Chicago pounded Cincinnati.

Mike Tauchman also went deep and finished with four RBIs as Chicago won for the ninth time in 11 games. The Cubs bashed seven homers while also setting season highs for runs and hits with 21.

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Jeimer Candelario went 4 for 5 and scored two runs in his first game since he was reacquired by Chicago in a trade with Washington on Monday. Candelario also made his big league debut with the Cubs in 2016.

Swanson hit a three-run homer in Chicago's five-run first against Ben Lively (4-7). He added a two-run drive in the fourth for his 15th homer this season, helping the Cubs build a 13-2 lead.

Giants 4, Diamondbacks 3

In San Francisco, Patrick Bailey picked off Geraldo Perdomo at first base for the final out in San Francisco's victory over Arizona.

Perdomo singled off Ryan Walker leading off the inning. Sean Manaea, signed in the offseason to be part of San Francisco's rotation, came on and got Ketel Marte to foul out and Corbin Carroll to fly out.

Manaea made three pitches to Arizona clean-up hitter Christian Walker before Bailey fired over to first to nab Perdomo. The Diamondbacks challenged the call that was upheld on review, giving Manaea his first career save.

LaMonte Wade Jr. broke out of a prolonged slump with two hits, including a go-ahead home run in the seventh inning for the Giants. Wade, who has been battling a sore back recently and was in a 1-for-18 funk, singled off Zac Gallen in the third, walked in the fifth, then hit his 10th home run off reliever Miguel Castro (5-5).

Phillies 3, Marlins 1

In Miami, Nick Castellanos slugged a tiebreaking two-run homer in the ninth inning to rally Philadelphia past Miami.

Castellanos, who has been mired in an 8-for-68 skid in the second half of the season, drilled a slider from Marlins closer David Robertson (4-3) over the wall in left-center to punctuate the three-run outburst in the inning. Earlier in the ninth, Bryce Harper tied the game with an RBI double.

Philadelphia's Gregory Soto (3-4) pitched a scoreless eighth and Seranthony Dominguez closed with a perfect ninth for his first save.

Avisaíl Garcia's RBI double in the third gave Miami an early lead. Garcia drove in Luis Arraez, who had two hits and saw his major league-leading batting average stay at .381.

Brewers 6, Nationals 4

In Milwaukee, Bryce Turang and Joey Wiemer hit consecutive two-run singles as part of a four-run fourth inning, and Milwaukee defeated Washington to snap a four-game skid.

Freddy Peralta (7-8) earned his second victory since May 21, allowing three runs in six innings and strikeout out seven. Devin Williams pitched the ninth to earn his 27th save in 29 chances.

Jake Alu, CJ Abrams and Alex Call drove in runs for the Nationals. Josiah

Gray (7-9) took the loss for Washington, which had won eight of its last nine home games.

Red Sox 6, Mariners 4

In Seattle, Alex Verdugo hit a two-run homer, Reese McGuire added his first of the season fresh off the injured list, and Boston snapped a three-game losing streak.

Verdugo's homer in the fifth inning was his eighth of the season and gave Boston a 5-1 lead. McGuire followed an inning later with a solo shot into the right field seats.

Boston starter Brayan Bello (8-6) worked out of an early jam and managed to get through six innings. Seattle had a 1-0 lead three batters into the game after Eugenio Suarez's RBI single, but the Mariners were unable to add on despite having the bases loaded with no outs.

Twins 3, Cardinals 2

In St. Louis, Donovan Solano hit a tiebreaking, two-run single in the seventh inning and Pablo Lopez tossed six effective innings as AL Central-leading

BASEBALL

Minnesota snapped a five-game skid with a win over St. Louis.

Minnesota was coming off a three-game sweep to the Kansas City Royals and having lost the last two games of a three-game set against the Seattle Mariners. The Twins hold a two-game lead in the division over Cleveland, which was no-hit in Houston on Tuesday.

Tyler O'Neill homered for St. Louis, which has lost four of its last five games and eight of 11.

Lopez (6-6) allowed one run on four hits over six innings with five strikeouts.

Royals 7, Mets 6, 10 innings

In Kansas City, Josh Walker barked home the winning run in the 10th inning and Kansas City Royals rallied past New York for its season-best fourth straight victory.

Hours after the retooling Mets traded star pitcher Justin Verlander and two other players to cap a stunning deadline selloff, they blew a 6-4 lead provided by rookie Francisco Álvarez's two-run homer in the top of the 10th.

Bobby Witt Jr. hit an RBI double in the bottom half and MJ Melendez tied it with a run-scoring single off Brooks Raley (0-2).

Pirates 4, Tigers 1

In Pittsburgh, rookie Liover Peguer hit a two-run home run and Johan Oviedo pitched seven strong innings to lead Pittsburgh over the slumping Detroit.

Oviedo (5-11), who allowed one run while scattering six hits, striking out five and walking two, has won back-to-back starts after losing eight consecutive decisions.

David Bednar pitched a perfect ninth inning for his 22nd save to close out the Pirates' fourth win in five games.

Matt Manning (3-3) remained winless in his last four starts. He gave up four runs and eight hits in six innings, struck out six and did not walk a batter.

Morocco remain eligible to advance

Hegering recovers in time to play for Germany in last group game

AUCKLAND, New Zealand, Aug. 2, (AP) — Marina Hegering is fit to play for Germany against South Korea in a Group H finale that the Germans are treating as a must-win Women's World Cup game.

The defender missed Germany's opening 6-0 victory over Morocco, as well as the shocking 2-1 loss to Colombia with an ankle injury.

Germany is ranked second in the world and has never failed to advance out of group play at the World Cup. A ninth trip to the knockout round would be guaranteed Thursday with a win over South Korea in Brisbane, Australia. A draw would also be sufficient for the Germans unless Morocco upsets Colombia in Perth, Western Australia.

The Germans need Hegering because defender Sara Doorsoun, who started the first two matches, injured her thigh in the loss to Colombia and has been ruled out for the group finale.

"It means a lot to us because as soon as Marina is in training and able to perform properly, that's fantastic value for our team," coach Martina Voss-Tecklenburg said. "And for that reason, we're happy that she's ready to play again."

The two-time World Cup champions aren't overlooking the winless South Koreans, who lost to Colombia and Morocco in their first two group games.

"Korea is an exciting opponent because it can play three different systems. So, the question is how will they start the match?" Voss-Tecklenburg

said. "Maybe they will surprise us with the high press."

She noted that South Korea coach Colin Bell "is a good tactician who can surprise us."

"South Korea obviously didn't play as well as it could have in its last match, but they are capable of more," she added.

South Korea is yet to pick up a point but hasn't been officially eliminated from the tournament.

To have any chance of advancing, the Taegeuk Ladies must beat Germany by a margin of at least 5-0, rely on Colombia to beat Morocco, and then hope tiebreakers fall in their favor.

"It's a slim chance to get to the knockout stages, but we still have an outside chance, and we will push as hard as we can as a team," midfielder Lee Young-ju said.

South Korea was unsure on the status of defender Lim Seon-joo, who started against Colombia but was injured in warm-ups ahead of the match against Morocco.

South Korea has lost its last six Women's World Cup games since scoring a 2-1 victory over Spain in the 2015 tournament, and Bell acknowledged his team will likely be eliminated against Germany.

"When you play football at the international level, you pay for every error you make," Bell said. "I'm really looking forward to seeing my players show what they are capable of, (but) the chances of us beating Germany 5-0 are very slim. I still believe we can do something sensational."

Morocco vs Colombia

Morocco made history when it beat South Korea in Group H play - a win that made Morocco the first Arab Nation ever to win a game at a Women's World Cup - and the Atlas Lions remain eligible to advance.

SOCCER

Morocco is playing in the World Cup for the first time and faces Colombia in Perth, on Australia's west coast, in one of the last two group games of the tournament. A win over the South Americans isn't exactly enough to push Morocco through, as the Atlas Lions would still have to overcome the goal differential Colombia has on the team.

Colombia sits atop Group H and has been extremely impressive. Ranked 25th in the world, the Las Chicas beat South Korea 2-0 and then upset second-ranked Germany 2-1.

A draw with Morocco would be enough to push Colombia into the round of 16 as the group winner.

Colombia has been led by Linda Caicedo, who at 18 years old has al-



Germany's Alexandra Popp is in action during the Women's World Cup Group H soccer match between Germany and Colombia at the Sydney Football Stadium in Sydney, Australia. (AP)

ready survived a battle with ovarian cancer. Although the Real Madrid star has been plagued with health issues throughout the tournament - she's been repeatedly treated for fatigue - Caicedo has scored in both of Colombia's

matches. Colombia coach Nelson Abadia said Caicedo will be at 100% against Morocco.

"She was going through a check-up so as to be sure that she is at

100%," he said. "You can be sure she is at a 100%. What happens with Linda is that we want to make sure that she is at 100% and that she herself feels and knows that she is OK. And she is."

India inflict 200-run defeat on West Indies to win ODI series

Australia, England docked World Test Championship points for slow over rates

TAROUBA, Trinidad, Aug. 2, (AP) — West Indies lost its first three wickets with only 17 on the scoreboard and never recovered as India won the final one-day international by the huge margin of 200 runs to clinch the three-match series 2-1 on Tuesday.

Put in to bat, India reached 351-5 with captain Hardik Pandya smashing 18 in the last over for a 52-ball 70 not out. West Indies was all out in reply for 151 in 35.3 overs. Shardul Thakur took 4-37 while Mukesh Kumar's 3-30 included West Indies openers Brandon King (0) and Kyle Mayers (4).

CRICKET

The hosts were chasing their first ODI series win against India since 2006 but faced a tough challenge after Ishan Kishan (77) and Shubman Gill (85) gave India a great start, scoring 143 in 19.4 overs.

Hardik, whose final over was against Romario Shepherd, hit five sixes and four fours.

Sanju Samson (51) and Hardik added more quick runs at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy in India's highest ODI total against West Indies in West Indies.

In reply, West Indies was 1-1, 7-2 and then 17-3 with the wicket of captain Shai Hope (5). The game was effectively over at 75-7 when No. 3 Alick Athanaze (32) was bowled by Kuldeep Yadav (2-25). Late resistance came from Alzarri Joseph (26) and Gudakesh Motie (39 not out) who put on 55 runs for the ninth wicket.

West Indies was unchanged from its series-leveling six-wicket victory in the second ODI.

India, which will host the Cricket World Cup from October, was again under-strength as it rested Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli once more. India made two changes - bringing in Rituraj Gaikwad, who scored 8 at No. 3, and Jaydev Unadkat for Axar Patel and Umran Malik. Unadkat was playing his first ODI game for 10 years and took 1-16 in five overs.

India had a five-wicket win in the first match.

India won the preceding two-test series 1-0.

West Indies and India are also scheduled to play a five-match T20 series, starting at Tarouba on Thursday. The fourth and fifth Twenty20 games will be at Lauderdale, Florida, on Aug. 12-13.

Australia and England were docked points in the World Test Championship on Wednesday for their slow over rates during the recently completed Ashes series.

Australia, the reigning test world champion, had 10 points deducted and England lost 19 points. They



India's Mukesh Kumar hoists the trophy after India defeated West Indies for 200 runs in their third ODI cricket match to win the series 2-1 at the Brian Lara Stadium in Tarouba, Trinidad and Tobago. (AP)

had each collected 28 points for winning two tests apiece as well as a draw in the five-match series that finished 2-2 on Monday.

The punishments meant Australia dropped to third place in the nascent standings and England to fifth. The next WTC final isn't until 2025.

England fell foul of the over-rate regulations in four of the five tests, and Australia in one of them.

The International Cricket Council last month implemented an overhaul of the sanctions for slow over rates, which was retrospectively applied for the start of this WTC cycle.

Pakistan and Afghanistan will prepare for next month's Asia Cup by playing a three-match one-day international series in Sri Lanka.

Hambantota will host the first two ODIs - Aug. 22 and 24 - with the final game scheduled for Colombo on Aug. 26.

Pakistan and Sri Lanka are due to co-host the Asia Cup from Aug. 30 after India refused to play the tournament in Pakistan due to political tensions with its neighbor.

Pakistan will play Nepal in the opening game of the Asia Cup in Multan and will also host three more games of the tournament. Sri Lanka is due to host nine Asia Cup matches including the final on Sept. 17.

Pakistan, Nepal and India are in Group A while Group B comprises Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. The top two teams from both groups will qualify for the Super 4 stage of the tournament.

Ridley nursing sore toe and will be limited in training camp practice

Kupp leaves practice early with hamstring injury

IRVINE, Calif., Aug. 2, (AP) — Rams receiver Cooper Kupp left Los Angeles' practice early with a hamstring injury Tuesday night, and the team is uncertain how long he will be sidelined.

The former Super Bowl MVP walked off the field with the training staff about 30 minutes into the two-hour workout at UC Irvine. Matthew Stafford and other players didn't see exactly what happened, but coach Sean McVay said he was told Kupp "came up a little bit in a red zone route."

"Obviously we're much better when he's here, and we hope he's going to be OK," McVay said. "If he's not, we'll see what happens, but the practice had to go on."



India's Sanju Samson hits a six against West Indies during the third ODI cricket match at the Brian Lara Stadium in Tarouba, Trinidad and Tobago. (AP)

Kupp is returning for his seventh NFL season this fall after missing the final eight games of last season with a high ankle sprain. He also missed the final eight games of his second NFL season in 2018 due to a torn knee ligament.

FOOTBALL

Kupp won the NFL's triple crown of receiving in 2021, leading the league in catches (145), yards receiving (1,947) and touchdowns (16). He starred again during the Rams' playoff run culminating in two touchdown catches in the Super Bowl, including the game-winner with 1:25 to play.

He had 75 catches for 812 yards and six touchdowns in only nine games last season before his ankle sprain.

Kupp is one of just a few key veterans left with the Rams, who are likely to field the NFL's least experienced roster this season after parting ways with most of their veteran depth in the offseason. Stafford and Aaron Donald are also back with the Rams, who went 5-12 last year in the worst season in league history for a defending Super Bowl champion.

Kupp is expected to be Stafford's go-to target again this fall.

Jacksonville Jaguars receiver Calvin Ridley will be limited in training camp beginning Wednesday because of a sore toe.

Ridley left practice early Tuesday, took his shoulder pads and shoes off and chilled on a metal bench. The Jaguars provided no update on Ridley until coach Doug Pederson addressed reporters before practice Wednesday.

Ridley was the clear star during Jacksonville's first week of camp. He made crowd-pleasing catches every day and showed little rust after nearly two years away from the game, first to deal with his mental health and then because of a year-long suspension for gambling on games.

The Jaguars traded for him last October, counting on Ridley returning to form and helping to build one of the best receiving corps in the NFL.

He caught 90 passes for 1,374 yards and nine touchdowns in 2020 despite dealing with a broken left foot. He had 31 receptions for 281 yards and two scores before sitting out the final two months of the 2021 season to focus on his mental health following a home invasion he detailed in an article for The Players Tribune.

Pleased with Bijan so far: Falcons coach

Robinson hopes to carve new, more 'profitable' path for RBs

FLOWERY BRANCH, Ga., Aug. 2, (AP) — Bijan Robinson is all of a week into his first NFL training camp. He knows better than anyone he's got an awful lot to learn.

Yet, before he ever takes a handoff for the Atlanta Falcons, Robinson rec-

ognizes that he's in a unique position to help carve a new, more profitable path for the league's most beleaguered position.

Running back. "If you can do a lot of things, a lot of different things for your team, then you can maximize yourself to the best of you ability," Robinson said.

He's already given a tantalizing glimpse of that versatility in his first few practices with the Falcons.

In addition to lining up as a traditional running back, Robinson has taken snaps out of the slot, shifted outside like a wide receiver, and dropped back to work on punt returns.

In an early bit of brilliance, he thrilled win-starved Falcons fans by putting an ankle-breaking move on linebacker Troy Anderson - darting one way, then the other to leave the defender hopelessly behind - and then hauled in the slightly overthrown pass with a juggling, one-handed grab.

"Pretty damn pleased with Bijan so far," Atlanta coach Arthur Smith said.

The Falcons have a lot riding on Robinson - and, really, all running backs do.

In recent years, the once-glamorous position has come to be viewed as a spot where you can draft a solid player in the lower rounds, work them hard until it's their time to get paid, then move on to a fresher body who won't gobble up a lot of the salary cap.

The issue has taken on such significance that a group of prominent running backs - including Derrick Henry, Saquon Barkley, Josh Jacobs, Christian McCaffrey, Nick Chubb and Austin Ekeler - recently held a Zoom call to commiserate over what might be done to improve their value in a pass-happy league.

FOOTBALL

Now, along comes Robinson, who the Falcons are counting on to defy the perception that running back is a one-dimensional role that takes a punishing toll on the underpaid guys who play it.

Atlanta went against the grain by using the No. 8 pick on Robinson, the highest a running back has been drafted since Barkley went second overall to the New York Giants in 2018.

Smith doesn't want to get into what other teams might be thinking, but he makes it clear that the Falcons place a high value on runners who can do more than just take a handoff. Robinson, who played collegiately at Texas, joins another similarly skilled player on the Atlanta roster, Cordarrelle Patterson.

"You go back to how some people operate and the way they have fixed charts, which kind of makes sports go round," Smith said. "There is no rule that says 'You don't have your own internal value on people and the impact they have on a game.' The way we use him, I think, is different than most."

Robinson could be the most important player yet in the Falcons' lengthy rebuilding process, which already included the drafting of tight end Kyle Pitts and wide receiver Drake London with top picks the past two years.

Those three players are being counted on to take the load off Desmond Ridder, who is going into his first full season as the No. 1 quarterback. There are plenty of doubts about whether Ridder - a third-round pick who has played just four NFL games - is capable of handling such a prominent role.

Robinson and Ridder are rooming together at training camp, giving both a chance to pick each other's brains and enhance their growth.

"Me and Des, we'll always do our own thing after practice," Robinson said.



Robinson



FC Bayern Munchen celebrates with the match winning trophy during the pre-season friendly football match between Liverpool FC and FC Bayern Munchen in Singapore. Bayern won 4-3. (AP)

Sports

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Buffon retires from soccer at the age 45

PARMA, Italy, Aug 2, (AP): At age 45 and after a career that included a World Cup title with Italy, a long list of trophies with Juventus and many years when he was considered among the best goalkeepers in soccer, Gianluigi Buffon announced his retirement on Wednesday.

Buffon had one season remaining on his contract with Parma in Serie B and therefore leaves the sport with the same team that he began his professional career with nearly three decades ago.

"That's all folks! You gave me everything. I gave you everything. We did it together," Buffon wrote on Instagram next to a video of his career highlights.

The pinnacle of Buffon's career came during the 2006 World Cup, when he conceded only two goals during the seven matches of the Azzurri's run to the trophy. Neither of those two goals were scored by opponents during open play. One was an own-goal by teammate Cristian Zaccardo and the other was a penalty kick by Zinedine Zidane during the final.

SOCCER

"I experienced Buffon for 25 years, first with Juve and then on the national team - his greatness as a player and as a man," former coach Marcello Lippi said, adding that he thinks Buffon should take a job with the national team.

At Juventus, Buffon was the backbone behind 10 Serie A titles and stayed with the club even after the 2006 "Calciopoli" scandal that saw the team relegated to Serie B. He helped the Bianconeri win the second division a year after the World Cup title.

"A legend hangs up his gloves today," Juventus tweeted, "Your saves, your smiles, and your character will be forever remembered. Thank you, and congrats on an incredible career."

Buffon and Juventus also had two Serie A titles taken away due to the "Calciopoli" match-fixing scandal.

The only big title missing from Buffon's career was the Champions League, having lost three finals with Juventus - to AC Milan in 2003, to Barcelona in 2015 and to Real Madrid in 2017.

Buffon left Juventus for Paris Saint-Germain in 2018 only to return to the Turin club a year later as a backup to Wojciech Szczesny. He then made a sentimental return to Parma in 2021.

"Over the course of his illustrious career, which has no equals, Gigi showed an unrivaled ability, determination and passion on and off the field," Parma president Kyle Krause said. "Parma will always be your home."

World Cup Standings

BRISBANE, Aug 2, (AP): Women's World Cup standings on Wednesday.

Group	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Group A							
*-Switzerland	3	1	2	0	2	0	5
q-Norway	3	1	1	1	6	1	4
e-New Zealand	3	1	1	1	1	1	4
e-Philippines	3	0	2	1	8	3	3
Group B							
*-Australia	3	2	0	1	7	3	6
q-Nigeria	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
e-Canada	3	1	1	1	2	5	4
e-Ireland	3	0	1	2	1	3	1
Group C							
*-Japan	3	3	0	0	11	0	9
q-Spain	3	2	0	1	8	4	6
e-Costa Rica	3	1	0	2	3	11	3
e-Vietnam	3	0	0	3	1	8	0
Group D							
*-England	3	3	0	0	8	1	9
q-Denmark	3	2	0	1	3	1	6
e-China	3	1	0	2	2	7	3
e-Haiti	3	0	0	3	0	4	0
Group E							
*-Netherlands	3	2	1	0	9	1	7
q-United States	3	1	2	0	4	1	5
e-Portugal	3	1	1	1	2	1	4
e-Vietnam	3	0	0	3	0	12	0
Group F							
*-France	3	2	1	0	8	4	7
q-Jamaica	3	1	2	0	1	0	5
e-Brazil	3	1	1	1	5	2	4
e-Panama	3	0	0	3	3	11	0
Group G							
*-Sweden	3	3	0	0	9	1	9
q-South Africa	3	1	1	1	6	6	4
e-Italy	3	1	0	2	3	8	3
e-Argentina	3	0	1	2	2	5	1
Group H							
Colombia	2	2	0	0	4	1	6
Germany	2	1	0	1	7	2	3
Morocco	2	1	0	1	1	6	3
South Korea	2	0	0	2	0	3	0

Note 1: Standings read as played/won/drawn/lost goals for goals against and points.
Note 2: * denotes qualified as group winners for the knockout stage.
Note 3: q denotes qualified for the knockout stage.
Note 4: e denotes eliminated.

South Africa, Jamaica reach last 16 for 1st time; France advance atop Group F



Jamaica's Cheyna Matthews in action against Brazil's Adriana during the Women's World Cup Group F soccer match between Jamaica and Brazil in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

Sweden set showdown with US, Brazil, Italy eliminated

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, Aug 2, (AP): Player of the match Hildah Magaia called the moment "life-changing." Coach Desiree Ellis flagged something deeper, though, after South Africa beat Italy 3-2 Wednesday to qualify for the round of 16 at a Women's World Cup for the first time. Jamaica held Brazil to a 0-0 draw and advanced to the round of 16 of the Women's World Cup for the first time.

South Africa had to beat eighth-ranked Italy to progress. A draw would have been enough to take Italy through. And in a turbulent final 20 minutes, both teams stood on the brink of qualifying.

The halftime score was 1-1 after Arianna Caruso's penalty and Benedetta Orsi's own goal. Magaia scored to put South Africa ahead 2-1 and left them on the brink of history, before Caruso equalized from a Cristiana Girelli corner.

At last, in the second minute of stoppage time, Magaia provided the assist for Themba Kgatlang's match-winner and South Africa was through in a moment of huge significance for women's sport in their country.

Magaia's comment carried literal force. In advancing to the last 16, each South Africa player will take home at least \$60,000, a life-altering sum. Magaia said she now will be able to properly care for her mother.

A dispute over pay that clouded South Africa's preparation and only was resolved on the eve of the world tournament, now is well in the background, one of many trials the team had to overcome to get to the World Cup.

All of that struggle was reflected in their jubilation at fulltime. As the second half seeped they threw everything into a last bid for victory.

South Africa qualified second out of Group G behind Sweden, which beat Argentina 2-0 in its last match Wednesday and will face the United States in the next round. The South Africans will face the Netherlands on Sunday.

In previous group matches, South Africa lost 2-1 to Sweden after leading 1-0 with a Magaia goal and drew 2-2 with Argentina after leading.

On a night of high drama and low

temperatures, Caruso's 11th-minute penalty and Orsi's own goal kept it tight in the first half in Wellington, where a southerly wind dropped temperatures close to freezing and reduced the crowd to around 10,000, mostly South Africans.

Arianna Caruso's penalty in the 11th was canceled out by an own goal in the 32nd. Magaia scored in the 67th to put South Africa ahead 2-1, but Caruso equalized and momentum swung back to Italy.

At last Jermaine Seoposenwe went forward and squared the ball to midfielder Magaia who, rather than shooting, crossed to Kgatlang to strike the ball home.

The tension continued as stoppage time exceeded 11 minutes, and then it was over. Some South African players danced, many embraced. Others, Kgatlang among them, seemed too overwhelmed.

SOCCER

Now South Africa can regroup and think how it will take its next step. Italy was disconsolate at the end, so close to progressing, but denied at the last moment.

France 6, Panama 3

In Sydney, France has had to roll with the punches at the Women's World Cup.

The No. 5-ranked team was held to a surprise draw against Jamaica in its opening game and on Wednesday had the shock of going a goal down to Panama inside two minutes.



Sweden's Rebecka Blomqvist embraces teammate Madelen Janogy (left), after scoring her team's first goal during the Women's World Cup Group G soccer match between Argentina and Sweden in Hamilton, New Zealand. (AP)

France recovered to win 6-3 and advanced to the round of 16 atop Group F, but celebrations were muted after being pushed by another underdog.

He spoke after the Jamaica game of the way in which the gap is closing in women's international soccer. And Wednesday was further evidence of that as Panama exposed France's defensive weaknesses and Jamaica held Brazil 0-0 to advance as runner-up in the group.

France could face two-time champion Germany in the round of 16. While that is a potentially daunting prospect, this World Cup has proven that reputations can count for little as the once-dominant nations are being seriously challenged and cut down to size.

As well as Jamaica, South Africa is another unexpected name in the knockout stage, while Colombia beat Germany 2-1 and leads Group H heading into the last match.

France responded to going behind to Marta Cox's 30-yard (meter) free kick by scoring five times by the 52nd minute. But it still conceded two more as Panama mounted an unlikely fightback late on.

The French had to thank Kadidiatou Diani, who scored a hat trick to put them well ahead by the time Panama came back into it.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino was part of a crowd of 40,498 at Sydney Football Stadium for one of the most thrilling games of the tournament so far.

The French only needed a draw to guarantee their place in the round of 16 for the fourth time in succession. But Renard's team was given an early scare when Cox whipped the ball into the top corner, beyond the reach of goalkeeper Pauline Peyraud-Magnin to score her country's first goal at a Women's World Cup in style.

France responded impressively to that early setback by going into the break with a 4-1 lead.

Panama's Deysire Salazar lashed the ball into her own net when trying to clear Maelle Lakrar's header in the 21st. Diani scored her first goal seven minutes later, and converted from the spot in the 37th after Yomira Pinzon handled in the area.

Lea Le Garrec made it 4-1 in the fifth minute of first-half stoppage time. Panama's players had gone from elation at the start of the half to dejection at the end of it.

As the whistle blew for the break, Cox gathered her teammates for an impromptu huddle in the middle of the field, with the players looking visibly frustrated.

It got worse for Panama as Diani scored her second penalty seven minutes after the break when Wendy Natis



France's goalkeeper Pauline Peyraud-Magnin makes a save during the Women's World Cup Group F soccer match between France and Panama at the Sydney Football Stadium in Sydney, Australia. (AP)

was penalized on a VAR review for handling in the box.

France appeared capable of going on a goal spree in the second half, but it was Panama's players who mounted an unexpected fightback.

They pulled a goal back with a penalty in the 64th, which was converted by Pinzon.

Lineth Cedeno scored another for the 52nd-ranked team, with a header in the 87th.

Vicki Becho hit France's sixth in the 10th minute of stoppage time to set a new record for the number of goals her country has scored in a Women's World Cup match.

France will play the second-place team from Group H in Adelaide next Tuesday.

Sweden 2, Argentina 0

In Hamilton, Rebecka Blomqvist's second-half goal lifted Sweden to a 2-0 win over Argentina to advance the Blagult to a round-of-16 showdown with the United States.

Argentina was eliminated from the tournament.

Neither side looked close to scoring for much of the match until Blomqvist broke the deadlock with a headed goal at the 66th-minute mark to help the blue and yellow finish 3-0 and win Group G.

Sweden, which rested nine starters to open the match, threatened at times in the first half. A combination of disjointed play and fouls prevented Sweden from taking early control of the game.

Playing at times in a pelting rain, Argentina did not create a real chance in open play, and suffered a blow

when veteran Florencia Bonsegundo was stretchered off in tears after a late tackle by Blomqvist in the 41st minute.

Late in the match, Gabriela Chavez committed a foul while defending a corner kick. Elin Rubensson converted the penalty kick in stoppage time to seal the victory for Sweden.

Swedish captain Caroline Seger made her 20th Women's World Cup appearance Wednesday to equal Hedvig Lindahl's tournament record for Sweden.

Jamaica 0, Brazil 0

In Melbourne, After conceding 12 goals in its Women's World Cup debut in 1999, Jamaica shut out France, Panama and Jamaica in consecutive games to book an improbable place in the tournament's knockout stage.

It's the first time since 1995 that Brazil has failed to advance out of the group stage.

In addition to being ranked well below both Brazil and France, Jamaica progressed despite the financial struggles it faced before the tournament.

These difficulties resulted in Jamaica receiving support from fans through crowdfunding due to inadequate support from its federation. Nearly \$100,000 was raised for the team through two fundraisers.

After opening the tournament with a 4-0 victory over Panama, Brazil failed to get the victory it needed to extend the great Marta's sixth and last World Cup campaign.

With Marta starting the match for the first time in the group stage, Brazil maintained possession for most of the first half but struggled to test Jamaica goalkeeper Rebecca Spencer.