



rugby
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baseball

MPs KEEN ON POLL COMMISSION, AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTIONAL COURT TO SECURE THEIR RETURN

Reform begins with pensions, loans

Crown Prince aspires for a comprehensive development transformation

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

■ Citizens do not want to be entertained by proposals that supposedly stimulate the country's renaissance, as they rather instigate crises

■ The four laws are not that ambitious, and the Parliament and government did not address many files

■ Questions about the feasibility of an airport that can accommodate 25 million passengers while the country is closed and the conditions for visits are impossible

■ Kuwaitis are waiting for urgent solutions to problems caused by laws approved under parliamentary pressure

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 9: It is surprising that the people's priorities were removed from the list of MPs' priorities who are now focusing on their personal priorities as well as the disturbing files and issues which do not conform to the Kuwaiti society's culture, nature and composition, such as banning co-education, say reliable sources.

Sources pointed out this is happening at a time the plan of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah continues to aspire for a comprehensive developmental transformation, revitalizing the economy, diversifying sources of income to improve the citizens' livelihood, and upgrading services through decisions that ignore parliamentary extortion or influential people. Sources confirmed that the Kuwaiti society was built on social constants, represented in customs and traditions which shaped the features of the Kuwaiti fabric committed to its morals and its Arab and Islamic identity; warning about the precursor of new social and political crises whose signs are looming on the horizon with the outdated proposals. Sources added they are totally oblivious to prioritizing the merits of the current stage. Sources said some are trying to bring such issues back to the fore, especially banning co-education; while society is waiting for a lot from the two authorities to advance the country.

Sources pointed out the leadership is fully aware of the requirements of the current stage and the demands of citizens; confirming that "Kuwaitis monitored the National Assembly's first session in the current legislative term. They were satisfied with the outcome, although the four laws which were approved are not that ambitious. The Assembly did not consider what could relieve the burdens of citizens. It did not also take a step regarding personal loans that citizens were forced to obtain to cover needs that were beyond their reach, or due to illness or education."

Sources hinted that the parliamentarians only cared about certain files to ensure their return to the Assembly like the amendment of the Constitutional Court Law and ratification of the Election Commission Bill, while vital and urgent bills were postponed and set aside; foremost of which are the retirees and pension increment, especially those whose pension is less than a thousand Kuwaiti Dinars, as well as the personal loans file

that citizens with modest income have been waiting for. Sources added these two files might be pushed over to the next sessions despite their importance.

According to sources, "the Assembly did not consider the subsidies as well, and those with low salaries that are not consistent with the current inflation; pointing out other countries throughout the world are working to raise salaries based on inflation and decrease in the purchasing value of the currency to ease the burdens of citizens." They stressed that "the Assembly did not address many files and the government did not discuss them. The interference of profiteers hindered their completion, because the latter are working hard to keep decision-makers away from such vital issues. For example, subsidies that cost the State KD7 billion annually are benefiting only the wealthy and merchants who sell subsidized materials to the State, while experts confirm this does not happen in any other country. If only the government allocated KD1 billion or KD2 billion for the needy with low salaries, it would have saved a lot of public money. This would have stopped the daredevils who seek to put pressure with all force in order to maintain the suffering of the people, under the pretext of 'social justice'; hence, they incorporate bank loans and hard debts into this file, to get what they want."

Sources reiterated the need to deal with the loans file, emphasizing it is unfair for a large group of Kuwaitis; revealing that commercial loans secured by in-kind assets are totally in different from personal loans, which do not exceed KD1.9 billion.

Sources believe that consensus between the Assembly and government has become an urgent need in light of the current circumstances to ensure a better future for the relationship of the two authorities. They asserted: "Kuwaitis do not want to entertain themselves with proposals that do not stimulate the country's renaissance, but rather instigate crises and bickering which impede the national march towards progress."

Sources also emphasized that citizens are waiting for urgent solutions to problems caused by laws passed under parliamentary pressure in successive legislatures; including audio-visual amendments, electronic crimes and loans.

Sources stated: "Many citizens are wondering about the feasibility of the new airport, which is supposed to accommodate 25 million passengers annually; while the country is closed and does not allow visitors except under difficult conditions, and perhaps even impossible conditions, up to the point of preventing companies from welcoming visitors to conclude agreements and deals."



Al-Jarallah

Newswatch

ABU DHABI: UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed welcomed US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan at Al-Shati Palace in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday to discuss the strategic partnership between the UAE and the United States.

They reviewed regional and international developments and stressed on the importance of joint action to ensure peace and stability in the Middle East, according to the UAE news agency WAM.

Both sides expressed a shared desire to further strengthen the close relations in all areas to serve the common interests. (KUNA)

UNITED NATIONS: The United States and its allies vowed Tuesday to keep Syria's failure to account for its chemical weapons program in the spotlight at the U.N. Security Council every month despite opposition from Russia and China.

U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield told the council Syrian President Bashar Assad's government "has repeatedly lied to the international community" and to investigators from the international chemical weapons watchdog, which has confirmed that it used these banned weapons on at least nine occasions.

She said the Biden administration will continue to demand a full accounting from Syria as it pledged after joining the Chemical Weapons Convention in September 2013, when it was pressed by its close ally Russia following a deadly chemical weapons attack in the Damascus suburb of Ghouta, which the West blamed on Damascus. (AP)

UNITED NATIONS: The United Nations announced late Tuesday that an agreement had been reached with Syria to reopen the main border crossing from Tur-

key to its rebel-held northwest for six months.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres welcomed the "understanding" reached following talks between U.N. humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths and Syrian officials, U.N. deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said.

The agreement will reopen the Bab al-Hawa crossing which has been used for 85% of deliveries to the northwest Idlib region.

NEW DELHI: India's top opposition leader unleashed a strong condemnation Wednesday of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government for its failure to control bloodshed in a remote northeastern state that he said has been split in two.

Rahul Gandhi told Parliament that the army should have been able to stop the bloodshed already. But despite the presence of troops in Manipur, the violence has festered for over three months. More than 150 people have died in Manipur and over 50,000 people have fled in fear since clashes erupted in early May. (AP)

KHARTOUM: Clashes between Sudan's army and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) escalated Tuesday in the old neighborhoods of Omdurman, in the western part of the capital, Khartoum.

The committees of the districts issued relief calls for the adjacent neighborhoods to host hundreds of people who left their houses, and they mourned the people killed in clashes.

Al-Nour Hospital issued calls for blood donation as the number of injured has increased.

In a statement, the Sudanese army said its forces had completed combing the old districts of Omdurman and would continue attacks the rival, noting its forces caused casualties in the lines of RSF. (KUNA)

Day by Day

THE plane thief and the traitor, with his gang has been cornered, has become a familiar face for the security agencies of countries wherever he sets his foot on. They know he is a forger and has mastered the art of forging signatures using the high-tech scanner - a technique that is well-known to legal experts and the judiciary.

Don't you feel ashamed of yourself when you stand in front of your family and children ... since deep inside you know you are a thief.

Where are those people who you claimed you can con-

trol like puppets from a string? You cannot lie to people forever. Your days are numbered and soon you will find yourself behind bars.

The people whom you robbed in your country and stole their hotels and land and sent them to prison through false accusations are waiting to see your end sooner than later.

The day is not far when you will see your ugly face in every place.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



Kuwait Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is seen in this group photo, Wednesday, during his visit to the regional center of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI). - See Page 5

EGP 1.7bn net in first half '23 for ABK-Egypt

- Details Page 7 -

Banks told to increase rate

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 9: The Central Bank of Kuwait has directed banks, after its recent decision to raise the discount rate by 0.25 percent, to increase their pricing for individual deposits in dinars by a minimum of one-eighth of a percentage point, in a regulatory effort to increase the attractiveness of the national currency amid the widening margin between the discount rate. The interest on the dollar is about 1.25 percent, as the US interest currently ranges between 5.25 and 5.5 percent, reports Al-Rai daily.

The Central Bank has finally approved raising the discount rate from 4 to 4.25 percent, as of July 27. The sources indicated that, according to the CBK directive, all banks adjusted their price scale for new customer deposits, to add the added percentage, each according to its pricing, noting that the interest rate granted to customers differs from one bank to another, according to each bank's need for liquidity.

Continued on Page 5

Regional stability shared interest

US, Iraq affirm security cooperation

WASHINGTON, Aug 9, (KUNA): The US Department of Defense (DoD) and the Iraqi Ministry of Defense reaffirmed Tuesday their commitment to security cooperation and shared interest in regional stability.

"The US and Iraqi delegations reaffirmed their commitment to developing Iraq's security and defense capabilities and determination to deepen security cooperation across a full range of issues to advance our countries' shared interest in Iraq's security and sovereignty, and in the stability of the region," reads a joint statement after the conclusion of the inaugural US-Iraq Joint Security Cooperation Dialogue in Washington, D.C. from August 7-8.

The Iraqi delegation was led by Minister of Defense Thabit al-Abbasi and a US delegation, led by Assistant Secretary of Defense Celeste Wallander.

They discussed a range of bilateral defense issues in accordance with the 2008 US-Iraq Strategic Framework Agreement and as part of a comprehensive, 360-degree partnership.

Minister al-Abbasi met with US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and US representatives from the Joint Staff, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, US Central Command, State Department, and National Security Council.

The Iraqi delegation included the Director of the Counterterrorism Service, the Chief of Defense, the Deputy Commander of the Joint Operations Command - Iraq, and other senior officials.

The Joint Security Cooperation Dialogue reflects the maturing bilateral strategic partnership and builds upon the foundation laid by previous bilateral discussions, including the July 2021 US-Iraq Strategic Dialogue and February 2023 US-Iraq Higher Coordinating Committee.

The US and Iraqi delegations welcomed the full implementation of the Strategic Dialogue, confirming that there are no US forces with a combat role in Iraq and that all US military personnel remain in Iraq at the invitation of the Government of Iraq to train, advise, assist, and share intelligence in support of Iraq's fight to ensure the enduring defeat of ISIS.

The two sides reviewed shared challenges and opportunities for cooperation, focusing on the impressive achievements of the Defeat-ISIS campaign; ongoing efforts to prevent the group's resurgence, affirming the joint cooperation with the Iraqi Security Forces including the Peshmerga and a shared commitment to regional stability.

The delegations also reviewed the critical operational support provided through the mission of Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR) to train, advise, assist, and share intelligence with the Iraqi Security Forces. The delegations discussed the urgent need to repatriate displaced persons and detainees currently in northeast Syria to their countries of origin and to support reintegration efforts in local communities.

The United States and the Republic of Iraq intend to consult on a future process, separate from the JSCD and inclusive of the Coalition, to determine how the Coalition's military mission will evolve on a timeline according to the following factors: the threat from ISIS, operational and environmental requirements, and ISF capability levels.

The Iraqi and US delegations committed to form a higher military commission between the US and Iraq to evaluate the future process described above.

The delegations further discussed efforts to build the institutional capacity of the Iraqi Security Forces through US military assistance and security cooperation programs, including Foreign Military Financing and Foreign Military Sales.

Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:46 Asr 15:29
 Sunrise .. 05:12 Maghrib .. 18:34
 Zohr 11:54 Isha 19:58

Local

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

By Day: Hot and relatively humid specially over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind with speeds of 08-30 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

Weather

By Night: Hot to rather hot humid specially over coastal areas and partly cloudy with light to moderate southeasterly wind to light variable wind with speeds of 06-26 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain later on.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	47	36
Kuwait Airport	47	32
Abdaly	47	30
Jahra	48	34
Salmiyah	45	36
Ahmadi	45	37
Nuwaisib	46	34

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



Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Protocol Affairs Nabeel Al-Dakhl and the Bahraini Ambassador Salah Ali Al-Maliki.



Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah with Bahraini Ambassador Salah Ali Al-Maliki (right) and Egyptian Ambassador Osama Shaltout (center).



Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah with other dignitaries.



Photos by Leah Qurtal

Bahrain envoy hosts dignitaries

His Excellency Salah Ali Al-Maliki, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to Kuwait, hosted a gathering of prominent community members.

This assembly included esteemed sheikhs, officials, representatives from the diplomatic community, business

leaders, media professionals, journalists, and influential figures from traditional Kuwaiti diwanis. Among the distinguished guests was Ahmed Al-Jarallah, the Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers, who led the gathering.

Ministry suspends files of some charity groups

'FATF evaluation in November'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 9: The Ministry of Social Affairs has suspended the files of some philanthropic organizations until their data is updated, and the financial and administrative reports for the first and second quarters of 2023 are submitted, reports Al-Qabas daily.

According to informed sources, tightening control over fundraising organizations and clearing charity work from any suspicions have been in an ongoing bid to implement 40 recommendations to prevent the use of charity funds for financing terrorism and ensure that donations and aid go to those who deserve it.

The Ministry of Social Affairs decided to suspend the charters of some charities that it had licensed after discovering their non-compliance in updating their records and submitting their financial and administrative reports.

Work is underway in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Financial Controllers Bureau and the Central Bank of Kuwait to develop the charity work system in the country.

Files will be temporarily suspended until

the associations commit to submitting the required reports according to the framework overseeing the organization of charity associations both inside and outside the country.

The tightening of procedures and the application of articles of the law and regulations aims to ascertain the size of the charity projects outside the country, verify the sources for sending financial donations, and the extent of the associations' commitment to the laws and decisions regulating charity work in the country at home and abroad, especially since Kuwait is committed to international agreements that aim to combat terrorism and its financing.

Kuwait is awaiting the evaluation of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in November. Stopping the files made the non-compliant associations unable to send financial donations abroad.

They must now expedite the submission of financial and administrative reports on the work related to the first and second quarters of the current year, and upload it to the automated system in order to be able to work again.

The sources revealed that the ministry's automated system is divided into several items related to charity projects, and each association is obligated to fill in the data according to its financial status, and attach the beneficiaries of foreign projects, according to a previous approval from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the applicable electronic platform.

Some photos from the gathering.

Mission successful: eye doctors

1,462 treated in Chad, Somalia

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 9: The head of the Al-Safa Charitable Association, Muhammad Abd al-Rahman al-Shaya, announced the conclusion of the medical convoys for eye surgery and combating blindness in the republics of Chad and Somalia, which were carried out in the camps for the displaced in the regions of Baidoa and the Somali capital, Mogadishu, as well as in a number of regions of Chad, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Al-Shaya said in a press statement that the project cost 55 thousand dinars and benefited 1,462 patients, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the concerned authorities in Kuwait and the targeted countries.

He went on to say the project, which was donated by charitable people, aimed at improving the quality of life of the beneficiaries and providing good health for

those poor and needy, whom poverty prevented them from being able to perform such simple surgeries, adding that since the majority of the region's population are farmers or poor shepherds, they are in desperate need.

At a time when cataract cases are widespread among the population, you find that the hospitals in these regions suffer from an acute shortage of ophthalmologists and surgeons and need specialized medical services.

Al-Shaya explained that the clinical examination was carried out during the medical convoys for the benefit of 1,700 patients, and eye conditions were diagnosed through examination of the fundus of the eye, measurement of vision, measurement of intraocular pressure, lensometer, and ultrasound of the eye.

Kuwaitis can study in 2 Turkiye universities

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 9: The Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Acting Minister of Education, Dr. Jassim Al-Ustad said two Turkish universities specializing in human medicine has been accredited in accordance with the controls and standards, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In response to a question from MP Dr. Hamad Al-Matar, the minister said: On January 15, 2023, a decision was issued regarding the registration and enrollment of Kuwaiti students at Koc University and Hacettepe University in the Republic of Turkey, based on the controls and standards of the Public Authority for Academic Accreditation and Education Quality Assurance, taking into account the necessary criteria when determining institutions of higher education outside Kuwait.

For example, the institution must have institutional academic accreditation from one of the bodies specialized in academic accreditation in the country in which the institution is headquartered; the institution's academic programs must be academically and programmatically accredited by one of the programmatic academic accreditation bodies accredited by the National Bureau for Academic Accreditation and Education Quality Assurance.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Need more admission slots for excellent students in medical colleges'

IN A recent publication, Al-Qabas brought to our attention news of a concerning decline in admissions to Kuwait University's faculties of human medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy. This decline of 9% compared to the previous year starkly contradicts the alignment plans between education outputs and the job market, and is at odds with the development plan. Moreover, it is a blow to the aspirations of our exceptional students," columnist **Asrar Jowhar Hayat** wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"The report reveals that many exceptional students with high averages in high school, as well as their equivalent averages, were denied admission due to limited available medical seats at Kuwait University. This raises questions: How can it be that over four decades have passed since the inception of the Faculty of Medicine, which still only accommodates 170 students annually? Especially when there is a significant demand for Kuwaiti doctors, both male and female?"

"Equally perplexing is the fact that the acceptance rate into the Faculty of Medicine constitutes a mere 2% of the total admissions to the university, while the Faculty of Arts accepts 14%. These discrepancies challenge the notion of the development plan's effectiveness."

"Despite the existence of seven projects for new medical buildings in Kuwait as part of the development plan, the College of Medicine has seemingly chosen to scale down admissions rather than amplifying them."

"Is it reasonable for the university to continue admitting students into majors that are less in demand simply to inflate its admission numbers during press conferences?"

"Meanwhile, no substantive steps are taken to increase available slots in disciplines vital to Kuwait's needs, such as human medicine, dentistry, and pharmacology."

"Should the matter of admissions be left solely to the discretion of the university and its College of Medicine? Shouldn't there be coordination and alignment between government entities to ensure that the needs of the state's plans are met, particularly in areas where there is an evident gap in essential medical professionals?"



Asrar Hayat

"I direct my appeal to the wise government, specifically addressing His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Ahmed Al-Nawaf, and his deputy, His Excellency the Minister of Defense, Sheikh Ahmed Al-Fahd, who oversee the country's development file. I urge them to instruct the university to promptly admit students who achieve exceptional equivalent scores, exceeding 95%, into the faculties of human medicine and dentistry."

"This action would not only honor the academic excellence of our youth but also fulfill the demands of the development plan. This decision would mirror the government's previous steps in accepting all applicants for oil tests and the Saad Al-Abdullah Academy, prioritizing the fields of medicine and exceptional students."

"In conclusion, I implore the government to inquire about the numbers of professors in medical colleges and assess their capacity. I firmly believe that the colleges can easily double their current intake, if not more. It is essential to act decisively now to ensure that our healthcare sector is equipped with the national cadres it requires and that our students are provided with the opportunities they rightfully deserve."

Also:

"The recent strategy employed by "OPEC+" has been initiated by Saudi Arabia through its unilateral voluntary reduction of one million barrels of oil per day. This began last July and extends into the current and upcoming months. Russia is also participating in this strategy, contributing 500,000 barrels starting this month, with continuation into the next month," columnist **Kamel Abdullah Al Harmi** wrote for Al-Rai daily.

"This approach, alongside the collective reduction already in effect for over two years, has led to a rise in oil prices from \$75 per barrel two months ago to the current \$86. Yet, concerns remain regarding some organization members facing declining production and insufficient oil reserves, which might trigger an oil crisis. Despite the potential influx of additional oil supplies from non-OPEC + countries, Saudi Arabia remains steadfast in its production reduction policy."

"The focus now lies on stabilizing oil as a consistent financial source, free from fluctuations that could necessitate production cuts and subsequent adjustments to match the new barrel price. This proactive approach seeks to prevent financial deficits resulting from reduced income due to

declining oil prices.

"Oil-producing nations also shoulder expenses related to investing in new oil discoveries, maintaining old wells through advanced technologies, and ensuring continuous production. However, giant oil companies and independent firms show reluctance to invest in fossil fuels, capitalizing on OPEC +'s decisions to cut production and elevate oil prices."

"The current US administration faces a challenging scenario given the current \$86 per barrel oil price. It urgently requires purchases exceeding 300 million barrels to bolster strategic reserves. Missing the opportunity to buy oil at \$75 per barrel, it now finds itself in a waiting game as the likelihood of prices dropping to that level again is minimal. OPEC +'s swift intervention strategy prevents significant financial losses, with the organization making substantial sacrifices to establish the desired oil policy."

"Moreover, the challenge of rising bank interest rates compounds financial costs. Oil-producing nations, burdened with financial debts and necessitating foreign bank loans for capital projects, incur additional expenses. This compels these nations to seek higher oil prices and avoid levels under \$80."

"Russia's integration into the oil organization indeed contributed to price stability. However, the full potential of coordinating and structuring the oil market remains untapped. Despite European boycotts and imposed oil sanctions, Moscow maintained production by selling to China and India at discounted rates. This action influenced price hikes, motivating Russia's decision to decrease production by 500,000 barrels."

"This move could yield better prices and induce global price pressure, potentially softening major countries' sanctions, as seen with the United States and its efforts to increase oil supplies from Venezuela and Iran during the presidential election campaign."

"Consequently, Saudi Arabia's new oil strategy centers on agile intervention to achieve a suitable price level by curtailing supply, preempting shortages, and safeguarding oil countries' budgets. Moreover, it serves to offset bank interest costs and facilitate investment project continuity. In sum, "OPEC+" has reached an advanced stage in combating oil price declines and their repercussions."

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukay



The Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah kisses the Holy Quran.



The Minister of Defense distributes certificates and awards to the winners.



Deputy PM honors winners

Support vowed for Quran memorizing contests

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 9, (KUNA): Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah confirmed the Ministry of Defense's (MoD) keenness to support competitions that encourage memorizing the Holy Quran.

A ceremony was held under the auspices and presence of Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad at the ministry's headquarters Wednesday morning, honoring the winners of the Quran recitation competition from backgrounds of workers, retirees and children from employees of the defense, interior, Kuwait National Guard and Kuwait Fire Force, which was organized by the Directorate of Moral Guidance and Public Relations of Kuwaiti Armed Forces in cooperation with the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, MoD said in a press statement.

The ceremony began with the recitation of verses from the Quran, followed by a speech by the Director of Moral Guidance and Public Relations, Brigadier General Mohammad Al-Awadi, in which he appreciated the generous care and great interest that this competition received for this year from MoD, it added.

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad distributed certificates and prizes to the winners and congratulated them in a speech on their victory, it stated.

This comes as a continuation of the state's efforts in caring for the Quran and its people, which concludes annually during the organization of the Kuwait International Award for Memorizing the Holy Quran, under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, it mentioned.

Chief of the General Staff of the Army Major General Dr. Ghazi Hassan Al-Shammari, Assistant Chief of the General Staff of the Administration and Manpower Authority Major General Dr. Khaled Al-Kandari, and multiple commanding officers in the Kuwaiti army attended the ceremony.

1.4m travelled via airport in July

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 9, (KUNA): A total of 1,447,790 passengers travelled to and from Kuwait International Airport in July, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said Tuesday.

Speaking to KUNA in a statement, acting director general of DGCA Emad Al-Jalawi said the airport witnessed a rise in the number of passengers by 16 percent and flights by 23 percent.

He noted that air shipping increased by three percent in July compared to the same period of 2022.

The number of arrivals hit 640,458, and the passengers who left the country were 806,232 in July, he noted.

The number of transit passengers reached 166,465, an increase of 75 percent compared to the same time of 2022, he said, indicating that 12,468 passenger planes were operated to and from Kuwait airport in July.

On air shipping, he revealed that 16.1 million kg, including 12.7 million kg imported items, were shipped.

He indicated that Dubai, Cairo, Istanbul, Doha and Jeddah were the most in-demand destinations in the above-mentioned period.

Nazaha receives 99.5pc of assets disclosure records

Transparency, integrity eyed

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 9: A senior specialist in the Department of Receiving Financial Disclosure Receipts at the Public Authority for Anti-Corruption (Nazaha), Sarah Al-Ghamlas, said 34,678 financial disclosure statements were received until July 31, 2023, accounting for a total of 99.5 percent of the declarations," noting that "from among the declarations that were submitted to Nazaha include 17,494 first time declarations after assuming the job covered by the provisions of financial disclosures, while the Authority received 11,522 updates for the past 3 years, and 5662 final declarations covered by the provisions of financial disclosure law, reports Al-Rai daily.



Al-Ghamlas

Al-Ghamlas stressed on the "authority's keenness to establish the principle of transparency and integrity in economic and administrative transactions, and to work to combat corruption and prevent its risks and effects, and to strengthen the protection of state agencies from financial and administrative corruption," pointing to "the im-

Need to streamline advertising

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 9: The Director General of the Municipality, Eng. Saud Al-Dabbous, has emphasized the need to enforce strict control procedures pertaining to advertising regulations, which prohibit the display of any advertisement without obtaining proper authorization from the municipality and approval from other competent authorities, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to the instructions he issued, all control units must ensure legal procedures are followed regarding advertisements affixed to electricity poles, road signs, traffic lights and trees.

He stated that the teams responsible for monitoring will issue a detailed report for any violator who benefits from unauthorized advertising. Furthermore, legal

procedures will be followed to hold the individuals involved accountable for the violations.

Al-Dabbous pointed out that some individuals have been observed pasting prohibited advertisements, which include personal information like the advertiser's name and phone number. These actions and methods are in direct violation of Article 9 of the regulations, which strictly prohibit setting up such advertisements without the necessary license.

In addition, Al-Dabbous directed all supervisory positions involved in the matter to diligently enforce the circular. They are instructed to collaborate with relevant authorities and take all legal measures against individuals who display negligence to evade legal consequences.

portance of financial disclosure and its primary role in prevention" from financial corruption, protecting public funds, and strengthening oversight over everyone who assumes a public office.

On the occasion of the start of the second update period for the financial disclosure statements, starting from the beginning of this month, Al-Ghamlas urged the creditors to inquire about the start of their legal deadlines for submitting the financial disclosure declaration through the government "Sahel" platform to avoid delays beyond the legal deadlines allowed for them.

She pointed out, "The need to fill out the declaration forms, before coming to the authority's headquarters to hand in the financial disclosure statement, as all the required forms are available on

the authority's official website www.nazaha.gov.kw," stressing that "the authority continues to carry out the work of receiving financial disclosure statements."

The financial disclosure statement is submitted in three stages, starting with submitting the first declaration within 60 days of assuming the position, and the declaration is updated within 60 days from the end of every 3 years as long as the subject remains in his position, and finally the final declaration is submitted within 90 days of leaving the position.

In the event of delay or failure to submit a financial disclosure statement within its due date, he shall be punished with the penalties set forth in the law, and the violation file shall be referred to the competent examination committee to verify the elements of his financial disclosure.

Kuwait scouts to set example

CAIRO, Aug 9, (KUNA): Kuwait Boy Scouts Association is an example to be followed in the region, said Amr Hamdy, secretary general of Arab Scout Region at the World Organization of the Scout Movement Sunday.

At the conclusion of the voluntary work management course, Hamdy said the Kuwait branch will move to a new stage of progress thanks to the determination in attending such events.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chairman of the Kuwait Boy Scout Association Hussein Maqseed said that the course is the first of its kind in the Arab world, which is held for the heads and members of the committees working in the association.

Last week, the Arab Scout Region launched a course called "Development of Voluntary Work Management" for leaders in the association.

MUGHAL MAHAL  مغال محل
 ORDER WITH US DIRECTLY
 USE CODE : OFF15
 SCAN FOR ORDER
 1800188

KPC awards a series of purchase deals for 'LNG' from spot market

Intense heat wave prompted corp to increase fuel supply

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 9: Standard & Poor's (S&P) has reported information from reliable sources indicating that the intense heat wave sweeping the region has

prompted Kuwait Petroleum Corporation to initiate and award a series of immediate purchase contracts for liquefied natural gas (LNG), reports Al-rai

daily.

The agency disclosed that starting from July 6, the corporation has procured 6 shipments of LNG from the spot market. This move aims to meet the increased fuel demands for electricity generation during the ongoing heat wave in the country.

Furthermore, it was revealed that Kuwait Petroleum recently concluded a tender process and secured two LNG shipments for delivery in September. These shipments were obtained at a price range of 10.2 to 10.3 dollars per million British thermal units (MMBtu).

Delivery

According to an insider in the market, one of the two shipments might be scheduled for delivery in the latter part of September, while the second shipment's delivery was postponed to early October. Both shipments were awarded to an electricity producer.

In a separate tender that closed on July 18, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation successfully acquired two additional LNG shipments. These shipments are slated for delivery between August 25 and September 30, and they were secured at a slightly higher price of just over \$10 per BTU. The recipient of these shipments is an electricity producer and portfolio company.

Sources within the Middle East market have indicated that Kuwait Petroleum's purchasing decisions are based on a comparison between the prices of LNG and fuel oil, rather than adhering to standard pricing norms. The timing of

these tenders is also strategically aimed at obtaining competitive price offers.

Kuwait Petroleum embarked on spot purchases for the summer period, commencing with the closure of its tender on July 6. During this process, two shipments were procured at a price range of \$11.1 to \$11.3 per British thermal unit.

Data from "Standard & Poor's Global Commodity Insights" reveals that as of August 4, the price of LNG in the Middle East stood at \$10.55 per British thermal unit. In comparison, the price based on the Japan-Korea LNG standard was evaluated at \$10.99 per British thermal unit.

According to agency data, Kuwait imported 6.45 million metric tons of LNG in 2022. From January to July of the present year, the country imported 3.46 million metric tons.

Market insiders have noted that the majority of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's immediate LNG purchases are aimed at fulfilling the nation's heightened electric power requirements during the peak of the summer season.

The agency highlighted that Kuwait experienced record temperatures, with the mercury reaching around 47 degrees Celsius in July. Subsequently, the temperature surged to approximately 52 degrees Celsius on August 2.

In Egypt, the government was compelled to implement electricity rationing in many regions due to the heat wave. Similarly, the Iranian government declared a two-day public holiday on August 1 owing to the unprecedented heat wave.

Chinese influence expanding

China welcomes establishment of platform for ME multilateral talks

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 9: The Chinese Ambassador to the country, Zhang Jianwei, affirmed that his country supports international efforts to find a political solution to the Ukraine crisis, stressing the importance of reaching a solution through peaceful settlement and dialogue, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a statement to the daily, Jianwei expressed China's readiness to work with the international community to continue playing a constructive role in order to promote a political settlement to this crisis.

Asked if the participation of China and the US in the summit, which was called for by Saudi Arabia, would pave the way for ending the war in Ukraine, he said: "The Chinese side supports all efforts aimed at a political solution, pointing out that China's participation came in response to the invitation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia."

He added the Chinese position on the Ukraine crisis is consistent and clear from the beginning, and we call for finding a political solution to this crisis, and we push for dialogue, negotiation and finding a political settlement, noting that the Chinese side calls for preserving the sovereignty of states and their territorial integrity, respecting the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter, and paying attention to the legitimate security concerns of all parties, as well as support for all efforts aimed at finding a political solution, and this is our permanent and clear position.

Regarding the indications and messages behind the expansion of Chi-

nese influence and presence in the region, he said: China plays a positive role in the region with the aim of achieving development and stability, and it also stands by the efforts of Arab countries aimed at achieving peace, and we will continue our work in this regard, stressing that China has no special interest. Rather, it cooperates for the common interest with all countries in the region.

Asked if China was planning to hold an Iranian-Gulf summit, he only said: "The Chinese side will work with the countries of the region to achieve stability and development in the interest of all countries, and China has welcomed since ancient times the establishment and strengthening of a platform for multilateral dialogue in the Middle East, and this is consistent with the desire of countries in the region to improve relations and promote stability."

On the possibility of holding another Chinese-Arab summit, he said: "Last December, the Chinese-Arab summit and the Chinese-Gulf summit were held for the first time in Riyadh, and I believe there will be a second and third summit in the future."

Regarding China's role in the events and crises taking place in the countries of the region, he said: "We -- the Chinese -- are confident that the countries of the region will find a fair, just and reasonable solution through dialogue and negotiation on all problems in the region, and we are ready to work with the countries of the region and strengthen cooperation with them to achieve the interest of all peoples."

Proposed recommendations submitted

Arab Women's Committee meeting addresses 'women empowerment'

CAIRO, Aug 9, (KUNA): The extraordinary ministerial meeting of the Arab Women's Committee kick started on Wednesday to examine issues related to the broad objective of empowering women.

Ambassador Haifaa Abu Ghazala, the Arab League assistant secretary general for social affairs, said in a statement that the secretariat general places the empowerment of women among its priorities.

The three-day meeting addresses issues related to the women em-

powerment and proposed recommendations that would be submitted to the Arab summit for economic and social development, due in Mauritania in November.

Abu Ghazala added that the conferees would also discuss the strategic framework of the regional program for empowering women at the economic and social levels (2024-2030), an Arab task plan for encouraging business pioneering for the Arab females and the Arab women political empowerment.



The Guest Show poster

TGS presents Shiny Frank

This Thursday, The Guest Show (TGS) presents Shiny Frank, a noted Indian social worker.

Shiny has been living in Kuwait for many years. Professionally she is involved in schools for differently abled children, but her passion lies in social work. Her sympathy and empathy for the suffering and the downtrodden led her to help and support them in

different ways.

She was especially active during Covid, assisting the Indian Embassy as a volunteer and also otherwise providing help and succor to hundreds of people. It's not easy to be socially committed and Shiny is definitely that and more.

Here in this episode, she speaks to Chaitali B. Roy about her journey.



August

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KUNA photos Part of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society's aid to the Sudanese people.

Kuwait, Egypt to deliver urgent relief aid to Sudan: KRCS official

CAIRO, Aug 9, (KUNA): Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced on Wednesday that it was coordinating with authorities in Egypt to deliver 190 tons of urgent medical and food supplies to Sudan.

KRCS coordinator Khaled Al-Mutairi told KUNA that the Kuwaiti Em-

bassy in Cairo would coordinate with the Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC) to deliver urgent relief aid material to Sudan.

He affirmed that relief shipment would be handed to the Sudanese Red Crescent (SRC) and the Health Ministry for distribution.

HH Crown Prince, PM send greetings

HH the Amir congratulates Singapore on National day

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 9, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has sent a cable to Singaporean President Halimah Yacob expressing congratulations on her country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir wished the president good health and welfare to the people of Singapore.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-

Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has sent a cable to President Halimah Yacob expressing congratulations on her country's National Day.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished the president lasting good health and wellbeing. Also, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has sent a cable to President Halimah Yacob expressing congratulations on her country's National Day.

Kuwait 'ranks' 4th among Arab states as best country to live in

Ranks 60th globally according to The Statehood Index Stlx

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 9: Kuwait ranked fourth in the Gulf and Arab countries and 60 globally in the list of the best country to live in around the world, according to The Statehood Index Stlx, achieving 0.70 points, describing the quality of performance of Kuwaiti institutions as moderate.

As part of a research project issued by the German University of Würzburg, experts ranked 173 countries according to the extent to which they meet the basic needs of their population, including other criteria such as the rule of law, crime rate, violence, governance, and others.

Performance

The composite index refers to the performance of institutions and the ability of the state to introduce and support the laws enacted by the system. The index is also a tool for measuring the quality of the state by collecting detailed data to enhance performance comparison and policy analysis.

The UAE ranked first regionally and 32 globally, followed by Oman 48, Qatar 52, Kuwait 60, and Saudi Arabia 63. Singapore topped the world rankings, followed by Australia in second place, Denmark third, the Netherlands fourth, and Estonia fifth, while Luxembourg, Norway, Belgium, New Zealand and Germany dominated the rest of the top ten respectively.

The United States ranked 23rd, and Taiwan ranked 43rd, ahead of China, which ranked 61st after Kuwait. On the other hand, at the bottom of the index was Libya at 173, Yemen came at 172 and South Sudan at 171.

KD 2m allotted for consultancy deal tied to rail project

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 9: The Ministry of Public Works earmarked KD2 million in its budget for fiscal 2023/2024 to finance the consultancy agreement for the railway linkage between Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, reports Al-Rai daily quoting sources from the ministry.

Sources said the contract includes the development of tourism and logistics infrastructure in the surrounding area, with the aim of achieving the goal included in the work program of the government.

Sources revealed that Minister of Public Works Dr Amani Bogamaz gives importance to this project, as it is one of the vital projects in the government's work program under the economic axis; which includes a plan to develop and fortify priority sectors like transportation and logistics.

Sources also confirmed the issuance of decree number 113/2023 on approving the agreement, which was signed by the ministry as the representative of the Kuwaiti government; while the government of Saudi Arabia was represented by its Ministry of Transportation and Logistics Services.

Sources added the project aims to organize and activate the sustainable railway link between the two countries in order to achieve safe and efficient rail transportation; as well as the other positive, economic and environmental effects of the project.



Dr Bogamaz

'Application experience vital for business owners'

MoH gets approval from regulatory authorities for supply of medicines

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 9: The Ministry of Health recently obtained, as part of the ongoing supply operations, the approvals of the regulatory authorities regarding the supply of drugs for the treatment of cancer diseases at the Hussein Makki Al-Jumaa Center for Specialized Surgery, at a cost of about 3 million dinars, in addition to other medicines for the treatment of blood diseases in government hospitals worth 924 thousand dinars, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The sources added, that the approvals of the regulatory authorities included approving the ministry's request for the supply of medicines, solutions and supplies for dialysis in dialysis centers, worth 1.4 million dinars, in addition to medicines and solutions for treating mental illness, worth about one million dinars, in addition to medicines for patients with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome at the Communicable Diseases Hospital, Jahra 2, at a cost of 896,000 dinars, and other drugs for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis in public hospitals, at a cost of 910,000 dinars.

The sources added that the ministry is in the process of supplying medicines to treat a genetic bone disease in Jahra Hospital, at a cost of 782,000 dinars, saying it will not hesitate to provide and supply all kinds of medicines to patients and visitors in health facilities, with the aim of preventing any negatives that may hinder the patients obtaining his right to a diagnosis and treatment within a short period of time.

In addition, the Ministry of Health clarified, in response to what was circulated on social media, regarding the refusal to dispense medicine in Ibn Sina Hospital to a patient suffering from cancer, that the patient came with his sister last Thursday, and the medicine in the prescription and the patient's electronic file was dispensed. This is in accordance with the controls governing the dispensing of medicines.

The ministry added, in a statement, that another drug that is not a cancer treatment drug was withheld, as it was requested orally by the patient's sister, and is not included in the prescription.

Fahd Al-Shula, the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Communications Affairs, emphasized the necessity of implementing strategic measures that enhance the user experience of both individuals and business owners when utilizing government e-services. These steps are specifically directed at improving the Sahel and Sahel for Business Owners applications.

Al-Shula stated in an announcement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Wednesday that, subsequent to presiding over the coordination committee's meeting responsible for overseeing the Sahel and Sahel for Business Owners applications, these developmental actions are achieved through collaborative efforts among government entities. The aim is to elevate the overall quality of services and digital products they offer.

He clarified that the coordination committee remains committed to bolstering the impact of government agencies' endeavors in creating a framework for delivering electronic services, in alignment with the state's objectives. This approach aligns with the government's strategic plan for a productive administration and digital empowerment.

The minister also revealed that the committee convened to unify work teams and intensify cooperative efforts. The committee's ongoing commitment is to realize and fulfill the nation's vision for development. This reflects the resolute determination of government leaders to design and execute comprehensive plans, aiming to transition all government transactions into electronic formats for streamlined accessibility.

Al-Shula highlighted that government digital applications are integral tools in fostering digital advancement within a contemporary state. These applications play a vital role in enhancing service provision and simplifying administrative processes. By offering easy and efficient access to a diverse range of government services, they effectively reduce the time and effort required for completing transactions.

"Mujezat Al-Shifa" opens its branch No. 43 in The Avenues

Mujezat Al-Shifa Honey Company, which specializes in the production and distribution of bee products, has opened its new branch in the Avenues Mall, which is the 43rd branch for it in the State of Kuwait, in addition to the presence of more than twenty branches around the world.

In the context of this, the director of the "Miracle of Healing" Muhammad Al-Majdadi said: Out of a feeling of confidence that consumers gave us to become the first choice for lovers of bee honey and its products in Kuwait, we are always keen to be closer to our customers within the trouble of searching and in contact with them in every area, especially in the Avenues Mall. Which walked one of Kuwait's prominent landmarks, and as a global company, our products must be within sight of tourists visiting Kuwait from all countries of the world.

It is noteworthy that Mujezat Al-Shifa Company was established 25 years ago, and during these years it has been following the path of excellence and keeping pace with global development, in addition to keenness to enhance the quality of bee products, in addition to educating consumers.



KUNA photo
Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah and Acting Head of the National Security Apparatus Sheikh Sabah Shamlan.

FM visits NATO Regional Center, ICI

Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah visited, Wednesday, the regional center of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), in the presence of Acting Head of the Kuwaiti National Security Apparatus (NSA) Sheikh Sabah Shamlan Abdulaziz Al-Sabah.

During the visit, they were briefed on the work of the center and ways of enhancing cooperation and relations with the alliance and facilitating political dialogue between NATO countries and their partners in the Arab Gulf region, by creating a platform for discussion about security challenges at the regional and international levels. (KUNA)

MoE plans to hire 1,200 teachers

Ministry of Health fills 'vacant' positions through assignments

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 9: The Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadi, has issued a ministerial decision assigning Dr. Hisham Ahmed Kalandar, the duties of the Assistant Undersecretary for External Health Services Affairs in addition to his work, in the framework of filling the vacancies for leadership positions in the ministry, reports Al-Rai daily.

The vacant leadership positions whose affairs are managed by assignment include the position of undersecretary, in addition to 10 positions of assistant undersecretaries, out of 16 assistant undersecretaries, according to the new organizational structure of the ministry.

Vacant

The list of vacant sectors includes dentistry, support medical services, legal affairs, health care, public health, administrative affairs, engineering affairs and projects, digital health affairs, external health services affairs, and the position of Secretary General of the Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialization.

And at the level of assignments to fill the vacancies in these sectors, Al-Awadi issued earlier decisions that included:

■ Assigning Dr. Ahmed Abdel Rahman Asad to carry out the tasks and duties of the Assistant Undersecretary for Dental Affairs, in addition to his duties.

■ Assigning Dr. Al-Mundhir Al-Hassawi to carry out the tasks and work of the Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Affairs, in addition to his duties.

■ Assigning Dr. Nadia Juma to carry out the tasks and duties of the Assistant Undersecretary for Health Care Affairs, in addition to her duties.

■ Assigning Dr. Yaqoub Al-Tamar to carry out the tasks and duties of the Assistant Undersecretary for Medical Support Services.

■ Assigning Eng. Ibrahim Al Naham to carry out the duties of the Assistant Undersecretary for Engineering Affairs and Projects.

■ Assigning Dr. Fatima Al-Najjar to carry out the tasks and duties of the Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative Affairs, in addition to her duties as the Undersecretary for Special Medical Services.

■ Assigning Hisham Al-Dulaimi to carry out the duties of the Assistant Undersecretary for Legal Affairs, in addition to his duties as Undersecretary for Technical Affairs.

tion to his duties as Undersecretary for Financial Affairs.

■ Assigning Dr. Abdul Rahman Al-Mutairi to carry out the duties of the Undersecretary and the Secretary-General of the Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialization, in addition to his duties as Undersecretary for Technical Affairs.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education has identified its requirements for educational staff members for the upcoming academic year 2023/2024, totaling 1,200 male and female teachers, reports Al-Rai daily.

Shortages

The ministry, according to the daily, has called upon its administrative sector to source these educators both domestically and internationally, aiming to address shortages in specific subjects and bolster manpower for new educational institutions.

In the meantime, an educational source said 320 male and female teachers have secured approvals from the Civil Service Commission under local contracts up to the present date, with other matters being addressed by the CSC.

According to the source, the administrative sector has initiated the digital reception of teacher applications for external contracts through the ministry's official website. Simultaneously, they are in the process of reviewing numerous applications submitted by non-Kuwaiti teachers within the local context to ensure compliance with the prescribed specialization criteria established by the public education sector.

The source indicated that the appointment of Kuwaiti teachers nominated by the CSC will be conducted through the ministry's online platform.

The CSC, however, declined applications from numerous non-Kuwaiti teachers, citing the presence of Kuwaiti candidates registered in the central employment system for the same disciplines.

In addition, the source affirmed the ongoing collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the CSC to lift restrictions on job classifications for non-Kuwaiti teachers, aligning with the required numbers for the forthcoming academic year, explaining that there are about 1,000 vacant grades to provide cleaning workers for the ministry.

consistent with their plans to expand their lending activities, and therefore they are working to raise their share of dinar deposits from the individual market.

The sources pointed out that the highest interest rate is usually granted for long-term deposits, which start from a period of one year or more, while the lowest pricing is for short-term deposits such as the day and the week, noting that the CBK monitors the movement of deposits and their prices and any decline from the rates that were directed to be amended.

The sources stated that the banks' demand for individual deposits, particularly elite clients, is still strong, on the basis that they are classified as stable funds to a large extent, and it is difficult to move them from one bank to another if the owner is offered a slightly higher pricing by a competing bank, unlike commercial deposits that are less stable and more mobile in demand for the benefit of highest rate.

Banks told

Continued from Page 1

There are also technical considerations that determine the special interest rates, as the high rate is directed to clients with elite or "VIP" deposits, whose funds range from 500 thousand to one million dinars and above, and the terms of their deposits are characterized by stability, and their bonding periods are not less than one year. This motivates the competing bank to attract deposits to give them special rates.

Of course, there are reasons related to meeting the liquidity ratios, which the CBK is keen to be at very high rates, as there are banks that suffer from arranging their liquidity ratios most likely in the first half of this year, especially with regard to the "LCR" standard, as well. Others have surpluses, but they are not

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Nelson Vélez and María Ojeda from the San Germán T-Mobile store visited San Francisco de Asís Animal Sanctuary, bringing food and cleaning supplies as well as two hotspots to support their office operation. Dellymar Bernal and Esmeralda Montalvo (along with some cheerful furry residents) celebrated their visit.



T-Mobile donates \$50,000 to nonprofit organizations

T-Mobile is committed to Puerto Rico and has announced a donation of \$50,000 to selected nonprofits in their territory. T-Mobile Puerto Rico employees had the opportunity to choose five local nonprofit organizations to receive \$10,000 each: El Comedor de la Kennedy, Pediatric Hospital Foundation, Boys and Girls Clubs of Puerto Rico, San Francisco de Asís Animal Shelter, and My Brother's Workshop in USVI. T-Mobile employees visited the organizations to deliver the news and to make the donations. The Difference Maker Award is present-

ed to the top-ranked area, as scored on the Un-carrier Leaderboard each quarter. The collective team can share immense pride knowing their performance earned them the top spot as the "best of the best" in overall business performance. And most important, they are awarded to invest in their local communities! "Our Puerto Rico team is unlike any other. For years, they have led the way in showcasing how localized partnerships can provide unmatched opportunities to grow our brand while providing best-in-class experiences. Puerto Rico has been the example to

follow in so many ways! So, it's no surprise they continue to deliver an outsized contribution to our business," said Jon Freier, President, T-Mobile Consumer Group. "T-Mobile Puerto Rico recognizes the hard work and commitment of these organizations and their volunteers. I am proud of the dedication our employees put in every day at their jobs and in their communities. We are building something truly amazing as we make meaningful investments in our network, our customers and our people and we won't stop," said Jorge Martel, VP and General Manager for T-Mobile Puerto Rico. (AP)

Market Movements 09-08-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
PAKISTAN - KSE 100	+2.04	48,334.54	UAE - DFM	-0.18	4,070.54
PHILIPPINES - PSEI	+0.89	6,530.45	JAPAN - Nikkei	-0.53	32,204.33
SAUDI - Tadawul	+0.37	11,286.21			
EGYPT - EGX 30	+0.08	17,763.63			

Business

Biden is pitching his economic policies as key to a manufacturing jobs revival

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M., Aug 9. (AP): Bringing back factory jobs is one of the most popular of White House promises - regardless of who happens to be the president.

Donald Trump said he'd do it with tariffs. Barack Obama said companies would start "insourcing." George W. Bush said tax cuts would do the trick. But factory jobs seemed to struggle to fully return after each recession.

On Wednesday, President Joe Biden was to make the case in a New Mexico speech that his policies of financial and tax incentives have revived U.S. manufacturing. His claim is supported by a rise in construction spending on new factories. But factory hiring has begun to slow in recent months, a sign that the promised boom has yet to fully materialize.

That hasn't stopped the White House from telling voters ahead of the 2024 election that the Democratic president's agenda has triggered a "renaissance" in factory work.

"Hundreds of actions coordinated through his entire government are sparking a manufacturing renaissance across the United States," White House climate adviser Ali Zaidi told reporters ahead of Biden's New Mexico speech, asking them to picture in their minds a crowded jobs fair in Belen, New Mexico, for the 250 workers that Arcosa plans to hire at a factory that makes wind towers.

The president will speak as construction starts on Arcosa's plant, which formerly made Solo cups and later plastics. The White House said that Arcosa had to lay off workers in Illinois and Iowa before the Inflation Reduction Act became law last year, but customers placed \$1.1 billion in wind tower orders with the company afterward. The stock has risen more than 20% in the past 12 months.

Biden's message on jobs is one he's been repeating frequently.

At a Philadelphia shipyard last month, Biden offered his policies to fight climate change by shifting away from fossil fuels as a way to create jobs. It's a sign that he wants voters to process his social and environmental programs as being good for economic growth.

"A lot of my friends in organized labor know: When I think climate, I think jobs," Biden said. "I think union jobs. Not a joke."

Biden's trip to the Southwest is shaded by his reelection campaign and the challenge posed by a majority U.S. adults saying that they believe the economy is in poor shape. The president is trying to break through a deep pessimism that intensified last year as inflation spiked. His trip included a Tuesday speech in Arizona and will end with remarks Thursday in Utah. In 2020, Biden won both Arizona and New Mexico, key states that he likely needs to hold next year to secure another term.

The president does have a case to make to the public on employment. As the U.S. economy healed from the coronavirus pandemic, hiring has surged at factories. Manufacturing jobs have climbed to their highest totals in nearly 15 years. This is the first time since the 1970s that manufacturing employment has fully recovered from a recession.

But the pace of job growth at manufacturers has slowed over the past year. Factories were adding roughly 500,000 workers annually last summer, a figure that in the government's most recent jobs report fell to 125,000 gains over the past 12 months.

Biden administration officials have said there are more factory jobs coming because of its infrastructure spending, investments in computer chip plants and the various incentives in the Inflation Reduction Act.

Their argument is that the incentives encouraged the private sector to invest, leading to \$500 billion worth of commitments to make computer chips, electric vehicles, advanced batteries, clean energy technologies and medical goods. They say that more factories are coming because, after adjusting for inflation, spending on factory construction has climbed almost 100% since the end of 2021.

In April, the Economic Innovation Group, a public policy organization, issued a report that called construction spending for factories a "nationwide boom." The report notes there are signs that manufacturing gains are most prominent outside the Midwest, which has historically identified with the sector, as more plants open in southern and western states. But EIG is less sure that a full-fledged restoration of manufacturing is in the works as the sector has been in decline for decades.

Labor Department figures show that total factory employment peaked in 1979 at nearly 19.6 million jobs. With just under 13 million manufacturing jobs now, the U.S. is unlikely to return to that level because of automation and trade.

Adam Ozimek, chief economist at EIG, said jobs can be a flawed way to measure a manufacturing revival. He said better metrics include an increase in factory output, whether the U.S. can shift to renewable energy to blunt climate change and whether the government can achieve its national security goals of having a stronger supply chain.

"It's way too early to declare anything like a manufacturing renaissance," Ozimek said. "We are decades into structurally declining manufacturing employment. And it's not at all clear yet whether the positive trends are going to outweigh that continuing headwind."

Wall Street slips ahead of highly 'anticipated' report on inflation



Currency traders watch monitors near the screens showing the Korea Composite Stock Price Index (KOSPI), (right top), at the foreign exchange dealing room of the KEB Hana Bank headquarters in Seoul, South Korea. (AP)

Asia shares mostly decline

NEW YORK, Aug 9, (AP): Stocks are slipping Wednesday, weighed by drops for Big Tech companies, as Wall Street waits for a highly anticipated report on inflation that's arriving the next day.

The S&P 500 was down 0.6% in midday trading, coming off a rough run where it's dropped in five of the last six days. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 113 points, or 0.3%, at 35,200, as of 11:20 a.m. Eastern time, and the Nasdaq composite was 1.3% lower.

Stocks have cooled in August since soaring 19.5% through the first seven months of the year. Several reasons are behind the mini-pullback, including criticism that Wall Street too quickly formed a consensus that inflation will keep cooling, the economy will keep growing and the Federal Reserve has already finished its hikes to interest rates.

A report on Thursday will offer a big clue on how warranted those hopes are. The U.S. government will give the latest monthly update on inflation that consumers are feeling across the country, and economists expect to see an acceleration to 3.3% in July from 3% in June.

Such a reading would be down sharply from its peak of more than 9%

last summer, but economists say the last bit of improvement to get inflation down to the Fed's 2% target may be the toughest part.

Fed officials have said repeatedly recently that their upcoming decisions on interest rates will depend on what the data tells them, and they've pointed to reports on inflation and the job market in particular.

"With risks turning increasingly two-sided, Fed officials are beginning to shift the focus toward how long to hold rates steady at sufficiently restrictive levels," according to economists at Deutsche Bank.

A reading on Thursday that's much worse than expected could raise fears that the Fed's job in battling inflation is far from done and that it may have to keep hiking interest rates. At the least, it could push the Fed to keep rates high for longer than expected.

High rates slow inflation by grinding down the entire economy and hurting investment prices. The Fed has already pulled its federal funds rate to the highest level in more than two decades.

In the meantime, companies continue to offer profit reports for the spring that are mostly better than analysts expected.

Axon Enterprise, the company behind Tasers and Axon body cameras, jumped 16.3% for the biggest gain in the S&P 500. It reported much stronger profit for the spring than analysts expected. Akamai Technologies also helped to lead the market after beating forecasts for both profit and revenue. Akamai's stock rose 9.2%.

Outside of earnings, Penn Entertainment jumped 10.4% after the gaming company announced Tuesday that it was paying \$1.5 billion for the exclusive rights to re-brand its sports-betting app with the ESPN name.

On the losing end of Wall Street was Lyft, which fell 3.6%. The ride-share company reported better results for the latest quarter than expected, and its forecasts for the current quarter also topped forecasts. But analysts highlighted some cautious comments from the company for expectations for the end of the year.

WeWork plunged 37.9% to 13 cents after saying there's substantial doubt about its ability to stay in business as it burns through cash. The workspace-sharing company has already had a couple spectacular rises and falls in its history, and it reported a larger loss than expected for the spring late Tuesday.

Nvidia was the heaviest weight on the S&P 500, falling 5.5%. The chipmaker is one of the stocks that have rocketed this year due to Wall Street's frenzy around artificial-intelligence technology, raising fears that they went too far.

Europe

France's CAC 40 added 1.3% in early trading to 7,366.35, while Germany's DAX jumped 1.1% to 15,944.74. Britain's FTSE 100 gained 0.8% to 7,584.18. U.S. shares were set to drift higher with Dow futures up nearly 0.1% at 35,426.00. S&P 500 futures rose 0.2% to 4,528.50.

Asia

Asian shares mostly fell after worries about the U.S. banking system set off a decline on Wall Street and amid concerns closer to home about Chinese economic growth.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 lost 0.5% to 32,232.60 in afternoon trading. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 edged up 0.3% to 7,329.10. South Korea's Kospi added 1.3% to 2,606.84. Hong Kong's Hang Seng dropped 0.3% to 19,134.00, while the Shanghai Composite shed 0.4% to 3,247.91.

Clifford Bennett, chief economist at ACY Securities, called the export data out of China "rather alarming," noting it was the sharpest decline in three years and reflected global economic challenges, not just in China.

"Global demand is falling precipitously," he said.

"It is now very likely we will all be surprised by just how intense this global economic slowdown becomes. The three major economies of the world - U.S., China and the EU - are leading the downward charge."

Oil

In energy trading, benchmark U.S. crude slipped 16 cents to \$82.76 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, fell 14 cents to \$86.03 a barrel.

Currencies

In currency trading, the U.S. dollar fell to 143.13 Japanese yen from 143.36 yen. The euro cost \$1.0979, up from \$1.0960.

Unwavering commitment to innovation

stc leads the way in Mobile VPN testing

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 9: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced its successful completion of a pilot test for the new Mobile VPN technology, becoming the first telecom operator in Kuwait to achieve this remarkable feat. stc proved its technical prowess and dedication to offering secure and dependable mobile communication solutions through the implementation of Mobile VPN, a groundbreaking technology enabling mobile users' secure and efficient access to public and private networks.

The innovative solution tested by stc addresses challenges that arise in connecting to poor public-private network collaboration and unsatisfactory intelligent transformation, empowering organizations to access government and campus private networks securely from anywhere, at any time. With Mobile VPN, users can seamlessly connect to both public and private networks without the hassle of changing cards or numbers, fostering enhanced collaboration, heightened security, and seamless connectivity. This marks a significant step towards a new era of digital transformation and productivity, further solidifying stc's position as a leader in the telecom and digital solutions industry.

The pilot test reflects stc's unwavering focus on expanding its service offerings and maintaining its competitive pioneering position within the telecommunications industry. As the first telecom operator in the Kuwait to achieve this milestone, stc strengthened its position as a leader in offering transformative solutions to businesses and individuals.

Engineer Fahad Abdul Rahman Al Ali, CTO of stc, said, "At stc, we are driven by innovation and customer-centricity. Our successful Mobile VPN



Fahad Al Ali

pilot test represents our commitment to empowering businesses and individuals with secure and seamless mobile communications. Our focus is to not only provide convenience and a breadth of digital solutions, but also provide our valued customers with secure access to their sensitive information."

Advanced and Secure Connectivity. The success of the Mobile VPN pilot test marks the potential for stc to develop and introduce new service offerings in various industries, providing numerous benefits for key sectors in the Kuwaiti market:

1. School Campuses: With Mobile VPN, educational institutions can transform their campus networks, providing seamless and secure connectivity for both remote and on-campus education. The service enables efficient online learning, access to educational resources, and collaborative tools, ensuring uninterrupted education during pandemics or other disruptions.

2. Government: The use of Mobile VPN empowers government entities to establish secure and efficient 5G private networks. This enables seamless data transmission, secure communication, and efficient collaboration amongst government officials, accelerating digitalization efforts and enhancing the services provided for citizens.



stc visual on VPN testing

Result reflects solid growth in profit, business volume

ABK-Egypt achieves EGP 1.7 bln net profit in H1 of 2023

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait - Egypt (ABK-Egypt) announced achieving breakthrough results for the first half of the year ended 30 June 2023 reflecting very solid growth in profits and business volume over the course of the year. The Bank managed to achieve EGP 1.7 billion Net Profit representing a 91.6% growth compared to EGP 887 million over the same period in 2022.

Also compared to the same period in 2022, Net Interest Income grew by 40% to reach EGP 1.8 billion from EGP 1.3 billion and Net Operating Profit increased by 58.7% to reach EGP 1.7 billion from EGP 1 billion.

ABK-Egypt, one of the fastest growing banks in the Egyptian market, reported growth in Total Assets by 11.7% to reach EGP 84.5 billion compared to EGP 75.6 billion in December 2022.

Total Customer Deposits increased by 8% to reach EGP 71.4 billion compared to EGP 66.2 billion, while the Total Gross Loans Portfolio recorded EGP 40.3 billion, reflecting a 13.2% increase compared to EGP 35.6 billion at the end of 2022.

Financial Performance

Commenting on the Bank's performance, Mr. Ali Marafi, Chairman of ABK-Egypt, said, "The outstanding financial results achieved during the first half of 2023 reflect the strength of our financial position. Our achievements since entering the Egyptian market have exceeded the Group's expectations, which supports our vision for injecting future investments in Egypt. We remain positive about our future in the country as we continue to witness the considerable measures taken by the Egyptian government and the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) towards achieving economic stability and growth."

The Chairman attributed the Bank's performance during the initial six months of 2023 to proactive financial management measures aimed at attaining growth and increasing value. He continued, "We endeavor to continue to improve customer satisfaction through the integration of digital solutions, thereby simplifying and enhancing the Bank's product and service offerings."

Reaffirming the strength of the Bank's financial results, Mr. Khaled El Salawy, CEO & Managing Director of ABK-Egypt, said, "The Bank record-



Ali Marafi, Chairman of ABK - Egypt

ed EGP 2.1 billion Profit Before Tax, a growth rate of 78.2% compared to EGP 1.2 billion over the same period last year. This growth reflects the successful implementation of our ambitious strategy and our prudent approach in handling market changes, which allowed us to compete in very challenging local, regional, and global economic conditions and achieve remarkable growth on all financial indicators."

He added, "Our strong momentum during the first half of 2023 reflects the Bank's success in seizing business opportunities to achieve sustainable growth. We are fully confident in our ability to maintain notable growth rates for all business lines and increase our market share across all customer segments."

Expansion

In line with its ambitious growth strategy to expand its business in Egypt and realign its geographical presence to best cater for its growing customer base, ABK-Egypt recently opened a new branch located in Agora Mall, Fifth Settle-



Khaled El Salawy, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, ABK-Egypt

ment, New Cairo. It represents one of 45 premium branches tailored to serve customers in 18 governorates across Egypt.

Mr. El Salawy highlighted, "Over the coming period, we will continue to work on expanding our geographical footprint and coverage to more governorates, as well as enhancing customer experience, investing in human capital, and further upgrading our digital infrastructure as part of our digital transformation journey which will contribute to a competitive advantage and attract new customer segments."

Furthermore, Mr. Marafi affirmed, "The Bank strives to stay close to customers through increasing nationwide accessibility to all segments as well as providing distinguished banking services and innovative products that meet their rising aspirations and growing needs. The addition of a new branch to our network comes in accordance with our plans to enhance our reach to grow our business and attract new customer segments, bringing us closer towards achieving the national

financial inclusion goals set by the Egyptian government and CBE."

Financial Inclusion and Sustainable Development

Both the Chairman as well as the CEO & Managing Director of ABK-Egypt praised CBE's efforts towards achieving the financial inclusion goals through raising financial literacy rates and reaching out to unbanked segments with affordable and simple banking solutions that fulfill their needs. The Bank constantly explores new opportunities as part of its active role in supporting this national direction and all similar endeavors that paved the way to Egypt's transition to a cashless economy, which will ensure economic growth and accelerate the achievement of Egypt's sustainable development goals.

ABK-Egypt strongly believes in the direct impact of sustainable development on economic stability and the positive role of sustainable finance on the long-term growth of the banking sector, which necessitates giving primary focus on funding projects and activities of positive economic, social, and environmental impact. The Bank takes solid steps towards incorporating sustainable finance principles and practices into its business model and works on building a culture that promotes sustainable development and integrates environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors into all its operational activities.

About Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait

Since its establishment in 1967, ABK has progressed to become one of the leading Kuwaiti banks in the region that is today known for offering a simpler banking experience. The Bank offers personal, corporate, and private banking of which includes a wide array of products and services. ABK also provides a broad range of local, regional, and global investment solutions and services through its subsidiary, ABK Capital. Enjoying equal stability and strength, the Bank also offers the convenience of banking across the region, servicing other markets in Egypt and the UAE.

For more information about ABK, please follow the Bank's Instagram account @abk_kuwait, visit eahli.com, contact Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit one of the Bank's branches across Kuwait.

UAE led the region raising a total of USD 4 bln

GCC stock markets raised USD 5.3 bln in IPOs during H1 2023

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 9: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" released its research report titled "Initial Public Offerings (IPO) in the GCC markets", stating that the region raised a total of USD 5.3 billion in proceeds through 21 offerings during the first half of 2023, marking a year-on-year decline in value by 61% compared to the first half of 2022, when GCC issuers raised a total of USD 13.6 billion through 21 offerings.

Geographical Allocation:

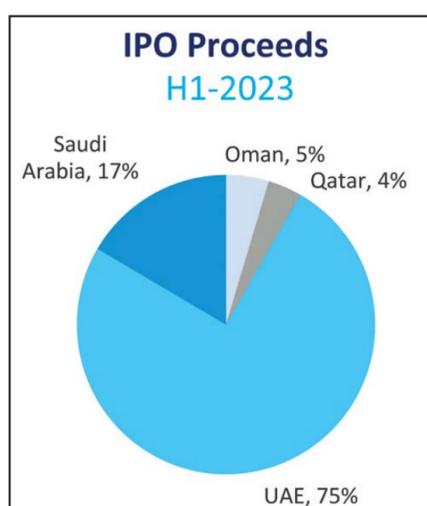
Markaz's report stated that the UAE led the region in terms of IPO proceeds raising a total of USD 4.0 billion from 4 offerings, constituting 75% of the total proceeds raised during the period. Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX) witnessed the highest proceeds with USD 3.7 billion through the offerings of ADNOC Gas, ADNOC Logistics and Presight AI while Dubai Financial Market (DFM) raised a total of USD 210 million from Al Ansari Financial Services IPO. This marked a drop of 57% year-on-year in value of UAE IPO proceeds compared to H1-2022. The Saudi Exchange (Tadawul) witnessed 15 initial public offerings in H1-2023 generating total proceeds of USD 0.9 billion and constituting 17%



of total GCC IPO proceeds. Saudi IPOs marked a drop of 78% year-on-year in value when compared to proceeds raised in H1-2022. Muscat Securities Market (MSM) witnessed 1 IPO with total proceeds of USD 244 million, constituting 5% of total proceeds raised during the period. Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE) hosted 1 IPO with total proceeds of USD 193 million, constituting 4% of the total IPO proceeds in GCC during H1-2023.

Top 5 GCC IPOs by Proceeds during H1-2023:

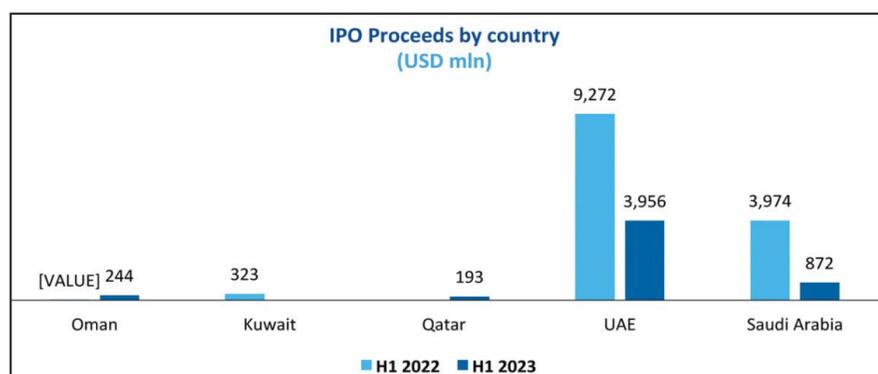
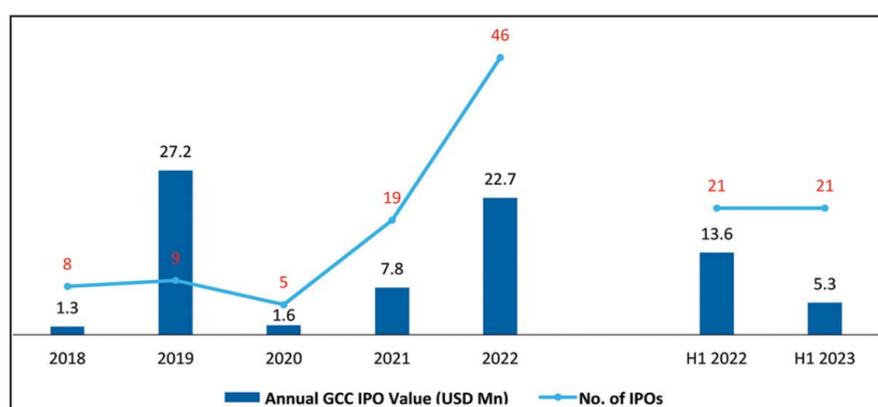
Markaz's report highlights the top 5 GCC IPOs by proceeds during H1-2023: Abu Dhabi National Oil Company gas business, ADNOC Gas, has raised USD 2.5 billion in proceeds marking the largest IPO on ADX and surpassing Bourouge, which raised USD 2.0 billion in June 2022. ADNOC Gas offered 3.84 billion shares, or 5% stake,



which was covered more than 50 times. ADNOC Gas IPO proceeds constituted 47% of total GCC IPO proceeds in H1-2023. ADNOC Logistics & Services raised a total of USD 772 million in its IPO on ADX which offered 1.41 billion shares, or 19% stake, that was covered 163 times. ADNOC L&S IPO proceeds constituted 15% of the total GCC IPO proceeds during the period. Presight AI IPO raised a total of USD 496 million in proceeds through the sale of 1.35 billion shares, or 32% stake, on ADX with total demand of investors which reached 136 times. Presight IPO constituted 9% of total GCC IPO proceeds during the period. Jamjoom Pharma raised a total of USD 336 million in its IPO on Tadawul. Jamjoom offered 21.0 million shares, or 30% stake, which was covered 67 times. The proceeds of the IPO constituted 6% of the total value raised by GCC IPOs. First Mills Company IPO raised a total of USD 266 million in proceeds. The company floated 16.6 million shares, or 30% stake, on Tadawul with a coverage ratio of 69 times. First Mills IPO proceeds constituted 5% of total GCC IPO proceeds in H1-2023.

GCC IPO Pipeline:

MBC Group is said to be planning to meet investors for its IPO in the Saudi market and working with HSBC Holdings Plc and JPMorgan Chase & Co. on the planned share sale.



Professional Medical Expertise Company has set the share offering price range for its IPO on Tadawul at SAR 63-68. The company plans to float 1.05 million ordinary shares, or 30% of the issued capital, on Nomu-Parallel Market. The book-building process for qualified investors will run between July 9-16. Marble Design Company intends to float 600,000 shares, or 10% of its SAR 60 million capital, on Nomu-Parallel Market. The book-building process for qualified investors will run from July 23-27. Investcorp Holdings, a Bahrain-based alternative asset manager, is planning a \$600 million IPO of its investment vehicle Investcorp Capital in Abu Dhabi as soon as September. Amanat Holdings, a Dubai-based healthcare and education investment firm, confirmed it is assessing monetization options for its healthcare platform, including a possible regional IPO in

the near term.

About Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz"

Established in 1974, Kuwait Financial Centre K.P.S.C "Markaz" is one of the leading asset management and investment banking institutions in the MENA region with total assets under management of over KD 1.13 billion as of 31 March 2023 (USD 3.67 billion). Markaz was listed on the Boursa Kuwait in 1997. Over the years, Markaz has pioneered innovation by developing new concepts resulting in new investment channels that enjoy unique characteristics enabling Markaz to widen investors' horizons. Examples include Mumtaz (the first domestic mutual fund), MREF (the first real estate investment fund in Kuwait), and Forsa Financial Fund (the first and only options market maker in the GCC since 2005), all conceptualized, established, and managed by Markaz.

Al-Hassad
More draws and annual returns

10,000 250,000 100,000

ahli united bank

Al-Hassad Draw flyer

AUB congratulates winners of Al-Hassad Weekly Draw

Ahli United Bank (AUB) Congratulates the Winners of Al-Hassad Weekly Draw of Al-Hassad Islamic account, which was held on 09 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 Announced 10 Winners Of KD 1,000 As Follows: Khaled Faleh Draimeeh Al-Azmi, Fatmah Ghulom Ali, Diaa

Hamdo Al-Kanash, Ali Abdulaziz Fahad Al-Hallaq, Yasmeen A F Al-Souqi, Awatef Abdulkareem Othman Al-Tuwajri, Talal Yaqoub Ahmad Yaqoub, Sarah Athal Majeed Edhaib, Shams Ali Haidar Murad and Maha Saleh Abdullah Al-Samaani. In its new package, Al-Hassad Islamic Saving Account presents a broader variety of rewards. Customers could now participate in the draw to win a monthly KD 100,000 prize, in addition to 10 weekly prizes of KD 1,000 each. The grand quarterly prize of KD 250,000 in cash for the

winner remains the most important aspiration of customers. It is a real chance for them to realize their life dreams. In addition to this attractive package, there will be the annual expected profits on the basis of a Wakala contract that increases the attractiveness of the Al-Hassad Islamic Saving Account to customers. Al-Hassad Account provides a suite of unique features, including the simplest and easiest savings program and a unique account-opening feature online with all ease with an instant deposit option.

Arriving to showrooms early October 2023

Elevate your drive! the Genesis G70, reignited and revamped!

DUBAI, UAE, Aug 9: The luxury sports sedan G70 is back with more agility and powerful driving performance.

Genesis Middle East & Africa has announced that the enhanced version of the G70 has started production in the Middle East in August and will be available in our showrooms soon.

The highly anticipated G70 is arriving soon to the Middle East Market. Building upon its resounding success in 2022 and its exceptional performance in 2023, The G70 returns as a new and improved version, featuring interior and exterior upgrades that emphasize luxury and performance.

The G70 & G70 Shooting Brake feature a 2.0 turbo engine and high-performance Brembo brakes as standard to ensure strong braking performance, interior and exterior with more details to emphasize luxury, and customer convenience specifications are standardized, and new specifications are added to enhance driving and braking performance and convenience.

The G70 will be available in two lineups: a 2.0 turbo and a 3.3 turbo, and the G70 Shooting Brake as a 2.0 turbo.

Equipped with a 2.0 turbo engine, the G70 & G70 Shooting Brake provides an agile and dynamic driving experience with driving systems such as 'Sport + (Sport Plus) mode', a driving mode specialized for limit driving.

Interior and exterior design that emphasizes luxury by adding a sense of luxury and details

The design of the G70 & G70 Shooting Brake inherits Genesis' unique design identity of "athletic elegance" while enhancing the driver-centric interior design.

The exterior design features a new Genesis emblem decorated with a Guilloché pattern, creating the image of a luxury sedan.

In addition, newly designed wheels such as 19-inch dark gray matte wheels,



The reignited and revamped G70.



as well as new exterior colors such as Vatna Gray and Kawah Blue, have been added to further reinforce its sportiness and luxurious image.

The interior space has a functional design improvement that enhances the convenience of operation and details enhances the driver's immersion.

Genesis emphasizes the sense of luxury by upgrading touch-type climate control display, frameless room mirror, leather steering wheel with new emblem, multi-function switches, door & console garnish patterns, air vents, cup holders and more to realize the delicate interior sensibility of a luxury sedan.

As for the built-in colors, Obsidian black/fog gray two-tone, Obsidian

black/vanilla beige two-tone, Forest blue/vanilla beige two-tone are newly added to expand the range of customer choices.

The G70 & G70 Shooting Brake retains the existing excellent driving comfort technology and is equipped with new features to provide customers with a pleasant and comfortable driving experience.

Genesis has strengthened its marketability by standardizing ventilated front seats for 3.3T model and upgraded USB charging port to Type C for market compatibility which are convenience features that are highly preferred by customers.

Menzies Aviation accelerates growth during first year under new ownership

Entered six new countries

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 9: Menzies Aviation, the leading service partner to the world's airports and airlines, and an Agility company, is marking a year since it joined forces with National Aviation Services (NAS) to become the world's largest aviation services company.

The company, which was acquired by Agility on 4 August 2022, has enjoyed accelerated growth over the past 12 months, successfully entering six new countries and growing its workforce to 40,000 employees – the highest in the company's 190-year history.

Accelerating global growth

With a focus on accelerating growth, Menzies has created a solid platform for expansion especially in emerging aviation markets. Notable successes were seen in all four regions around the world:

■ In the Americas, Menzies successfully expanded its footprint to Jamaica and Panama. It grew operations in Mexico from 31 to 37 airports and obtained new licenses for operations in Canada, Costa Rica, and Chile. It welcomed new customers through multiple contract wins in Philadelphia, Atlanta, and Texas taking it to 55 airports in the US – and more than 120 in total. It also achieved the largest net sales wins in its history, and won a series of large contracts with key global airline customers, making 2022 its best year yet in the Americas.

■ In Europe, significant growth was achieved with acquisitions and new partnerships in Montenegro, Serbia, Bulgaria and Italy. It also took a decisive step towards the acquisition of Portugal's largest aviation services and ground handling company, which is set to complete this year.

■ In the Oceania & South East Asia region, a new partnership at Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KUL) saw the company establish its first location in Malaysia, complementing its existing operations in Indonesia, China-Macau and Thailand. The company also secured its first engineering contract in Australia, where it has diversified into more narrow-body, high-volume ground handling.

■ In the Middle East, Africa & Asia, the company secured a new five-year license at nine airports in South Africa, where it also won a game-changing air cargo contract at three airports. In India, it entered a 15-year partnership with Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) to expand international and domestic cargo facilities at Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru.

In the same period, Menzies has grown its air cargo footprint from 69 locations to 75 locations. Air Menzies International, its freight forwarding business, also expanded its global network with new branches in Frankfurt, Germany; Lahore and Karachi in Pakistan; and Toronto,



Menzies Aviation accelerates growth.

'An extremely proud moment'

VRNG and Meridian Waste announce landfill gas to renewable natural gas project first in Missouri

CANONSBURG, Pa. Aug 9 (AP): Vision RNG (VRNG) is pleased to announce that its Landfill Gas (LFG) to Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) project at Meridian Waste's Eagle Ridge Landfill in Bowling Green, Missouri is now fully operational. The project uses 1,500 scfm of Landfill Gas (LFG) and produces 375,000 MMBtu of RNG annually, enough renewable gas to heat approximately 8,800 homes per year. The RNG is injected into a nearby interstate natural gas pipeline and used by various customers across the U.S. for transportation fuel and other sustainability purposes. RNG production has many environmental and economic benefits, including being a carbon-neutral energy solution, lowering methane emissions, reducing our dependence on fossil fuels, and utilizing the current natural gas infrastructure.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/2023080919469/en/>

Vision RNG (VRNG) is pleased to announce that its Landfill Gas (LFG) to Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) project at Meridian Waste's Eagle Ridge Landfill in Bowling Green, Missouri is now fully operational. The project

uses 1,500 scfm of Landfill Gas (LFG) and produces 375,000 MMBtu of RNG annually, enough renewable gas to heat approximately 8,800 homes per year.

"Vision RNG is proud to partner with Meridian Waste and is extremely proud of being able to bring this LFG to RNG project online. It is the first of its kind in the State of Missouri. The energy, environmental and economic benefits are significant for all parties," stated Bill Johnson, CEO of VRNG. "This is the first of several LFG to RNG projects VRNG will be bringing online, including projects in Kentucky, Alabama, South Carolina and Oklahoma."

"Today's announcement activating the Eagle Ridge Landfill's Clean Energy plant is an extremely proud moment for Meridian Waste and all our partners in this project - first and foremost Vision RNG," stated Walter "Wally" Hall, CEO - Meridian Waste. "This joint project represents the power of creative thinking, regulatory commitment, sound infrastructure investment and environmental stewardship in a manner that enhances the natural environment and our shareholders' financial commitment. This Missouri Clean

Energy project is the first of three of which Meridian Waste has partnered with Vision RNG, and it's exciting to say that together in the 'Show Me State' we are doing just that - showing that our partnership results in better technology, stronger infrastructure and cleaner energy."

"In Missouri and across our company footprint, Meridian Waste is committed to being a good neighbor, and a steward of the environment," stated Gregg Ascianto, Area President - Missouri. "Our business is safely and judiciously managing solid waste collections and disposal so that it benefits the greater community while protecting the environment. By converting our landfill gas into pipeline quality clean energy, we manage potential odors more effectively, reduce Greenhouse gas emissions, and capture a once wasted renewable resource to fuel more efficient trucks and operations throughout the region."

Based in Canonsburg, PA, VRNG was formed in 2021 with funding from Vision Ridge Partners. VRNG is composed of a strong and growing team of 30 professionals with extensive experience in LFG/RNG, Oil & Gas, and Landfills.

Canada. Technology transforms operations

The company has invested in technology to enhance operations with sustainability in mind. It extended its partnership with i6, a leader in digital fuel management technology to four additional airports in the UK and has selected Wipro Limited, a leading technology services and consulting company, to transform its air cargo management system.

All in for sustainability

With its sights firmly set on growing the business responsibly and sustainably, Menzies Aviation set a new net-zero commitment, aligned to the Science Based Targets initiative, for scope 1, 2, and 3 CO2e emissions across the company by 2045. The commitments, which were published

in Menzies' 2022 Annual Review & Sustainability Report, reflect the company's refreshed sustainability targets across safety, people, environment, ethical, community and governance pillars following the launch of its 'All In' plan for a fair and sustainable future in 2021.

Philipp Joening, CEO, Menzies Aviation, said: "We are extremely proud to reflect on the remarkable achievements and phenomenal growth we have experienced in the year since we joined forces with National Aviation Services (NAS). It is testament to the hard work, determination and collaborative spirit of our people, who continue to embody and represent the company's values, no matter where they operate. We're excited to look to the future, as we continue our journey to be recognised

as the leading aviation services provider."

Hassan El-Houry, Chairman, Menzies Aviation, said: "Twelve months ago we reshaped our industry when we combined NAS and Menzies to create the world's largest aviation services company. This marked a new era of accelerated growth for our business which now spans six continents, 60+ countries, and more than 250 airports, supported by a trained and dedicated team of more than 40,000 employees. We will continue to lead the industry by serving our airline and airport partners with the best quality, safety, and security systems. We are equally committed to helping all our stakeholders achieve their sustainability goals, and we will continue to be responsible corporate citizens in our communities."

Strategy to digitize banking services

KIB enables NFC service in all its widespread 'ATM' network

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 9: In order to provide its customers with a seamless and unique banking experience, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced activating the contactless near-field communication (NFC) service at its ATMs all around the country. This step comes within the framework of the Bank's comprehensive strategy aimed at keeping pace with the ongoing digital transformation and continuously developing its services and products.

Commenting on the new service, Ammar Maqames, Assistant Manager, Retail Banking Department at KIB, said: "This distinguished step by KIB confirms, once again, its constant keenness to provide more innovative digital solutions that will take its customers' experience to new horizons with world-class standards, in conjunction with the development of modern digital technologies. We continue to follow and keep abreast of all new technologies that we believe can contribute, directly or indirectly, to enhancing the degree of customer satisfaction and ensuring the quality of services that suit their lifestyle."

Using NFC-enabled KIB Cards, as well as mobile devices and smart-watches, KIB customers can withdraw cash or make numerous types of transactions in a faster, seamless, and more secure manner.

Apart from the new ATM service, KIB customers can still benefit from the Bank's ATM network in multiple ways, such as withdrawing and depositing cash, transferring money between accounts, managing PIN, and making cardless withdrawals using the civil ID and mobile number. Other services include settling



Ammar Maqames

KIB credit card payments, activating new cards, subscribing to the Bank's SMS service, redeeming cashback points, and topping up the KIB prepaid card.

It is worth noting that KIB remains a leader among Kuwaiti banking entities, supporting the digital transformation of the banking sector in the country. The Bank spares no effort in adopting new banking and financial technologies that elevate its customers' experience and contribute to the comprehensive progress and sustainable growth of the local banking market.

About KIB

Kuwait International Bank (KIB) is a bank that operates according to the Islamic Shari'ah, based in the State of Kuwait. Incorporated in 1973, and originally known as Kuwait Real Estate Bank, KIB made the transition to its current Islamic operating model in 2007. In 2018, KIB embarked on a new phase of its journey full of innovation and development. As part of its new strategic direction, the Bank focuses on offering a next-level customer experience under the slogan: "Bank for Life".

Ooredoo Kuwait launches its latest 'summer offers'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 9: Ooredoo Kuwait, the leading telecommunications company, continues to launch exciting offers on new and improved fiber internet packages for the summer season. This step comes as part of the company's strategy aimed at meeting the needs of users who want to obtain a high-quality fixed home internet service.

The new package is designed to meet the various needs of customers at competitive prices, where users will be able to double the speed of the internet while getting a discount of up to 40% on the original subscription value.

Ooredoo Kuwait offers customers the opportunity to use devices efficiently and with a faster internet to do many tasks, such as transferring and downloading data of all sizes, browsing apps, listening to music, watching videos, enjoying online video games, browsing websites and connecting on social networks.

With this move, the company strengthens its position as the leading internet service provider in the market and determines its commitment to providing the best service to the customers during all seasons.

FASTtelo

40% discount

EXCLUSIVE SUMMER OFFER!

Grab our Fiber offer today

FT summer campaign visual

BUSINESS

US probes Ram pickups complaints

US auto safety investigators have opened a probe into reports that some older Ram 1500 pickup trucks can lose power-steering assistance with little or no warning. The investigation by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration covers over 1.1 million pickups from the 2013 through 2016 model years. The agency says it has 380 complaints about the problem that include three crashes but no injuries. Investigators say in documents posted Tuesday that if the power steering fails, it takes extra effort

to steer the trucks and drivers could lose control. Stellantis, formerly Fiat Chrysler, recalled 440 pickups in 2016 to fix a power steering problem. But the agency says the complaints indicate a similar failure in trucks that are outside the scope of the recall. The agency says the recall query will determine if enough vehicles were recalled or if another safety defect might be causing problems. Stellantis said it is cooperating with NHTSA in the investigation. (AP)

Zoom wants workers back in office

The company whose name became synonymous with remote work is joining the growing return-to-office trend. Zoom, the video conferencing pioneer, is asking employees who live within a 50-mile radius of its offices to work onsite two days a week, a company spokesperson confirmed in an email. The statement said the company has decided that "a structured hybrid approach - meaning employees that live near an office need to be onsite two days a week to interact with their teams

- is most effective for Zoom." The new policy, which will be rolled out in August and September, was first reported by the New York Times, which said Zoom CEO Eric Yuan fielded questions from employees unhappy with the new policy during a Zoom meeting last week. Zoom, based in San Jose, California, saw explosive growth during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic as companies scrambled to shift to remote work, and even families and

friends turned to the platform for virtual gatherings. But that growth has stagnated as the pandemic threat has ebbed. Shares of Zoom Video Communications Inc. have tumbled hard since peaking early in the pandemic, from \$559 apiece in October 2020, to below \$70 on Tuesday. Shares have slumped more than 10% to start the month of August. In February, Zoom laid off about 1,300 people, or about 15% of its workforce. (AP)

Sony's profits drop as it warns of impact from US movie strikes

Profit at Honda doubles on healthy global auto, motorcycle sales

TOKYO, Aug 9, (AP) - Honda reported Wednesday that its April-June profit more than doubled on healthy sales of its motorcycles and cars, as the Japanese company also received a perk from favorable exchange rates.

Honda Motor Co. said its fiscal first quarter profit totaled 363 billion yen (\$2.5 billion), up from 149 billion yen.

Quarterly sales jumped 21% to 4.6 trillion yen (\$32 billion). Honda's financial service division also reported growing sales.

Honda, which makes the Fit subcompact, Honda e electric car and Gold Wing motorcycle, said its profitability improved, especially in North America, where production recovered.

Automakers around the world were slammed by supply shortages because of production delays related to social restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. But such restrictions have eased, allowing production to pick up again.

Auto sales were about the same in

Japan in the latest quarter as in the previous year, while dropping significantly in China because of intense competition from makers of battery electric vehicles, Honda said.

Honda is banking on growth in EVs in the US market, where it recently announced it is joining six other companies in the creation of a high-powered charging network across North America.

Worries about climate change have helped set off a dramatic shift in the auto industry toward battery electric vehicles, allowing for relative newcomers like Tesla and BYD to prosper, while catching some Japanese makers off guard with their hybrids and regular gasoline-powered models.

Honda said a computer chip shortage cramped its motorcycle sales in India, while sales rebounded in Indonesia as production recovered.

Honda said it sold 901,000 vehicles in the latest quarter, up from 815,000 a year earlier. It also sold more motorcycles worldwide at nearly 4.5 million, up from 4.2 million.

Honda added 23 billion yen (\$160 million) to its quarterly operating profit because of the impact of currency exchange rates. A weaker yen, trading lately at about 143 yen to the U.S. dollar, is a boon for Japanese exporters by boosting the amount of its overseas earnings when converted into yen.

Honda stuck to its full year projection of an 800 billion yen (\$5.6 billion) profit, up from 651 billion yen a year earlier.

Honda shares slipped 0.9% on the Tokyo Stock Exchange.

Also:

TOKYO: Sony's April-June profit slipped 17% from a year earlier, as worries grew about revenue damage from a strike in the movie sector, the Japanese electronics and entertainment company said Wednesday.

Tokyo-based Sony Corp.'s fiscal first quarter profit totaled 217 billion yen (\$1.5 billion), down from 261 billion yen a year ago.

Quarterly sales rose 33% to 2.96 trillion yen (\$21 billion), as sales for



People walk near the logo of Honda Motor Company at a showroom in Tokyo, May 13, 2022. Honda reported on Aug 9, that its April-June profit more than doubled on healthy sales of its motorcycles and cars, as the Japanese company also received a perk from favorable exchange rates. (AP)

the period grew in games and network services, the music business, financial services and imaging solutions.

Sony said its results got a boost

from a favorable exchange rate. The yen has been declining lately, trading at about 143 yen to the dollar, and a weak yen is a plus for Japanese exporters like Sony.

Sony's revenue in the movies segment was expected to suffer because of the strikes by the Writers Guild of America, or WGA, and Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, or SAG-AFTRA.

Release dates of movies, as well as deliveries of TV series, were being delayed, according to Sony.

Sony said it shipped 3.3 million of its PlayStation 5 video game consoles during the quarter through June. Sony estimates 108 million people are active users on its Sony online gaming network, up by 5 million users from a year ago.

Among Sony's recent top-earning music releases were the "SOS" album by SZA, Miley Cyrus' "Endless Summer Vacation" and "Harry's House" from Harry Styles.

Sony raised its full year profit forecast to 860 billion yen (\$6 billion) from an earlier projection for an 840 billion yen (\$5.8 billion) profit. That's lower than the profit it recorded the previous year at 1 trillion yen.

To produce carbon-free hydrogen

Sungrow to supply solutions to NEOM project in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, Aug. 9: Sungrow, the leading global inverter and energy storage system solution supplier, signed a contract with Larsen & Toubro to supply inverter skid solutions for a 2.2 GWac PV plant, the largest single-site utility-scale PV plant in the Middle East, for the NEOM Green Hydrogen Project in Saudi Arabia for the NEOM Green Hydrogen Company (NGHC). NGHC will produce carbon-free hydrogen using solely renewable energy sources such as wind and solar power to produce up to 600 tonnes per day of carbon-free hydrogen by the end of 2026. This project marks a significant milestone in advancing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's 2030 Vision for a clean and sustainable energy future.

Sungrow is well engaged in the NEOM Green Hydrogen project. Earlier, a few quarters back, Sungrow signed the contract with Larsen & Toubro to supply 400 MWh energy storage systems comprising a DC capacity of 536MW/600MWh to the NEOM Green Hydrogen project. Sungrow's 1+X Modular Inverter solution for the 2.2 GWac PV plant is another remarkable supply Sungrow contributes to the NEOM Green Hydrogen project.

Innovation

The solution is an innovation combining the advantages of both central and string inverters, featuring a 1.1 MW single unit as the minimum, and the maximum capacity can be expanded to 8.8 MW by combining eight units together, bringing a more flexible design for different blocks sizes and making the on-site operation and maintenance easier. Each module is designed with an independent MPPT, further improving the power generation capacity of the power plant. Tailored for this gigawatt project, the medium-voltage station integrated 1+X Modular Inverter of 8.8 MW capacity is offered.

As a result of the optimal IP65 high protection capability, the solution is resilient to sandy, dry, and windy conditions. Due to the smart forced air-cooling technology, the inverter solution can work stably in extremely high temperatures.

More importantly, the 1+X Modular Inverter is also equipped with intelligent string-level diagnosis to improve the power yield and real-time parallel arc detection to protect sys-

tem safety further. Therefore, these advantages help lower the overall operational cost.

"We are proud to be associated with this prestigious project as the EPC solution provider for the renewable energy and associated evacuation infrastructure for this project," said Mr. T Madhava Das, Whole-Time Director & Senior Executive Vice President (Utilities) at L&T. "Our success in the Renewable space in Saudi is the outcome of the support from our partners. We are very glad to partner with Sungrow on a project of such magnitude."

Agreement

James Wu, Senior Vice President of Sungrow, commented: "We are thrilled to partner with Larsen & Toubro to bring our products to the landmark NEOM Green Hydrogen project. We signed the agreement to supply the Battery Energy Storage Solution a few months ago. Now we've agreed to supply our PV inverter solutions to the project. Sungrow will continue to follow our mission of 'Clean power for all' and is preparing for the major challenges and opportunities towards the carbon neutrality of Saudi Arabia."

Larsen & Toubro is an Indian multinational engaged in EPC Projects, Hi-Tech Manufacturing and Services. It operates in over 50 countries worldwide. A strong, customer-focused approach and the constant quest for top-class quality have enabled L&T to attain and sustain leadership in its major lines of business for eight decades.

Sungrow Power Supply Co., Ltd. ("Sungrow") is the world's most bankable inverter brand with over 340 GW installed worldwide as of December 2022. Founded in 1997 by University Professor Cao Renxian, Sungrow is a leader in the research and development of solar inverters with the largest dedicated R&D team in the industry and a broad product portfolio offering PV inverter solutions and energy storage systems for utility-scale, commercial & industrial, and residential applications, as well as internationally recognized floating PV plant solutions, NEV driving solutions, EV charging solutions and renewable hydrogen production systems. With a strong 26-year track record in the PV space, Sungrow products power over 150 countries worldwide.

China denies deliberately seeking trade surplus with European Union

TOKYO, Aug 9, (KUNA): China said Tuesday it has never deliberately sought a trade surplus with the EU.

The surplus is a natural result under the combined influence of different industrial structures, specialization, ways of trade and external factors, noted an unnamed spokesperson at the Foreign Ministry in a statement.

This came in response to an inquiry whether Brussels will press Beijing to reduce barriers to European exports at a high-level meeting in September.

European Commission Executive Vice President and Trade Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis said in an interview that "the China-EU trading relationship is very unbalanced. China is running a huge trade

surplus, and the level of openness from the Chinese side is not the same as the level of openness from the EU side."

For years, the majority of EU companies in China have gained huge benefits from bilateral trade, which is the fundamental reason why these companies have chosen to operate and expand in China, the spokesperson said.

"The EU restrictions on export of high-tech products to China in recent years directly limited the EU's ability to tap the potential of export to China and led to unbalanced trade between the two sides. If the EU truly wants to address this issue, it needs to lift export controls against China, rather than putting the blame on China," the spokesperson noted.

DES MOINES, Iowa, Aug 9: A recent survey from Principal Financial Group® shows a disparity between US employers and their employees in financial health and well-being. As employer sentiment and business health remains steady, there are opportunities for employers to support employee financial health.

According to the latest Principal Financial Well-Being IndexSM, while both employers' and employees' top concerns include rising costs and macro-economic challenges, employers feel more satisfied with their business's present financial situation than employees feel about their personal finances. And although employees and employers largely report they're able to meet their respective financial obligations, that doesn't translate into workers feeling as satisfied with their current financial situation. Only 34% of employees are "always" or "often" satisfied about their personal finances compared to more than 70% of employers who are "always" or "often" satisfied about their business's finances.

Support

"As business owners continue to see growth, it's important to recognize their employees may feel less confident about their financial growth and there are ways to provide greater support," said Amy Friedrich, president of Benefits and Protection at Principal®. "Employer support could be offering financial wellness tools or providing a holistic benefits package that meets their employees' needs. This support can be a key differentiator for employers, helping them retain talent, while also making a real difference in the financial lives of their employees."

According to the survey, nearly two thirds of employees wouldn't be able to cover expenses for longer than three months if they lost their main source of income. When examining this trend based on demographic differences, over half (55%) of Gen Z and 44% of Millennial employees wouldn't be able to cover expenses after the first month without their main source of income. Additionally, women are more likely to say that they couldn't cover expenses for more than one week, while men are more likely to say they'd be able to cover expenses for six months or more.

Employer sentiment remains high, despite persistent concerns about inflation and the stability of the U.S. economy. More businesses are currently growing compared to this time last year (64% vs. 52%). Small businesses1 also reported

Study highlights disparity in financial health, well-being

Businesses are growing while workers less confident: survey

E-commerce prices declining

Growing inflation worries have more consumers tightening their spending

SAN JOSE, Calif., Aug 9: After powering online sales to new heights during the pandemic, consumers are pulling back on spending, saying inflation is taking its toll and that economic uncertainty has them bracing for the worst, according to a new consumer survey conducted by commerce protection leader Signifyd.

When asked about their spending plans in key retail verticals, consumers by significant margins said they would not be spending more in any of them this year, save for one - grocery, which continues to torment consumers with rising prices.

The responses indicate that consumers are more pessimistic about the economy and their finances than they were a year ago when Signifyd conducted a similar survey.

The insights are part of a detailed report Signifyd released today: "The State of Commerce 2023: How today's customer loyalty trends are defining the shape of retail's future." The report combines consumer survey results with a unique analysis of Signifyd's e-commerce data to chart the course of online spending from the perspectives of both consumers and brands. Among the report's findings:

■ Nearly 80% of consumers surveyed said inflation has caused them to cut back on spending this

year. Last year the figure was 69%.

■ Two-thirds of consumers said they abandoned their go-to brands to shop with a competitor in the past year, a third of them because of a bad customer experience.

■ While inflation remains stubborn, e-commerce prices are declining, acting as an inflation decelerator for the first time in years.

■ Winter holiday spending online will be up in 2023, but perhaps not as much as retailers had hoped.

Loyalists

By analyzing the frequency and recency of online purchases over time, the Signifyd data team was able to demonstrate the importance - and in some cases the transience - of merchants' most loyal customers. In the electronics vertical, for instance, only a modest percentage of loyalists, which Signifyd labeled "Soulmates," stick with a merchant from year to year.

That leaves brands scrambling for the less loyal, which make up cohorts Signifyd called "Hot Dates," "Ghosts" and "Exes," again based on the frequency and recency of purchases.

"The State of Commerce report provides online merchants with a detailed look into how consumers with different degrees of loyalty come and go. And it suggests ways retailers can hang on to their

most loyal customers while attracting those who are intrigued and reuniting with those who have strayed," said Signifyd Data Analyst Phelim Killough, who co-authored the report. "Customer loyalty has always been a key to retail success and never more so than in times of economic uncertainty for both businesses and consumers."

In addition to the exploration of customer loyalty and consumer sentiment, the State of Commerce 2023 report includes predictions based on Signifyd modeling for e-commerce sales for the rest of the year and during the holiday season in particular.

Signifyd provides an end-to-end Commerce Protection Platform that leverages its Commerce Network to maximize conversion, automate customer experience and eliminate fraud and consumer abuse risk for retailers. Its solutions provide the transparency and control that brands need to succeed in the rapidly changing world of commerce. Signifyd is among Fast Company's 10 Most Innovative Companies in AI and the leading provider of payment security and fraud prevention for the Top 1000 Retailers for 2023. The company is headquartered in San Jose, CA, with locations in Denver, New York, Mexico City, São Paulo, Belfast and London.

plan resource to further personalize the employee experience. Outside of retirement savings programs, top financial wellness benefits small businesses believe should be offered include helping employees establish a budget and financial plan, retirement income planning, and investment education. These benefits are key to boosting how secure employees feel across life and work.

Sentiment

The Principal Financial Well-Being IndexSM surveys business owners, decision makers and business leaders aged 21 and over who work at companies with 2 - 10,000 employees. The nation-wide survey, commissioned since 2012, examines the financial well-being of American workers and business employers. In 2020, the Well-Being Index was transformed from an annual survey to a regular pulse, offering three waves, revisiting questions and measuring sentiment regarding timely issues in the small and mid-sized business marketplace. In the first pulse of the Well-Being Index in 2022, the employee audience was

year-over-year increases in growth (58% vs. 46%). However, while most businesses report growth, they're less optimistic about the overall growth of the US economy.

"Small businesses continue to demonstrate positive sentiment and steady cash flow," said Friedrich. "However, when you move beyond their specific business or region, employers are less confident about the broader economy."

Employers play a critical role in the financial well-being of their employees. With more than half of employees more stressed about their finances than last year, there are opportunities for employers to pass on their positive sentiment and build a foundation that enables employees to plan for their financial futures.

The survey found the more optimistic a business is about the next 12 months, the more likely they are to add certain benefits such as critical illness, childcare support, financial wellness programs, and Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) to name a few.

Financial wellness programs are expected to emerge as an additional

The Conversation

Many cancer patients undergo unnecessarily treatments

Prostate cancer treatment is not always the best option

By Luisel Ricks-Santi
University of Florida

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

‘Me encontraron cáncer en la próstata,’ my father told me. They found cancer in my prostate.

As a cancer researcher who knows very well about the high incidence and decreased survival rates of prostate cancer in the Caribbean, I anguished over these words. Even though I study cancer in my day job, I struggled to take in this news. At the time, all I could muster in response was “What did the doctor say?”

“The urologist wants me to see the radiation oncologist to discuss ‘semilas’ [seeds],” he said. “They are recommending treatment.”

However, I understood from my work that not undergoing treatment was also an option. In some cases, that is the better choice. So I took it upon myself to educate my father on his disease and assist him with the life-changing decisions he would have to make. Our journey can give you a preview of what a cancer diagnosis can be like.

Prostate cancer diagnosis

Prostate cancer was not a new topic for my father and me. His battle with his prostate health started 10 years ago with an initial diagnosis of benign prostate hyperplasia, or BPH.

The prostate gets bigger with age for a number of reasons, including changing hormone levels, infection or inflammation. Two of the most frequent symptoms of BPH are difficulty urinating and a sudden, urgent need to urinate, both of which my father experienced.

Although research suggests that the factors that contribute to BPH similarly contribute to prostate cancer, there is no evidence that an enlarged prostate will necessarily develop into cancer.

Upon my father’s initial BPH diagnosis, I asked about his PSA levels, or the amount of prostate-specific antigens in his blood. PSA is a protein that both normal and cancerous prostate cells produce, and elevated amounts are considered red flags for prostate cancer. When combined with a digital rectal exam, a PSA test can allow doctors to more accurately predict a person’s risk of having prostate cancer.

My father said his PSA levels were elevated but that the doctors would begin active surveillance, or what he called “watchful waiting,” and monitor his PSA every six months to see if it rose.

After eight years of monitoring his PSA, doctors found my father’s PSA level had doubled. He then got a biopsy that indicated he had intermediate-risk prostate cancer.

Cancer risk categorization

After his diagnosis, my father was faced with the decision of how to proceed with treatment. I explained that categorizing how aggressive the cancer is and how far it has spread can help determine the best course of treatment.

Prostate cancer can be grouped into four stages. Stages 1 and 2, when the tumor is still confined to the prostate, are considered early-stage or intermediate risk. Stages 3 and 4, when the tumor has spread beyond the borders of the prostate, are considered more advanced and high risk.

Some patients with early-stage or intermediate-risk prostate cancer undergo additional treatment, including surgery, radiation or radioactive seed implants called brachytherapy. Patients with late-stage prostate cancer typically undergo hormone therapy along with surgery or radiation, or chemo-

therapy with or without radiation.

Although I was not surprised by my father’s diagnosis, given his advanced age and his battle with prostate disease over the past decade, I still struggled emotionally. I struggled with our conversations about what “curing” his cancer meant and how to explain his treatment options to him. I wanted to ensure he would have the best outcome and could still live his best life.

Our initial inclination was to undergo active surveillance. That meant we would monitor his PSA every six months instead of immediately starting treatment. That is appropriate for patients with early-stage and less aggressive tumors.

Screening problems

My father was leaning on me to help him decide how to proceed. I felt overwhelming anxiety because I did not want to fail him or my family. Even with all my expertise studying cancer genetics and working with cancer patients, I couldn’t help second-guessing our decisions, and I sometimes questioned our decision not to immediately treat his cancer.

Some people diagnosed with prostate cancer don’t immediately start treatment, because many of the tumors found through PSA testing grow so slowly that they are unlikely to be life-threatening. Detecting these slow-growing tumors is considered overdiagnosis, because the cancer ultimately will not harm the patient during their lifetime. Nearly half of all patients with prostate cancer are overdiagnosed, often leading to overtreatment.

Research suggests that many prostate cancer patients undergo unnecessarily aggressive treatments, which are often associated with significant harms, like urinary and bowel incontinence, sexual impotence and, in some cases, death. Several studies in the US have shown that patients with early-stage prostate cancer have a good prognosis, and the cancer rarely progresses further. With careful observation, most will never need treatment and can be spared the burdens of unnecessary therapy until there are clear signs of progression.

Overdiagnosis and overtreatment of prostate cancer led the US Preventive Services Task Force to recommend against PSA-based screening in 2012, with caveats for high-risk groups including African American men and those with a family history of prostate cancer. The recommendation was updated in 2018 to make screening a personal choice after discussion with a clinician.

Those recommendations have resulted in reduced screening and increased prostate cancer diagnoses. Given that Black men are more likely to see the cancer progress to aggressive forms of the disease after initial diagnosis, this may worsen existing health disparities.

Developing tests that better identify patients at risk of dying from prostate cancer can decrease overtreatment. In the meantime, educating patients can help them decide if screening is appropriate for them. For underserved and marginalized communities, community outreach can help improve health literacy and enhance awareness and screening.

When I looked through my father’s stack of medical records, I found a beacon of light that eased my apprehension. His doctor had ordered a genetic test that estimates how aggressive a tumor may be by measuring the activity of specific genes in cancer cells. An increase in gene activity linked to cancer would indicate that it is likely to grow fast and spread.

The test predicted that my father’s risk of dying from the disease in the next five years was less than 5%. Based

Create AI-driven personalized wellness recommendation engine

GERO and FOXO partner to help people live healthier and longer

PALO ALTO, Calif., Aug 9: GERO, a leading AI-driven biotechnology company focused on aging and longevity and FOXO Technologies Inc. (NYSEAM: FOXO), a leader in epigenetic biomarker discovery and commercialization, have announced the commencement of discussions to form a strategic collaboration between the two companies. As a result, FOXO and GERO will seek to develop an AI-driven personalized wellness and longevity recommendation engine based on proprietary epigenetic data.

This collaboration occurs in the wake of recent advancements from GERO, which sparked vigorous discussion among longevity experts in the scientific community when a story was published in Popular Mechanics that asserted Humans Can Stop – But Not Fully Reverse –

Aging. GERO’s machine-learning technology platform is being applied to discover potential therapeutic targets for fibrotic diseases using large-scale human data in collaboration with a large biopharma.

FOXO Technology’s unique datasets are a missing link in understanding the utility, reliability, and reversibility of epigenetic signatures of health and longevity. Augmented by GERO’s AI-driven understanding of human aging, this collaboration promises to enhance risk segmentation of individuals based on longitudinal changes in their epigenetic patterns. The overarching goal of this joint effort is to uncover new ways to personalize lifestyle-based interventions to delay the onset of chronic diseases and, ultimately, mortality.

Development

GERO and FOXO share the goal of helping people live healthier for longer, whether through the development of new diagnostics and therapeutics, or by lifestyle modifications. FOXO’s founding was based, in part, on the discovery of “epigenetic clocks” – a benchmark measure of biological aging, in which FOXO’s Chief Science Officer Dr. Brian Chen played a key role in demonstrating its utility. Since its founding, FOXO has generated data and partnerships to accelerate the development and commercialization of epigenetic signatures with the goal of gaining unique insights into one’s health and longevity.

Dr. Peter Fedichev [CEO and co-founder of GERO], sees enormous promise for the insights derived from longitudinal epigenetic data to address life and health span.

“Our goal is to slow down or even stop human aging. Epigenetics has revolutionized the way in which the field has thought about biological aging, but we have only scratched the surface.

On these results, we both understood that he had adequate time to make a decision and seek additional guidance.

My father ultimately decided to continue active surveillance and forgo immediate treatment.

Surviving prostate cancer

I still worry about my father’s diag-

without exception, leading to high levels of surgeon satisfaction and a willingness to adopt the skin-responsive device for FUE procedures on African-descended patients.

FUE device effective

Revolutionary technique ‘offers’ hope for hair restoration solution

LOS ANGELES, Aug 9: A groundbreaking study published in the Dermatologic Surgery Journal marks a significant turning point in the search for effective hair restoration among individuals of African descent. Titled “Follicular Unit Excision in Patients of African Descent: A Skin-Responsive Technique,” this study introduces an innovative approach tailored to this demographic’s unique hair and skin characteristics.

New Skin-Responsive Hair Transplantation Technique Revolutionizes Treatment for Patients of African Descent

Led by Dr. Sanusi Umar from the Division of Dermatology, Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, Torrance, and Dr. U Hair and Skin Clinic in Manhattan Beach, the study’s multinational team of experts from seven countries introduces the skin-responsive follicular unit excision (FUE) device UGraft Zeus® (Manhattan Beach, CA). This cutting-edge device uniquely adapts to hair curliness, skin thickness, and firmness in hair transplant patients, setting a new standard in hair restoration procedures.

Key findings from the study include: The skin-responsive technique achieves a remarkable success, with a mean graft transection rate of 3-6%, showcasing its effectiveness.

Skin thickness and firmness were identified as crucial factors in graft attrition rates, with hair curliness influencing the outcome to a lesser extent.

The Dr. UGraft Zeus FUE device consistently minimizes graft transection in all patients of African descent

Emphasizes

Dr. Umar emphasizes the significance of the study’s outcomes, stating, “Our skin-responsive technique marks a significant step towards a universal hair transplant methodology that caters to the unique physiological characteristics of each individual.” As the holder of several patents on UGraft Zeus technologies, Dr. Umar added, “In addition, we have created a universal scoring scale for accurately categorizing skin and hair characteristics of all individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity. Recognizing the vast diversity of skin and hair characteristics within any given population, especially in the African-descended population, has been instrumental in resolving this long-standing hair transplant challenge. This innovation can potentially revolutionize hair restoration practices and improve access to this transformative procedure.”

The study underscores the importance of tailored medical approaches, particularly for diverse patient groups. As medical advancements continue to flourish, this breakthrough offers renewed hope for individuals seeking hair restoration, including those with Afro-textured hair.

The cardiovascular polypill developed by the Spanish National Centre

With FOXO’s unique expertise and resources, we hope to unlock more nuanced relationships between epigenetics and aging that haven’t been previously understood,” commented Fedichev.

GERO invites partnerships for novel target identification and comprehensive drug discovery collaborations, as exemplified by its recent work with a biopharma leader. GERO’s scientific excellence and outstanding drug-discovery capabilities are the basis for the range of landmark papers in aging and drug discovery fields that shape the future of the industry, published in nu-

merous magazines, including Nature Communications and Science journals and are covered by Scientific American, Popular Mechanics and other media outlets.

GERO is a biotechnology company using physics-based generative models on human health record datasets, combined with AI-guided drug design, to develop transformative interventions for aging and age-related diseases. To achieve this goal, GERO acquired a massive dataset of longitudinal, real-world medical records and built a generative, very large model of human health. The

for Cardiovascular Research (CNIC) and Ferrer has been included by the World Health Organization (WHO) in its List of Essential Medicines

This cardiovascular polypill includes three active ingredients (acetylsalicylic acid, ramipril and atorvastatin) and has been proven to be effective in preventing cardiovascular events after a heart attack, reducing mortality from cardiovascular causes by 33%. This was evidenced by the SECURE2 study, with results published in August 2022 in the New England Journal of Medicine3 (NEJM).

“The SECURE results showed, for the first time, that the cardiovascular polypill developed by the CNIC and Ferrer achieves clinically relevant reductions in recurrent cardiovascular events in patients who have suffered a myocardial infarction,” said Dr. Valentín Fuster, principal investigator of the study, General Director of the CNIC, President of Mount Sinai Heart and Physician-in-Chief of Mount Sinai Hospital, New York.

As stated in the WHO report, “essential medicines are those that satisfy the priority health care needs of a population. They are intended to be available in functioning health systems at all times, in appropriate dosage forms, of assured quality and at prices individuals and health systems can afford.”

According to Oscar Pérez, Chief Marketing, Market Access and Business Development Officer at Ferrer, “the 33% reduction in cardiovascular mortality demonstrates the efficacy of treatment with Trinomia4 compared to standard treatment.

model is based on principles adopted from the physics of complex and dynamic systems and reveals the irreversible nature of human aging while highlighting the reversible aspects of diseases, distinguishing the two phenomena. It also reveals causal relationships between microscopic molecular- and organism-level features associated with diseases to enable rapid targeting and drug discovery, directly in human data.

GERO’s preclinical stage drug candidate demonstrates promising potential in addressing a diverse spectrum of neurodegenerative diseases.

side effects. To date, my father believes that active surveillance was the best decision for him and understands that this may not be the same for someone else. Talk to your doctor to see what the best options are for you or your loved ones. (AP)

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Lanez gets 10 years in prison for shooting Megan Thee Stallion

People

LOS ANGELES, Aug 9, (AP) — A judge sentenced rapper Tory Lanez to 10 years in prison Tuesday for shooting and wounding hip-hop superstar Megan Thee Stallion in the feet, bringing a conclusion to a three-year legal and cultural saga that saw two careers, and lives, thrown into turmoil.

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge David Herriford handed down the sentence to the 31-year-old Lanez, who was convicted in December of three felonies: assault with a semiautomatic firearm; having a loaded, unregistered firearm in a vehicle and discharging a firearm with gross negligence.

From the initial incident in the Hollywood Hills in July of 2020, to the marathon two-day sentencing hearing, the case created a firestorm in the hip-hop community, churning up issues including the reluctance of Black victims to speak to police, gender politics in hip-hop, online toxicity, protecting Black women and the ramifications of misogyny, a particular brand of misogyny Black women experience.

Herriford said it was "difficult to reconcile" the portrait Lanez's friends and family painted during the hearing of a kind, charitable person and good father to a 6-year-old son with the person who fired the gun at Megan.

"Sometimes good people do bad things," Herriford said. "Actions have consequences, and there are no winners in this case."

Megan testified during the trial that Lanez fired the gun at the back of her feet and shouted for her to dance as she walked away from an SUV in which they had been riding, after leaving a pool party at Kylie Jenner's home. She had to have surgery to remove bullet fragments. She revealed who had fired the gun only months later.

"Since I was viciously shot by the defendant, I have not experienced a single day of peace," Megan said in a statement read in court by a prosecutor on Monday. "Slowly but surely, I'm healing and coming back, but I will never be the same."

Lanez asked Herriford for mercy just before the judge delivered his sentence, requesting either probation or a minimal prison sentence.

"If I could turn back the series of events that night and change them," I would, Lanez continued. "The victim was my friend. The victim is someone I still care for to this day."

He added, "Everything I did wrong that night, I take full responsibility for."

Lanez appeared stunned while the sentence was read, but had no audible reaction. His family and fans in the courtroom also remained quiet after the sentence.

The rapper was given about 10 months of credit for time he's served, most of it spent in jail since his conviction in December.

"We're extremely disappointed," Lanez's lead attorney Jose Baez said outside the courthouse. "I have seen vehicular homicide and other cases where there's death, and the defendant still gets less than 10 years."

Sentence

Baez called the sentence "really just another example of someone being punished for their celebrity status and someone being utilized to set an example. And he's not an example. He's a human being."

Lanez's lawyers plan to appeal the verdict, and to attempt to have him released on bail while they do.

Megan, whose legal name is Megan Pete, was repeatedly praised by prosecutors for her courage in testifying during the case and enduring online campaigns of hatred directed at her.

"I hope that Miss Pete's bravery gives hope to those who feel helpless," said Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón of Megan at a news conference after the sentencing.

Prosecutors had sought a 13-year prison sentence. Legally, Lanez had been eligible for up to 22.

During Monday's session, Lanez's father, Sonstar Peterson, choked back tears as he talked about how the rapper's mother died when he was 11, just days after she first showed symptoms of the rare blood disorder that would lead to her death.

Lanez began releasing mixtapes in 2009 and saw a steady rise in

popularity, moving on to major-label albums. His last two reached the top 10 on Billboard's charts.

Megan Thee Stallion, now 28, was already a major rising star at the time of the shooting, and her prominence has surged since. She won a Grammy for best new artist in 2021, and she had No. 1 singles with "Savage," featuring Beyoncé, and as a guest on Cardi B's "WAP."

The elder Peterson, who is a Christian minister, was one of several people who gave statements on Lanez's character and charitable giving - as did the mother of Lanez's son. Dozens more wrote letters to Herriford, including rapper Iggy Azalea, who asked the judge to hand down a sentence that was "transformative, not life-destroying."

Herriford said Lanez's 6-year-old also sent in a handwritten letter, but the judge did not describe it further.

Lanez's family and supporters have packed the courtroom; during the trial, they contended his prosecution was unjustly brought on by Megan and powerful figures in music. After the verdict was read in December, Lanez's father denounced the "wicked system" that led to his son's conviction; on Monday, Sonstar Peterson apologized to Herriford for the outburst.

The judge had handed several small victories to each side during the sentencing hearing.

He found that Megan, who was in an isolated area wearing only a bathing suit with no shoes, was an especially vulnerable victim when she was shot, but that Lanez was not overly cruel or callous in firing at her.

The judge found that Lanez posed no threat to public safety and that his lack of a criminal record should work in his favor.

Lanez's lawyers argued that he suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder from his mother's death and other childhood difficulties. That stress led to serious alcohol abuse as an adult, they said.

But the judge agreed with prosecutors that those mental illnesses should not be considered in the sentencing, and in the end gave prosecutors most of what they wanted.

Variety



This image released by Netflix shows Alia Bhatt in a scene from 'Heart of Stone.' (AP)

Film

'Heart of Stone' caps Indian superstar's banner year

Alia Bhatt makes her Hollywood debut

LOS ANGELES, Aug 9, (AP) — Alia Bhatt had been weighing her Hollywood options for a few years. A popular star of Hindi films for over a decade with nearly 79 million Instagram followers, she'd been interested in making an English-language film, but nothing had been working out. Then Bhatt got word of a new action franchise led and produced by Gal Gadot and within a week of reading the script, the deal had closed. It was, she concluded, fate.

"Your first film chooses you," Bhatt said in an interview with The Associated Press in June. "Technically, this is my first English-language movie. It chose me and I'm so happy it did."

"Heart of Stone," a globe-trotting spy thriller co-starring Gadot and Jamie Dornan, debuts globally Friday on Netflix. Bhatt's role as a tech prodigy named Keya is one that's hard to describe without spoiling the twisty plot, but it's an important one. In India, the actor had grown accustomed to being a lead, but here she was happy to delve into a more supporting part - as long as it had substance to it.

In reading the script, she wanted to make sure that her character wasn't just there to fill a "South Asian" slot, and that she was involved in - and impacting - the storyline.

"The way I judge it is if you take the character out of the story and you still have a film, then that character's not important," Bhatt said.

But most of all, she was excited to be second to a woman who was also producing. Director Tom Harper called Bhatt a "formidable talent" and said that it was the dynamic between Keya and Gadot's character, Rachel Stone, that most excited him about the film.

"The two bounce off each other brilliantly and you get real electricity," Harper said. "Some of my fa-

vorite parts of the movie are when they riff off each other and the banter that they have."

Bhatt was struck by how similar Hollywood sets are to than the ones she's spent a decade on in India - with the main difference being the hours. The days were shorter on "Heart of Stone," but so were the breaks. In India, she said, there would be an hour for lunch, 30 minutes for snacks and a later finish time.

She was also pregnant during the shoot and was tickled to see some of the things she "did" in the finished film (with the help of stunt doubles and digital effects).

"I'm like, 'Wow, I did that?'" she laughed. "I don't think so, but it looks like I did."

Ambassador

The release of "Heart of Stone" caps off what has been a banner year for the 30-year-old, in which she also welcomed her first child, attended her first Met Gala and was named the first Indian house ambassador for the luxury label Gucci. She had a small part in the Telugu-language action epic "RRR," which became an international sensation, and also has been making a name for herself as a producer.

The first film she produced, "Darlings," was a Netflix production as well, and the experience has been "challenging and scary and fruitful all at the same time."

Bhatt hails from a Bollywood family. Her father, Mahesh Bhatt, is a well-known filmmaker, and her mother, Soni Razdan, is a former actress. She made her debut in Karan Johar's teen drama "Student of the Year" in 2012, garnered accolades for playing a kidnapping victim in the drama "Highway," from 2014, and last year she married fellow Bollywood star Ranbir Kapoor.

"My parents from the very beginning have been very careful with the words of encouragement that they give me. ... It helps when you grow up in a family that's seen the highs and the lows and seen everything in between," she said. "At the end of the day, my dad always says, you most definitely going cannot be the first member of your own fan club. So, try to have a 10-foot distance from it all."

She doesn't have a grand plan for her future in Hollywood and does not see herself moving to the U.S., like her friend Priyanka Chopra Jonas.

"I think what Priyanka did was extremely brave and very different from what anyone has ever done. She's such an inspiration to every young girl from India that has that big dream to be a global icon and a global star," Bhatt said. "I don't think I could do that. I want to continue to do movies in India. And I want to be able to get these one-off, amazing international opportunities."

"I still don't know what I'm doing," she added. "It's just this one film and we'll see how it goes from here."

Also:

LOS ANGELES: Harry and Meghan have competition. In "Red, White and Royal Blue," the royal rom-com adaptation of Casey McQuiston's bestseller, Nicolas Galitzine ("Cinderella") stars as British prince Harry and Taylor Zakhar Perez ("The Kissing Booth") plays the son of the first female US president (Uma Thurman). They're initially bitter rivals who cause a media frenzy when they tussle and fall into a cake at a royal wedding. But in the film, directed by playwright Matthew Lopez, a resulting PR campaign brings them closer. "Red, White and Royal Blue" premieres Friday, Aug. 11, on Prime Video.

LOS ANGELES: The Grammy-winning performer Ciara is expecting her fourth child, her third with husband and Denver Broncos quarterback Russell Wilson, a representative for the singer confirmed to The Associated Press.

Ciara broke the news in a video announcement on her Instagram, revealing her pregnant silhouette in front of a pool.

She wrote in the caption, "You look at me like that again, we make another kid... You my heart I'm your rib." The clip is soundtracked by "How We Roll," her 2023 collaboration with Chris Brown.

In July 2020, Ciara and Wilson welcomed their second child, Win Harrison Wilson. In 2017, they had their first - Sienna Princess Wilson. Ciara also has a 9-year-old son, Future Zahir, from a previous relationship with rapper Future. Ciara is known for her often "breathy soprano" vocals. She rose to prominence with her debut studio album Goodies (2004), which spawned the top five singles "1, 2 Step" (featuring Missy Elliott), "Oh" (featuring Ludacris), and "Goodies" (featuring Petey Pablo), the latter of which topped the Billboard Hot 100 and the UK Singles Chart. (Agencies)

BANGKOK: The son of two Spanish film stars has been arrested in Thailand on suspicion of murdering and dismembering a Colombian surgeon on a tourist island, police said.

Daniel Sancho Bronchalo was taken from Koh Phagnan, where the remains of Edwin Arrieta Arteaga were found, to another island, Samui, where he is being held, Surat Thani provincial police commander Saranyu Chamnanrat said Tuesday.

Sancho, a chef with a YouTube channel, has been charged with premeditated murder, which carries a possible death penalty, and with concealment of a body

to cover up the death, Saranyu said.

Details of the killing emerged last week when Thai media reported that plastic bags containing body parts of a man, later identified by police as Arrieta, were found at a landfill on Koh Phagnan, an island famous for its monthly "full moon parties."



Ciara

Wilson

Police said Sancho came in to report a missing person after the body parts were found and was subsequently detained. He later confessed to killing and dismembering Arrieta and then dumping the body parts in the landfill and the sea, although he denied that it was premeditated, police said. His arrest warrant was issued by

the Koh Samui Provincial Court on Saturday.

Saranyu declined to elaborate when asked about the motive, but said it was likely due to a personal relationship between the suspect and the victim. Thai media have cited police as saying that Sancho, who came to Thailand for a holiday, told the

authorities that the two had a romantic relationship and that he tried to break up with the victim but the victim refused.

Security camera video broadcast by Thai media reportedly taken a day before the body parts were found showed Sancho and Arrieta on a motorbike together. (AP)

People & Places

Books

Native or indigenous?

Journalism group rethinks its name

ATLANTA, Aug. 9, (AP) - The Native American Journalists Association is aiming to become more inclusive as its members vote on whether to rebrand as the Indigenous Journalists Association - a move inspired, in part, by evolving trends in cultural identity.

The group, with more than 950 members mostly in the United States, is expected to approve the change at its annual conference this week in Winnipeg, Canada. Voting on the new name, as well as branding that would replace a feather with an "ija" logo in stylized letters, runs through Thursday, Aug. 10.

Founded in Canada in 1983, NAJA wants to foster inclusion with Indigenous journalists there as well as in Alaska and Hawaii, since "Native American" is a modern alternative for "American Indian" - referring specifically to the millions of descendants of the original inhabitants of what is now the Lower 48 states.

"Essentially, we're going back to our roots and trying to create and provide support and resources for Indigenous journalists all across Turtle Island," board member **Jourdan Bennett-Begaye** said, invoking the term some Indigenous people use to refer to the North American continent.



Bennett-Begaye

More broadly, the proposed change aligns with terminology used by the United Nations and many multinational organizations as the group also seeks allies among Indigenous journalists worldwide. The Maori people in New Zealand, the Sámi people in Arctic Scandinavia and Russia, and the Mapuche people in Patagonia all face similar issues, with journalists who cover climate change, conflicts over land and resources and missing and murdered women, she said.

The change also would reflect an evolution in how Indigenous people see themselves. They're increasingly calling for "decolonizing" language, moving away from terms that were imposed on them, like "Indian" - a legacy of Christopher Columbus' infamous cartographic blunder - and even, in some contexts, "American," which derives from a mapmaker's effort to honor another Italian explorer, Amerigo Vespucci.

Movement

"It's part of this larger movement that's happening in Indigenous people, just reclaiming everything that's theirs that should be theirs," Bennett-Begaye said. "Since contact, decisions have been made for us and not by us."

Still, some NAJA members have raised concerns that if the association globalizes, its focus on issues particular to Native Americans might be lost. Board members have proposed creating regional chapters if that happens.

"Indigenous is inoffensive, but it also doesn't do any of the kind of distinct sovereignty work, distinct political work, distinct cultural affiliation - that other words do, said Elizabeth Ellis, a historian at Princeton University and an enrolled citizen of the Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma. "It doesn't tell you much beyond the fact that you're existing in opposition to a history and ongoing legacy of colonization."

Usage of the word "Indigenous" has soared in recent years, particularly after demonstrations against the Dakota Access Pipeline in 2016 forged the largest pan-Indigenous alliance in North American history. Standing Rock marked a before and after for Native American visibility in the media and popular culture, Ellis said.

But the proliferation of its usage doesn't mean other terms should disappear, because they're not always interchangeable, said Ellis. Indian, American Indian, Native American, Native, and even "NDN" - a tongue-in-cheek slang popular in social media - each have distinct meanings and are appropriate in different contexts.

Indian, for example, is a historical reference used to connote barbarism to justify enslaving Indigenous people during the colonial era - settlers equated it to savagery while seizing more land and federal policies invoked it as a racist concept in the 19th century, Ellis said. "Indian Law" remains embedded in the US Constitution and in the official names of many Indigenous nations, so its usage in such contexts is inescapable.

"Indigenous" applies worldwide, including to anyone whose ancestors didn't come from somewhere else, and whose communities have endured oppression of their people. But it doesn't reflect the particular duality that many Native Americans experience as citizens of their tribal nations as well as the US, Ellis said.

This is why many Native Americans, when communicating with wider audiences, identify themselves first by their tribal affiliations, and increasingly, in their Indigenous language. Ellis intentionally introduces herself as Peewaalia, just as Bennett-Begaye tells people she's Diné, a member of the Navajo Nation.

Young people in particular are driving these changes in language, Bennett-Begaye said.

"A lot of older folks, and across Indian Country, they still call themselves Indian. My late grandmother, she still calls herself Indian," she said. "But young people ... they see that as derogatory. They're like, 'We don't call ourselves that.' And I think that's the cool part, like, young people owning their identity."

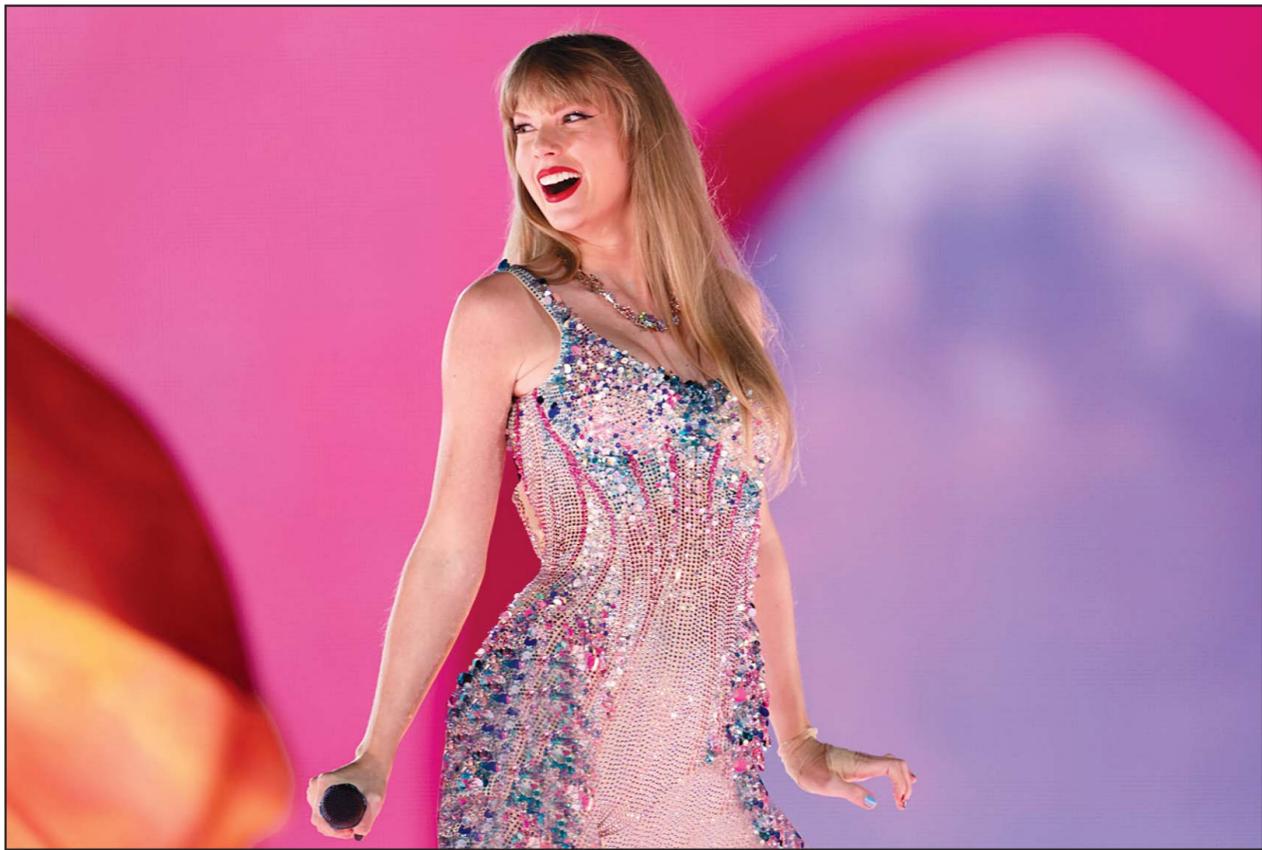
Also:

NEW YORK: Rachel Maddow's next book will be an exploration into right-wing extremism in the US, including a plot to overthrow the government at the start of World War II.

Crown, an imprint of Penguin Random House, has announced recently that Maddow's "Prequel: An American Fight Against Fascism" will be published Oct. 17. The book expands upon research for the liberal author-commentator's podcast "Rachel Maddow Presents: Ultra," for which Steven Spielberg has acquired film rights.

"Just as I like to dive into the backstory and deep origins of any particular news event, I also find it helpful to know if we've previously contended with something like what we're seeing in today's news," the Emmy-winning MSNBC host, who discussed the book on "The Rachel Maddow Show" on Monday night, said in a statement released by Crown.

"Even though I find it disturbing and a little scary that, in our own time, some sizeable chunk of Americans seem ready to jettison real elections and instead embrace rule by force, it's somehow heartening to me to know that this isn't a brand new challenge - another sizeable chunk of Americans felt essentially the same way in the lead-up to World War II."



Taylor Swift performs during 'The Eras Tour,' May 5, 2023, at Nissan Stadium in Nashville, Tenn. She leads the 2023 nominations with eight - seven for her 'Anti-Hero' music video and the Artist of the Year category MTV announced on Tuesday, Aug. 8. (AP)

Music

Jay-Z's Made In America fest canceled

Swift, SZA lead MTV VMAs noms

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 9, (AP) - Taylor Swift tops the 2023 MTV Video Music Awards nominations.

She leads with eight - seven for her "Anti-Hero" music video and a nod in the artist of the year category - followed by SZA, who has six, MTV announced on Tuesday.

Swift currently has 14 VMAs to her name, placing her behind Beyoncé, who has 28 (two with Destiny's Child), Madonna, who has 20 awards, and Lady Gaga, who has 19.

Beyoncé is also nominated for artist of the year.

Doja Cat, Kim Petras, Miley Cyrus, Nicki Minaj, Olivia Rodrigo and Sam Smith are tied at five nominations, and BLACKPINK, Diddy and Shakira each received four.

The 2023 MTV Video Music Awards, scheduled for Sept. 12, will have a record-breaking 35 first-time nominees including Petras, and Metro Boomin' and Rema, who boast three each.

Aespa, Burna Boy, Davido, Esplanon Armado, FIFTY FIFTY, PinkPantheress, Saucy Santana, Stephen Sanchez and Toosii are also nominated for the first time.

The VMAs will be held at the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey. Fan voting begins online Tuesday across 15 gender-neutral categories, including the new best Afrobeats category, and ends Friday, Sept. 1.

Voting in the best new artist category will remain active throughout the show.

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Jay-Z's annual Made in America festival, scheduled for next month in Philadelphia, has been canceled.

"Due to severe circumstances outside of production control, the 2023 Made in America festival will no longer be taking place," the festival shared in a statement on social media. Made in America had been scheduled for Sept. 2-3 on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway with Lizzo and SZA as the headliners.

"This decision has been difficult and has not been made lightly nor without immense deliberation. Made

Hebrew Association, the 92nd Street Y has been based on Manhattan's Upper East Side since 1900. Some of the most notable public figures in the arts, politics

and culture have spoken and performed there.

The 92nd Street Y will also host events - many of them streaming online



Tributes left outside the former home of Sinead O'Connor ahead of the singer's funeral, in Bray, Co Wicklow, Ireland, Tuesday, Aug. 8. O'Connor's family has invited the public to line the waterfront in Bray on Tuesday as her funeral procession passes by. Fans left handwritten notes outside her former home, thanking her for sharing her voice and her music. (AP)

Bartoli veers into management of opera while still singing at 57

SALZBURG, Austria, Aug. 9, (AP) - Cecilia Bartoli has a favorite role she wished she could sing.

"There is one character which I was always in love with since I started my Mozart career, and it's Don Giovanni," she said. "With me, you never know."

She laughed at her thought of a baritone part. Now 57, the mezzo-soprano has highlighted 17th and 18th century music and is singing the lead in Gluck's "Orfeo ed Eurydice," which opened Friday at the Salzburg Festival in modern-dress Cristof Loy production that has five performances through Aug. 14.

Bartoli has expanded into an administrative career, succeeding Riccardo Muti as artistic director of the Salzburg Whitsun Festival in 2012 and in January became director of the Opéra de Monte-Carlo.

"After 35 years of singing, I think it's a great challenge," she said. "When you are the performer, you are concentrating in your music," she said. "You don't know exactly the other artists, what

are their needs. Everybody's different, has a different body, has a different way of reacting about stress. Each artist has a different way to see that."

Bartoli made her opera debut in 1987 and gained recognition for her work in Rossini and Mozart. She has excelled in Baroque roles that veered from the mainstream, releasing recordings devoted to 19th century soprano Maria Malibran, castrati and composers Antonio Salieri and Agostino Steffani.

"She's not only a fantastic singer, a fantastic musician, she's one of the few artists in this region - where the air is quite thin," Salzburg Festival artistic director Markus Hinterhäuser said. "Her knowledge and her interest in questions of music is absolutely amazing. And also, she's very, very brave."

She selects the operas she stars in for a pair of performances at the Whitsun Festival each year in late May and early June, a production that returns for the main summer festival.

Miguel, Tems, Metro Boomin, Ice Spice, Coi Leray, Latto, Lil Yachty, Doechii, Lola, and many more were scheduled to perform.

Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney expressed disappointment at the abrupt change of course. "Since 2012, Made in America has grown into a Philly tradition on Labor Day Weekend celebrating music and promoting worthwhile social causes," Kenney said in a statement.

"We are grateful for all the partners and festival goers who have contributed to this event's incredible success over the years, especially our partners at Roc Nation, and we look forward to bringing Made in America back and bigger than ever to the Benjamin Franklin Parkway next year."

- featuring such acclaimed fiction writers as Helen Garner, John Edgar Wideman, Richard Ford, Sandra Cisneros and Viet Thanh Nguyen. (AP)

ORLANDO, Fla: Students in a Florida school district will be reading only excerpts from William Shakespeare's plays for class rather than the full texts under redesigned curriculum guides developed, in part, to take into consideration the state's "Don't Say Gay" laws.

The changes to the Hillsborough County Public Schools' curriculum guides were made with Florida's new laws prohibiting classroom discussion about sexual orientation or gender identity in mind. Other reasons included revised state standards and an effort to get students to read a wide variety of books for new state exams, the school district said in an emailed statement on Tuesday.

Several Shakespeare plays use suggestive puns and innuendo, and it is implied that the protagonists have had premarital sex in "Romeo and Juliet." Shakespeare's books will be available for checkout at media centers at schools, said the district, which covers the Tampa area.

"First and foremost, we have not excluded Shakespeare from our high school curriculum. Students will still have the physical books to read excerpts in class," the statement said. (AP)



This image provided by the Salzburg Festival shows mezzo-soprano Cecilia Bartoli as Orfeo in a rehearsal of Christof Loy's production of Gluck's "Orfeo ed Eurydice" at the Salzburg Festival. (AP)



Winfrey



Casper

Variety

CHICAGO: Willie Perry Jr., a Chicago disc jockey known as "DJ Casper" and creator of the iconic "Cha Cha Slide" dance, has died. He was 58.

Perry was diagnosed with cancer in 2016, and his wife confirmed his death Monday in a statement to WLS-TV.

"Casper was a fun-loving, giving person," his wife, Kim, said in the statement. "He was a genuine, family oriented man. He loved Chicago with all his heart. He will be greatly missed."

His "Cha Cha Slide" continues to be a favorite at weddings, clubs and many other events about two decades after it became popular. Participants typically dance in lines and rows, following commands to a funky beat on when and where to step, stomp, hop and slide.

Perry told WLS-TV in a May interview that the "Cha Cha Slide" initially was an aerobic exercise for his nephew who worked at a fitness club. It would go on to become popular in many countries.

"From there, it just took off," he said. "I have one of the biggest songs that's played at all stadiums: hockey, basketball, football, baseball. They played it at the Olympics. It was something that everybody could do."

Perry said he was diagnosed in 2016 with renal and neuroendocrine cancer.

Doctors "went in to try to do surgery, and they found out the kidney was connected to the main artery, so they decided not to do it and just treat it," he told the television station.

Perry said the illness caused him to lose about 60 pounds (27.2 kilograms). (AP)

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NEW YORK: Oprah Winfrey, Rachel Maddow and Arnold Schwarzenegger will be among those appearing this fall at the 92nd Street Y, a New York City cultural institution and community center marking its 150th anniversary.

Winfrey will appear with co-author Arthur C. Brooks to discuss their new book, "Building the Life You Want: The Art and Science of Getting Happier," and Maddow will examine the roots of far-right extremism in the US, the subject of her upcoming book "Prequel." Schwarzenegger will give a talk about his book "Be Useful: Seven Tools for Life."

Founded in 1874 as the Young Men's

Climate

What's heating up Earth?

Experts look beyond warming and El Nino

NEW YORK, Aug 9, (AP) — Scientists are wondering if global warming and El Nino have an accomplice in fueling this summer's record-shattering heat.

The European climate agency Copernicus reported that July was one-third of a degree Celsius (six-tenths of a degree Fahrenheit) hotter than the old record. That's a bump in heat that is so recent and so big, especially in the oceans and even more so in the North Atlantic, that scientists are split on whether something else could be at work.

Scientists agree that by far the biggest cause of the recent extreme warming is climate change from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas that has triggered a long upward trend in temperatures. A natural El Nino, a temporary warming of parts of the Pacific that changes weather worldwide, adds a smaller boost. But some researchers say another factor must be present.



Diamond

"What we are seeing is more than just El Nino on top of climate change," Copernicus Director Carlo Buontempo said.

One surprising source of added warmth could be cleaner air resulting from new shipping rules. Another possible cause is 165 million tons (150 million metric tons) of water spewed into the atmosphere by a volcano. Both ideas are under investigation.

Florida State University climate scientist Michael Diamond says shipping is "probably the prime suspect."

Maritime shipping has for decades used dirty fuel that gives off particles that reflect sunlight in a process that actually cools the climate and masks some of global warming.

In 2020, international shipping rules took effect that cut as much as 80% of those cooling particles, which was a "kind of shock to the system," said atmospheric scientist Tianle Yuan of NASA and the University of Maryland Baltimore County.

Pollution

The sulfur pollution used to interact with low clouds, making them brighter and more reflective, but that's not happening as much now, Yuan said. He tracked changes in clouds that were associated with shipping routes in the North Atlantic and North Pacific, both hot spots this summer.

In those spots, and to a lesser extent globally, Yuan's studies show a possible warming from the loss of sulfur pollution. And the trend is in places where it really can't be explained as easily by El Nino, he said.

"There was a cooling effect that was persistent year after year, and suddenly you remove that," Yuan said.

Diamond calculates a warming of about 0.1 degrees Celsius (0.18 degrees Fahrenheit) by midcentury from shipping regulations. The level of warming could be five to 10 times stronger in high shipping areas such as the North Atlantic.

A separate analysis by climate scientists Zeke Hausfather of Berkeley Earth and Piers Forster of the University of Leeds projected half of Diamond's estimate.

In January 2022, the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai undersea volcano in the South Pacific blew, sending more than 165 million tons of water, which is a heat-trapping greenhouse gas as vapor, according to University of Colorado climate researcher Margot Clyne, who coordinates international computer simulations for climate impacts of the eruption.

The volcano also blasted 550,000 tons (500,000 metric tons) of sulfur dioxide into the upper atmosphere.

The amount of water "is so absolutely crazy, absolutely ginormous," said Holger Vömel, a stratospheric water vapor scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research who published a study on the potential climate effects of the eruption.

Volmer said the water vapor went too high in the atmosphere to have a noticeable effect yet, but that effects could emerge later.

A couple of studies use computer models to show a warming effect from all that water vapor. One study, which has not yet undergone the scientific gold standard of peer review, reported this week that the warming could range from as much as 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) of added warming in some places to 1 degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) of cooling elsewhere.

But NASA atmospheric scientist Paul Newman and former NASA atmospheric scientist Mark Schoeberl said those climate models are missing a key ingredient: the cooling effect of the sulfur.

Normally huge volcanic eruptions, like 1991's Mount Pinatubo, can cool Earth temporarily with sulfur and other particles reflecting sunlight. However, Hunga Tonga spouted an unusually high amount of water and low amount of cooling sulfur.

The studies that showed warming from Hunga Tonga didn't incorporate sulfur cooling, which is hard to do, Schoeberl and Newman said. Schoeberl, now chief scientist at Science and Technology Corp. of Maryland, published a study that calculated a slight overall cooling — 0.04 degrees Celsius (0.07 degrees Fahrenheit).

Just because different computer simulations conflict with each other "that doesn't mean science is wrong," University of Colorado's Clyne said. "It just means that we haven't reached a consensus yet. We're still just figuring it out."

Lesser suspects in the search include a dearth of African dust, which cools like sulfur pollution, as well as changes in the jet stream and a slowdown in ocean currents.

Some nonscientists have looked at recent solar storms and increased sunspot activity in the sun's 11-year cycle and speculated that Earth's nearest star may be a culprit. For decades, scientists have tracked sunspots and solar storms, and they don't match warming temperatures, Berkeley Earth chief scientist Robert Rohde said.

Solar storms were stronger 20 and 30 years ago, but there is more warming now, he said.

Still, other scientists said there's no need to look so hard. They say human-caused climate change, with an extra boost from El Nino, is enough to explain recent temperatures.

University of Pennsylvania climate scientist Michael Mann estimates that about five-sixths of the recent warming is from human burning of fossil fuels, with about one-sixth due to a strong El Nino.

The fact that the world is coming out of a three-year La Nina, which suppressed global temperatures a bit, and going into a strong El Nino, which adds to them, makes the effect bigger, he said.

Also:

COPENHAGEN, Denmark: Days of heavy rain triggered landslides and flooding in mountainous southern Norway, where authorities said Wednesday they were considering blowing up a dam at risk of bursting to prevent downstream communities from getting deluged.

The Glåma, Norway's longest and most voluminous river, is dammed at the the Braskereidfoss hydroelectric power plant, which was under water and out of operation. Police said a controlled explosion before the dam fails would allow officials to control the flow of water.

"When there is so much water, we can perhaps imagine, in the worst case, a kind of tidal wave coming sailing down the river," police spokeswoman Merete Hjertø told Norwegian broadcaster NRK.

Police in southern Norway said more than 600 people were evacuated in a region north of Oslo overnight and said the situation there was "unclear and chaotic." The Norwegian Public Roads Administration said Wednesday that all main roads between Oslo and Trondheim, Norway's third-largest city, were closed.

"We are in a crisis situation of national dimensions," Innlandet country Mayor Aud Hove said. "People are isolated in several local communities, and the emergency services risk not being able to reach people who need help."

More heavy rain was expected over southern Norway and central Sweden.



Artemis II crew members, (from left), Jeremy Hansen, Victor Glover, Reid Wiseman and Christina Koch, stand together at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida, in front of an Orion crew module on Tuesday, Aug. 8. The US-Canadian crew inspected the capsule during a visit late Monday and Tuesday. NASA plans to send the four around the moon and back late next year. (AP)

Astronauts get first look at spacecraft that will fly them around moon

The four astronauts assigned to fly around the moon in another year got their first look at their spacecraft, as NASA warned Tuesday there could be more delays.

They peeked into their unfinished Orion capsule, red "Remove Before Flight" tags still dangling from it, and came away impressed.

"Nothing else looks like that ... that's what gave me shivers," astronaut Christina Koch told reporters.

The US-Canadian crew inspected the capsule during a visit to Kennedy Space Center late Monday and Tuesday. NASA plans to send the four around

the moon and back late next year.

Investigations into the capsule's heat shield, however, could delay this first lunar trip by astronauts in more than half a century. Last year's test flight around the moon, with no one on board, resulted in unexpected charring and loss of material from the heat shield at the bottom of the capsule. The heat shield is meant to protect the capsule against the extreme heat of reentry.

The following mission of the Artemis program — a moon landing — faces even more hurdles and may slip from late 2025 into 2026. The main issue re-

mains SpaceX's Starship, the rocketship that will carry two NASA astronauts from lunar orbit down to the south pole.

With only one test flight so far for Starship — resulting in an explosion a few minutes after liftoff in April — NASA is concerned whether Elon Musk's SpaceX can pull everything off in time. The space agency will not commit to a moon landing using Starship, until SpaceX conducts multiple Starship orbital flights, sets up a refueling depot around Earth and completes a moon-landing dress rehearsal. (AP)

Health

EG.5 variant appearing more frequently

COVID hospitalizations in US spike again

NEW YORK, Aug 9, (AP) — Here we go again: COVID-19 hospital admissions have inched upward in the United States since early July in a small-scale echo of the three previous summers.

With an updated vaccine still months away, this summer bump in new hospitalizations might be concerning, but the number of patients is far lower than before. A look at what we know:

How bad is the spike?

For the week ending July 29, COVID-19 hospital admissions were at 9,056. That's an increase of about 12% from the previous week.

But it's a far cry from past peaks, like the 44,000 weekly hospital admissions in early January, the nearly 45,000 in late July 2022, or the 150,000 admissions during the omicron surge of January 2022.

"It is ticking up a little bit, but it's not something that we need to raise any alarm bells over," said Dr. David Dowdy, an infectious disease epidemiologist at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

It's likely that infections are rising too, but the data is scant. Federal authorities ended the public health emergency in May, so the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and many states no longer track the number of positive test results.

What about deaths?

Since early June, about 500 to 600 people have died each week. The number of deaths appears to be stable this summer, although past increases in deaths have lagged behind hospitalizations.

How are we tracking the virus?

The amount of the COVID-19 virus in sewage water has been rising since late June across the nation. In the coming weeks, health officials say they'll keep a close eye on wastewater levels as people return from summer travel and students go back to school.

Higher levels of COVID-19 in

wastewater concentrations are being found in the Northeast and South, said Cristin Young, an epidemiologist at Biobot Analytics, the CDC's wastewater surveillance contractor.

"It's important to remember right now the concentrations are still fairly low," Young said, adding it's about 2.5 times lower than last summer.

And while one version of omicron — EG.5 — is appearing more frequently, no particular variant of the virus is dominant. The variant has been dubbed "eris" but it's an unofficial nickname and scientists aren't using it. "There are a couple that we're watching, but we're not seeing anything like delta or omicron," Young said, referencing variants that fueled previous surges.

Mutations

And mutations in the virus don't necessarily make it more dangerous.

"Just because we have a new sub-variant doesn't mean that we are destined to have an increase in bad outcomes," Dowdy said.

When is the new vaccine coming?

This fall, officials expect to see updated COVID-19 vaccines that contain one version of the omicron strain, called XBB.1.5. It's an important change from today's combination shots, which mix the original coronavirus strain with last year's most common omicron variants.

It's not clear exactly when people can start rolling up their sleeves for what officials hope is an annual fall COVID-19 shot. Pfizer, Moderna and smaller manufacturer Novavax all are brewing doses of the XBB update but the Food and Drug Administration will have to sign off on each, and the CDC must then issue recommendations for their use.

Dr. Mandy Cohen, the new CDC director, said she expects people will get

their COVID-19 shots where they get their flu shots — at pharmacies and at work — rather than at dedicated locations that were set up early in the pandemic as part of the emergency response.

"This is going to be our first fall and winter season coming out of the public health emergency, and I think we are all recognizing that we are living with COVID, flu, and RSV," Cohen told The Associated Press last week. "But the good news is we have more tools than ever before."

Also:

MEXICO CITY: Mexico has shuttered 23 pharmacies at Caribbean coast resorts, six months after a research report warned that drug stores in Mexico were offering foreigners pills they passed off as Oxycodone, Percocet and Adderall without prescriptions, authorities said Tuesday.

A four-day inspection raid targeted drugstores in Cancun, Playa del Carmen and Tulum.

In March, the US State Department issued a travel warning about sales of such pills, and the practice appears to be widespread.

The Navy Department said Tuesday that irregular sales were found at 23 of the 55 drug stores inspected.

The Navy said the pharmacies usually offered the pills only to tourists, and the drugstores advertised such pills, and even offered home delivery services for them.

The Navy said it found outdated medications and some for which there was no record of the supplier, as well as blank or unsigned prescription forms.

In February, the University of California, Los Angeles announced that researchers there had found that 68% of the 40 Mexican pharmacies visited in four northern Mexico cities sold Oxycodone, Xanax or Adderall, and that 27% of those pharmacies were selling fake pills.



A man puts his child on a plastic vessel to play in flood waters of the Bagmati river following heavy monsoon rains in Kathmandu, Nepal, Tuesday, Aug. 8. (AP)



Naylor



Paparo

Discovery

Woman injured by shark bite: A woman was seriously injured after a shark bit through her thigh while she was swimming at a New York City beach, officials said, an unusually severe attack that appears to be without precedent in recent decades.

The 65-year-old woman, whose name has not been released, was swimming off Rockaway Beach just before 6 pm. Monday when a shark bit into her left leg, the city parks department said in a statement.

The bite removed a chunk of flesh from her thigh, leaving a gaping wound several inches wide and deep, according to a photo shared with The Associated Press.

Lifeguards pulled the woman from the water, administered first aid and applied a tourniquet to her leg. She was taken to a nearby hospital, with police describing her condition as critical but stable.

The bite appeared to be the most serious shark attack in New York waters since at least the 1950s, said Gavin Naylor, the program director of the International Shark Attack File at the University of Florida. He said the bite mark was most consistent with a juvenile white shark, though he said it may have also been a bull shark or sandbar shark.

"This is a very severe injury from something that's powerful and unambiguous," he said. "It's very deliberate."

Most reported bites in New York waters involve smaller sharks mistaking a person's ankle or lower leg for a fish, leaving behind minor grazing marks or puncture wounds. In recent years, New York has seen an uptick in those types of shark encounters, though none of the resulting injuries were considered serious.

"This is something qualitatively different," Naylor said.

Christopher Paparo, the manager of Stony Brook University's Marine Sciences Center, agreed the wound was "unlike anything we've been seeing."

Authorities banned swimming on Rockaway Beach on Tuesday, as police flew a drone over the area, scanning the murky surf for signs of a fin. They said they hadn't seen any sharks since Monday's incident. (AP)

3 dead after eating mushrooms: Australian police were trying to figure

out how three people died and a fourth became critically ill after apparently eating wild mushrooms at a family lunch.

Homicide detectives have been investigating the case. Police have interviewed the woman who they say cooked the meal

at her home on July 29 but didn't become ill herself. Police released her without filing any charges but say she remains a suspect.

The woman told media outside her home in the town of Leongatha, in Vic-

toria state, that she didn't know what had happened.

"I didn't do anything," she told Network Nine on Monday. "I loved them and I'm devastated they're gone."

The woman declined to answer questions about what meals were served to which guests or the origin of the mushrooms.

Victoria Police Det. Inspector Dean Thomas said it wasn't clear what type of mushrooms the guests had eaten, but their symptoms were consistent with those from a death cap, a particularly deadly variety.

He said it would take some time to determine what happened and police were keeping an open mind.

"It could be very innocent but, again, we just don't know," Thomas said.

The woman had been hosting her in-laws, Gail and Don Patterson, both aged 70. Both died at area hospitals. Also at the lunch were Gail Patterson's sister Heather Wilkinson, 66, who died, and husband Ian Wilkinson, 68, a Baptist pastor who remained hospitalized this week in critical condition.

Thomas said the woman who cooked the meal was separated from her husband but police had been told their relationship was amicable.

Her children were also at home during the lunch but did not eat the same meal, police said. (AP)



A sign announcing a face mask requirement is displayed at a hospital in Buffalo Grove, Ill., Friday, Jan. 13, 2023. COVID-19 hospital admissions are inching upward in the United States since early July 2023. It's a small-scale echo of the three previous summers. (AP)

PSG's biggest rivals Marseille have strengthened well

Enrique faces tough challenge, with uncertainty over Mbappe, Neymar

PARIS, Aug 9, (AP): Luis Enrique is the eighth coach to take charge of Paris Saint-Germain in 12 years of Qatari ownership of the French club, a hire-and-fire approach which has so far failed to deliver the ultimate goal of winning the Champions League.

The former Spain and Barcelona coach signed a two-year contract in July after Christophe Galtier was fired. He faces a dual task: making the side competitive in Europe and providing a more attractive brand of soccer than his predecessors.

Club president Nasser Al-Khelaifi said Enrique's arrival will mark the start of a new cycle and a better style of play, but such pledges at PSG are easier made than carried out.

First up is a home game against modest Lorient on Saturday night, where Enrique will look to deploy his preferred 4-3-3 formation. But even before he has taken charge of his first game, reports in Spanish media last weekend said he already wants to quit PSG out of frustration at the handling of the Kylian Mbappe transfer situation.

At this stage, Enrique doesn't even know if Mbappe will be included in his team at all as his standoff with the club continues, and leading sports daily L'Equipe reported Monday that fellow superstar Neymar wants to leave this summer. PSG did not comment, but the Brazil forward has been linked with a move back to Barcelona, all of which makes things harder for Enrique even before his first game.

Mbappe has been at odds with PSG since telling the club last month that he would not take up the option of a 12-month

extension on his contract, meaning he could leave for free next year unless he is sold before this transfer window ends.

If Mbappe does stay this season, then Enrique will be his fifth coach since joining in 2017. The previous incumbents could not win the Champions League, with only Thomas Tuchel reaching the final in the pandemic-shortened 2020 edition.

Enrique had been without a job since Spain's elimination from the World Cup last year. He pledged to keep the same attacking philosophy that made his reputation at Barca, where he won the treble in 2015.

SOCCER

That attack featured Luis Suarez, Neymar and Messi, who won't be reunited with Enrique after joining Inter Miami in the MLS.

He comes at a time when PSG is very much in transition. But he has revamped teams before, doing so with Spain after its elimination in the round of 16 of the World Cup in Russia.

If Mbappe is sold, then Enrique will rely heavily on Neymar - providing he stays - and whoever comes in to strengthen the attack. France winger Ousmane Dembele has been widely reported to be an imminent signing for PSG.

The skilful Dembele's speed is even a match for Mbappe, but he does not have nearly the same ability in front of goal



PSG's Neymar (second from right), fights for the ball against Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors's Choi Chul-soon (right), during a friendly soccer match in Busan, South Korea. (AP)

- scoring a modest 40 goals in 185 games for Barcelona and only four in 37 for France.

Enrique would need a top-class striker to replace Mbappe, but they are in short supply. England striker Harry Kane is in talks to join German powerhouse Bayern Munich, while Barca striker Robert Lewandowski turns 35 on Aug. 21 and

is too advanced in age for a long-term contract.

PSG have been linked with Eintracht Frankfurt forward Randal Kolo Muani, who is a very quick and highly skilled player but is still developing as a finisher with a career-best 15 league goals last season.

His options without Mbappe or a reputed finisher to replace him are limited. Hugo Ekitike scored only three league goals in a disappointing first campaign with PSG last season and the club may look to sell the 21-year-old.

Enrique has tinkered with formations during the pre-season tour to Japan and South Korea, where PSG won only one game, even trying Marco Asensio at center forward.

PSG's biggest rivals Marseille have strengthened well with the arrival of veteran striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and experienced midfielder Geoffrey Kondogbia. If the club keep veteran forward Alexis Sanchez and key midfielder Matteo Guendouzi, then new coach Marcelino could have a squad strong enough to lead Marseille to their first league title since 2010.

Monaco have also changed coach with Adi Hutter replacing Philippe Clement, but he'll have to plan his season without standout central defender Axel Disasi, who joined Premier League Chelsea last week. Monaco finished a disappointing sixth last season but still have enough quality going forward to push for a top-four place. A title challenge does not seem realistic, however.



Las Vegas Aces guard Kelsey Plum (10) works for a shot attempt against Dallas Wings guard Crystal Dangerfield (11) during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Arlington, Texas. (AP)

A first for Grand Slam tennis

US Open adding video review for double bounces

WASHINGTON, Aug 9, (AP): New U.S. Open tournament referee Jake Garner recalls being a chair umpire and having a tough time figuring out in the moment whether a ball bounced twice before a player got it back over the net.

If that happens at Flushing Meadows this year, though, an official can check a replay: Video review will make its Grand Slam tennis debut when main-draw competition begins in New York on Aug. 28.

TENNIS

"There were certain situations, of course, where you would see a video post-match and wish you had made a different decision," Garner told The Associated Press, "or wish you had assistance in making that decision."

Video review - which is separate from the electronic line-calling used for ruling balls in or out at all matches - will be set up for five of the Open's 17 competition courts: Arthur Ashe Stadium, Louis Armstrong Stadium, Grandstand, Court 5 and Court 17. That sampling, which should include a little more than 50% of singles matches, according to Garner, will be studied



Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark, hits a return against Kimberly Birrell, of Australia, during the National Bank Open women's tennis tournament in Montreal. Caroline Wozniacki made a triumphant return to tennis, defeating Kimberly Birrell in straight sets at the National Bank Open on Tuesday.

before deciding whether to expand the system in 2024.

This year, players in singles, doubles and mixed doubles will get three challenges per set for things such as double bounces, a ball touching a player's body, a player touching the net or a player being hindered by noise. They'll hold onto a challenge if they're correct and receive an additional one in tiebreakers. "I had pushed for this

for a while, so I am glad to see the U.S. Open is going to allow it," said Jessica Pegula, an American who is ranked No. 3 and was involved in a high-profile missed call on a double bounce that helped her opponent, Iga Swiatek, at last year's French Open. "It will be great for both the players and the fans."

It's the latest example of modern assistance for officials in sports - and the latest example of the U.S. Open leading the way when it comes to recent rules changes at major tennis tournaments.

"We're always looking to innovate," Garner said.

The U.S. Open was the first Slam event with electronic line-calling (in 2006), the first with a serve clock (2018) and the first to allow in-match communication with coaches (2022). Video review was test-

sense," said Caroline Garcia, a 2022 U.S. Open semifinalist from France. "It can be super frustrating if you think you saw a double bounce and the umpire didn't see it, for some reason. It's always better to know right away than to be mad at someone. You just want to know."

When there is a challenge, two people away from the court will send the best replay to the chair umpire's screen and video boards in the arena. The umpire will have three options: confirm the original call, overturn it or let the call stand if there isn't clear video evidence one way or the other.

All reviews will be prompted by players and should help reduce - if not eliminate - disagreements over these types of episodes, which happen every so often.

"If you think something didn't go your way, just challenge it. Then there's no more arguing," said Jordan Thompson, an Australian ranked No. 55.

He lost a point in the last game of a match at a U.S. Open tuneup in Washington two years ago even though his opponent connected with the ball after an extra bounce. The two players got in each other's faces afterward, and the chair umpire climbed down to separate them.

At the 2009 French Open, for example, Serena Williams hit a shot that went off her opponent's arm but wasn't called that way. This year in Paris, Holger Rune won a point that he shouldn't have because of a double bounce.

"Some umpires, they make mistakes. Some for me; some for him," Rune said. "That's life."

Such errors should be more avoidable now.

Bonner stars, Sun cruise past Storm

Aces dominate Wings

SEATTLE, Aug 9, (AP): DeWanna Bonner scored 21 points, Alyssa Thomas had 16 points, 12 rebounds, eight assists and four steals and the Connecticut Sun beat the Seattle Storm 81-69 on Tuesday.

Rebecca Allen added 13 points and Tiffany Hayes scored 10 for Connecticut (21-7), which has won three straight games. Bonner finished with four 3-pointers on just six attempts.

Bonner scored 14 points in the final five minutes of the first half, including a 3-pointer just before the halftime buzzer for a 50-34 lead. Seattle scored just 14 points in the second quarter.

BASKETBALL

Jewell Loyd and Sami Whitcomb each scored 11 points for Seattle (7-21), which continues its four-game homestand on Thursday. Ezi Magbegor had 10 points, six rebounds and four assists and Dulcy Fankam Mendjiadeu had eight points and 12 rebounds. Loyd, the WNBA scoring leader at 24.9 points per game, was just 5 of 18 from the field with four turnovers.

Aces 104, Wings 84
In Arlington, A'ja Wilson scored 28 points and grabbed 14 rebounds, Kelsey Plum added 20 points and the Las Vegas Aces eased past the Dallas Wings.

Las Vegas responded to its lowest-scoring game of the season - a 99-61 loss to New York on Sunday - with a 54-point first half. The Aces scored the opening 16 points of the game and led 54-26 at halftime behind double-digit scoring from Jackie Young (12), Chelsea Gray (13) and Plum (15). Wilson, who celebrated her 27th birthday on Tuesday, also had nine points and 10 rebounds in the half.

The Aces shot 51% from the field in the first half, including 11 of 17 from 3-point range. Las Vegas finished 16 of 32 behind the arc with four apiece from Plum, Young and Gray.

Lynx 88, Sky 79

In Chicago, Napheesa Collier scored 29 points, Jessica Shepard added 17 points, seven rebounds and five assists and the Minnesota Lynx beat the Chicago Sky.

Minnesota scored the opening seven points of the fourth quarter to take a 72-62 lead. Kayla McBride made a long 2-pointer to extend it to 81-71 and Shepard added a jumper from the free-throw line with 3:01 left for a 12-point advantage.

After a Chicago turnover, Lindsay Allen made two free throws with 23.1 seconds left for an 85-79 lead. Collier added two free throws on Minnesota's next possession for an eight-point lead.

McBride finished with 13 points and Nikola Milic added 12 points for Minneapolis (14-15). Rachel Banham, who has not played since July 12 due to a broken right thumb, scored three points in seven minutes. Dorka Juzaszek did not play for the second straight game.

Collier, who picked up her fourth foul with 5:06 remaining in the third quarter, finished 10 of 18 from the field to help Minnesota shoot 52%.

Jaguars plan to play starters in preseason opener

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., Aug 9, (AP): Jacksonville Jaguars coach Doug Pederson plans to play most of his starters in the team's preseason opener at Dallas on Saturday.

Pederson said Wednesday he won't play them "long at all," maybe a series or two. But it'll be the first game action for receiver Calvin Ridley since Oct. 24, 2021. Ridley, playing through a broken left foot that season, stepped away to address his mental health following a home robbery. He was suspended for the entire 2022 season because he bet on the NFL while away from the Atlanta Falcons.

The Jaguars traded two draft picks to get Ridley last November, and he's been the team's most dynamic player through the first two weeks of training camp. Now, he'll join teammates Trevor Lawrence, Christian Kirk and Evan Engram in a game for the first time.

All eyes will be on Ridley, who caught 90 passes for 1,374 yards and nine touchdowns in 2020 despite the injury. He had 31 receptions for 281 yards and two scores before sitting out the final two months of the 2021 season.

Pederson said Ridley is unlikely to play



Green Bay Packers' AJ Dillon runs during NFL football training camp in Green Bay, Wis. (AP)

much longer than other starters.



The Browns will start the season missing a pair of defensive ends.

Alex Wright and Isaiah Thomas both underwent knee surgeries on Tuesday and will be sidelined into the regular season, depriving Cleveland of depth and potentially forcing the Browns to look outside for help.

FOOTBALL

The team said Wright and Thomas were both operated on at University Hospitals by Browns physician Dr. James Voos. The Browns expect the players to need "several weeks" to recover and estimate they'll be back "early in the season." Cleveland opens on Sept. 10 against the Cincinnati Bengals.

Wright, a third-round pick in 2022, was injured in the Browns' 21-16 win over the New York Jets in the Hall of Fame game last Thursday. Thomas, selected in the seventh round last year, got hurt during practice on Saturday.

Change Name

Earlier my name was MOHAMMAD ISMAEL SIDDIQUI, I have changed it to MOHAMMAD ISMAIL I, should be known by this name, my passport no. M7062442 and My Kuwait civil id no. 273121303626 MOHAMMAD ISMAIL S/O MOHAMMAD ISHAK SIDDIQUI sauth tola marwitiya old ward no.5 and new ward no.9 bansgaon gorakhpur pin code. 273403

Change Name

I, Mayank holder of Passport No. L4533106 change to MAYANK (as Given name) SEN (as Surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name MAYANK SEN and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents.

Resilient Astros stun Orioles on Tucker grand slam off Bautista

Rangers extend longest winning streak in 7 years to eight

BALTIMORE, Aug 9, (AP): Kyle Tucker's grand slam off Félix Bautista in the top of the ninth inning gave the Houston Astros a 7-6 victory over the Baltimore Orioles on Wednesday night.

Houston trailed 5-0 after Ryan Mountcastle and Adley Rutschman homered off Framber Valdez in the first and second innings, but the Astros pulled off a remarkable comeback in the ninth.

Pinch-hitter Jon Singleton led off the ninth with a walk, and Jose Altuve followed with a single. Bautista (6-2) struck out Alex Bregman, but Yordan Alvarez came within a few feet of tying it with a drive to center. Jorge Mateo - a shortstop making only his second start of the year in center field - couldn't catch it, and the ball bounced off the wall for a very long single.

Tucker then battled Bautista for nine pitches, finally hitting a 100 mph fast-ball to right-center field for his 20th home run of the year. Bautista had allowed only five earned runs all season before Houston scored four on him in two-thirds of an inning.

Braves 8, Pirates 6

In Pittsburgh, Orlando Arcia hit a two-out, two-run double in the ninth, and Atlanta rallied from three runs down to beat Pittsburgh.

Braves star Ronald Acuña Jr. hit a leadoff homer but left the game in the sixth when he was hit on the left elbow by a pitch from Pirates reliever Colin Holderman. The Braves said X-rays were negative.

Kevin Pillar tied the game in the ninth with a two-out RBI single against Pirates closer David Bednar (3-2) before Arcia put the Braves ahead. Major league-best Atlanta stopped a three-game skid.

Kirby Yates (6-0) pitched a scoreless eighth. The Pirates put two runners on in the bottom of the ninth, but Raisel Iglesias got Jack Suwinski to hit a game-ending comebacker for his 21st save in 23 chances.

Mariners 2, Padres 0

In Seattle, Logan Gilbert struck out a career-high 12 in seven innings of one-hit ball and Seattle won its sixth straight.

Gilbert retired 21 of the 22 batters he faced, yielding only an infield single to San Diego's Xander Bogaerts in the second inning. Star center fielder Julio Rodríguez aided Gilbert (10-5) by robbing Fernando Tatis Jr. of a potential homer with a leaping catch at the wall.

Seattle (61-52) has won 11 of 13 and pulled within two games of Toronto for the third and final AL wild-card spot. San Diego lost its third straight.

Matt Brash worked out of trouble in the eighth and Andrés Muñoz handled the ninth for his sixth save, concluding a three-hitter for Seattle.

Rangers 6, Athletics 1

In Oakland, Max Scherzer gave up three hits over seven innings and Texas beat Oakland, extending its longest winning streak in seven years to eight games.

In his second start for the Rangers since being acquired by the New York Mets, Scherzer (11-4) struck out six, retired nine of the first 10 batters and didn't allow a hit until JJ Bleday's lead-off homer in the fourth.



Tampa Bay Rays' Josh Lowe reacts after his triple off St. Louis Cardinals starting pitcher Miles Mikolas during the eighth inning of a baseball game in St. Petersburg, Fla. (AP)

Corey Seager had three hits including his 19th home run for the Rangers.

Cubs 3, Mets 2

In New York, Mike Tauchman hit a tiebreaking homer in the eighth inning off Drew Smith (4-4) and Jameson Taillon retired his final 16 batters to win his fourth straight start as Chicago beat New York.

Cody Bellinger also went deep and Yan Gomes had an RBI double for the surging Cubs, who won for the 16th time in 21 games.

Pete Alonso hit an early two-run homer for the sinking Mets. New York has lost seven of eight since trading Justin Verlander and other veterans at last week's deadline.

Adbert Alzolay worked a one-hit ninth for his 15th save in 16 tries. He started a 1-6-3 double play on Daniel Vogelbach to end it.

Taillon (7-6) allowed three hits in seven innings and improved to 5-0 in his past six outings.

BASEBALL

Rockies 7, Brewers 3

In Milwaukee, Milwaukee's Andrew Chafin and Abner Uribe combined to allow three straight bases-loaded walks in the 10th inning and hand the win to Colorado.

The Rockies' Nolan Jones went deep twice, the first multi-homer game of his career. Other homers came from Colorado's Elias Díaz and Milwaukee's William Contreras and Andruw Monasterio.

Chafin (2-4) walked Michael Toglia to start the 10th before Brenton Doyle loaded the bases with a bunt single. Automatic runner Harold Castro scored the go-ahead run when Chafin walked Cole Tucker on four pitches. Uribe came in, started the at-bat with a pitch clock violation and then threw three more balls to Ezequiel Tovar. Uribe then walked Ryan McMahon on four pitches to put the Rockies ahead 6-3.

Rays 4, Cardinals 2

In St. Petersburg, Yandy Díaz, Brandon Lowe and Randy Arozarena hit RBI singles in the eighth inning and Tampa Bay beat St. Louis.

Josh Lowe opened the eighth with a triple against Miles Mikolas (6-8). Andre Pallante entered and retired pinch-hitter Harold Ramirez on a grounder before Díaz hit a groundball single to center that made it 2-1 - the first of four consecutive base hits.

Díaz went 4 for 4 and raised his average from .315 to .322 as the Rays improved to 7-3 over their last 10 games. Isaac Paredes hit his 22nd homer of the season in the seventh inning, when he knotted the game at 1-1.

Tampa Bay center fielder Jose Siri helped preserve the 1-all tie with a leaping catch at the wall on Nolan Gorman's two-out drive off Jason Adam (3-2) with a runner on first in the top of the eighth.

Guardians 1, Blue Jays 0

In Cleveland, Tanner Bibee pitched seven innings and Ramón Laureano drove in the game's only run in his debut for Cleveland, which ended Toronto's four-game winning streak.

Bibee (8-2) allowed six singles - three by Whit Merrifield - and remained unbeaten in his last nine starts.

Laureano, claimed off waivers on Monday from Oakland, hit an RBI double in the second inning off Yusei Kikuchi (9-4), who gave up three hits in seven innings.

Trevor Stephan pitched the eighth and Emmanuel Clase worked around two infield singles in the ninth for his 30th save.

Marlins 3, Reds 2

In Cincinnati, Jorge Soler hit a two-run homer in the seventh inning and Miami rallied past Cincinnati in a matchup of NL wild-card contenders.

Soler connected on a four-seam fast-ball from reliever Lucas Sims (3-3), sending it just out of the reach of leaping center fielder TJ Friedl. The Marlins held on to snap a five-game skid and move within one-half game of the Reds for the final wild-card spot. Cincinnati has lost seven of eight.

Miami starter Braxton Garrett (6-3) gave up two runs and six hits in six innings. David Robertson worked the ninth for his second save with Miami and 16th overall.

Angels 7, Giants 5

In Anaheim, Brandon Drury had three hits and Lucas Giolito picked up his first win for Los Angeles, which beat San



Washington Nationals center fielder Alex Call catches a line out by Philadelphia Phillies' Bryson Stott during the third inning of the first baseball game in a doubleheader in Philadelphia. (AP)

Francisco to stop a seven-game skid.

Giolito (7-8) went six innings and allowed three runs on three hits with seven strikeouts. He had given up 12 runs in nine innings since being acquired from the Chicago White Sox on July 26.

Drury's single in the Angels' four-run first inning chased Giants starter Scott Alexander (6-2), who allowed hits to the only three batters he faced.

Wilmer Flores had two hits, including a two-run homer in the eighth inning, and drove in four runs for the Giants. Flores has reached base in 19 straight games, the longest streak of his career.

Dodgers 5, Diamondbacks 4

In Phoenix, Freddie Freeman had three hits, Julio Urías threw six quality innings and Los Angeles held on to beat fading Arizona.

The Dodgers have won three straight and seven of eight. The D-backs have lost seven straight and fell to .500 (57-57) for the first time since April 7, when they were 4-4.

Arizona scored twice in the ninth to get within one run, but Evan Phillips induced a game-ending double play from rookie Corbin Carroll to earn his 15th save in 17 chances.

Urías (9-6), who gave up four hits, struck out five and walked one. The left-hander has thrown 14 straight scoreless innings dating to July 25.

Yankees 7, White Sox 1

In Chicago, Aaron Judge and Kyle Higashioka homered and New York beat Chicago.

Clarke Schmidt (8-6) pitched neatly into the sixth inning and combined with two relievers for 13 strikeouts.

Isiah Kiner-Falefa hit a two-run double and scored during New York's four-run fourth against Touki Toussaint (1-5), and the Yankees scored three more in the eighth behind the long balls by Higashioka and Judge off Tanner Banks.

Luis Robert Jr. hit his 31st homer for the White Sox, whose three-game winning streak ended.

Phillies 8, Nationals 4, game 1

Nationals 5, Phillies 4, game 2

In Philadelphia, Joey Meneses' second homer of the game was a solo shot off Philadelphia All-Star closer Craig Kimbrel (6-3) in the ninth inning that gave Washington a doubleheader split.

Meneses also hit a two-run shot off reliever Jeff Hoffman in the seventh that tied the game at 4-all. Bryce Harper hit a two-run homer for the Phillies.

Jordan Weems (3-0) tossed a scoreless eighth and Kyle Finnegan worked the ninth for his 18th save, fanning Harper to end it.

In the opener, Philadelphia's Kyle Schwarber homered twice off Washington's Trevor Williams (5-7) to reach 30 for the season and drove in five runs.

Zack Wheeler (9-5) settled down after allowing early homers to Lane Thomas and Keibert Ruiz, working six innings.

Tigers 6, Twins 0

In Detroit, Eduardo Rodriguez pitched seven solid innings and Detroit stopped Minnesota's five-game winning streak.

Rodriguez (8-5) allowed four hits - all singles - struck out five and walked three. Tigers slugger Miguel Cabrera went 2 for 4 and scored a run. He has 3,142 hits, passing Tony Gwynn and moving into a tie with Robin Yount for 19th place on the career list.

Twins ace Sonny Gray (5-5) struck out 10 in six innings. He was charged with three runs - two earned - and seven hits.

Royals 9, Red Sox 3

In Boston, Drew Waters, MJ Melendez and Michael Massey each hit two-run home runs and Kansas City beat Boston to snap a three-game skid.

Brady Singer (8-8) allowed three runs over 6 2/3 innings.

Adam Duvall homered for Boston, which has lost five of six. Kutter Crawford (5-6) allowed three runs in 3 1/3 innings.

Turner joins Forest from Arsenal

LONDON, Aug 9, (AP): United States goalkeeper Matt Turner joined Nottingham Forest from Arsenal for a reported 10 million pounds (\$12.75 million) on Wednesday. Turner has signed a four-year deal. He only joined Arsenal in June last year from New England Revolution.

The 29-year-old Turner started for the U.S. team in all four of its games at the World Cup last year but only played for Arsenal in cup competitions last season.

"It's a great challenge and a great step in my career," Turner said. "When I heard that there was interest to bring me here, it just felt right for my family, it felt right when my agent spoke to me about it and it feels like the right move for me right now." He is Forest's third offseason signing after right back Ola Aina and winger Anthony Elanga. Forest will be playing in its second straight season in the Premier League, and visits Arsenal in its first game on Saturday.

Another innovation by Pep that's moving the needle in EPL

Ball-playing goalkeepers & hybrid defender-midfielders latest trends

LONDON, Aug 9, (AP): Goalkeepers are getting so good with the ball at their feet that they could almost be outfield players.

Take Ederson Moraes at Manchester City, for example: He can ping a pass 60 meters right onto the head of Erling Haaland or into the stride of Jack Grealish. Pep Guardiola has even said Ederson is the best penalty-taker at City.

The Premier League will be full of ball-playing goalkeepers this season, with the arrival of Andre Onana at Manchester United and Guglielmo Vicario at Tottenham adding to the list of keepers who are now expected to be the starter of attacks as much as the last line of defense.

Expect more length-of-the-field team goals but maybe more defensive mistakes, too, with the majority of teams likely to be playing the ball out from the back in an effort to keep possession, beat the press and make full use of the pitch to attack in space.

Onana has emerged as a master of this - and it's why United has spent 51 million euros (\$57 million) on a keeper who could be a transformational signing, an emblem of the Erik ten Hag era if the club can return to its former glories.

"With him, something will change in our game," Ten Hag said of Onana, who showed in last season's Champions League - when playing for Inter Milan - his ability to pierce a press with his precise balls into midfield or up front.

Gone are the days when a goalkeeper's sole duty was to keep the ball out of the net. Now they need to be as good with their feet as their hands, essentially giving teams an 11th player in their build-up and allowing defenders to push further upfield.

According to Sky Sports, goalkeepers' possession retention averaged around 43% between 2003-10. Last season, that figure had risen to 67% - the highest ratio on record.

Aside from Onana and Vicario, Mark Flekken and Bart Verbruggen - two Dutch ball-playing goalies - have moved to the Premier League this off-season with Brentford and Brighton, respectively.

They'll join Ederson, Kepa Arrizabalaga at Chelsea, Allison Becker at Liverpool, Aaron Ramsdale at Arsenal who, along with the likes of Jason Steele (Brighton) and David Raya (Brentford), are all exceptional with their feet.

Raya, for example, had a 42.1% accuracy with his long passes last season. He is reportedly close to a move to Ar-

senal, which would give coach Mikel Arteta two ball-playing keepers - like Guardiola has at City with Ederson and Stefan Ortega.

Again, Guardiola can be regarded as a trendsetter in this department, at least in English soccer. In his first season at City in 2016, one of his first big decisions was to sell Joe Hart - a key member of the City team's spine - and bring in Claudio Bravo, a goalkeeper whose one-on-one shot-stopping was suspect but whose passing from the back was peerless. Ederson was then signed in 2017 and has proven to be great in both respects.

Many coaches, as is often the case, have copied Guardiola.

Not everyone, though. Of the top teams, Newcastle still has a goalkeeper in Nick Pope who looks uncomfortable with the ball at his feet but makes up for it with his shot-stopping ability.

They are few and far between these days.

The price tags of the Premier League's top goalkeepers highlight their growing importance.

Allison cost Liverpool 73 million euros (then \$85 million) in July 2018, at the time a world-record fee for a goalkeeper. Chelsea paid even more - 80 million euros (then \$92.6 million) - for Kepa a month later.

Now Onana comes in at No. 3 in the list of the most expensive goalkeepers ever.

SOCCER

Here are a couple of other tactical developments to watch out for:

Hybrid defender-midfielders

There's another innovation by Guardiola that's moving the needle in the Premier League.

Like he did in Germany with Philipp Lahm, Guardiola has adapted his formation - chiefly to accommodate the arrival of striker Erling Haaland - to include a defender who plays as a midfielder when the team is in possession. It's termed a "hybrid" role.

Last season, City initially pushed a full back, Joao Cancelo or Rico Lewis, into central midfield alongside Rodri to allow both the team's attacking central midfielders to get closer to Haaland and so that City had two deeper-lying midfielders in place in case of a turnover of possession. That hybrid player eventually became John Stones, who mostly pushed forward from cent-



Manchester City's Julian Alvarez (right), challenges for the ball with Arsenal's goalkeeper Aaron Ramsdale during the English FA Community Shield final soccer match between Arsenal and Manchester City at Wembley Stadium in London. (AP)

er back to join Rodri. Stones was a revelation. Get this: He completed more dribbles than any player in a Champions League final since Lionel Messi in 2015.

Others are now using the tactic. At Arsenal, Oleksandr Zinchenko did it last season and summer signing Jurrien Timber might do the same this season. At Liverpool, Trent Alexander-Arnold became a hybrid defender-midfielder late in the season and had seven assists across April and May, a big reason for the team's strong league finish.

Expect only top clubs to use the hybrid tactic, however, because it's best suited for teams who dominate possession and can afford to only have three at the back for parts of games.

Brighton's rope-a-dope Brighton has been an entrancing watch since the arrival of Roberto De Zerbi in September, mainly because of the risks his team take at the back.

The center backs hold onto the ball in a bid to draw opposition players toward them. When they do, they quickly pass forward into the spaces left behind and the full backs are encouraged to support the forwards to create overlaps. Central midfielders also receive the ball under pressure at times and aim to make a one-touch lay-off to create space.

It can go wrong and leave the defense open - Brighton lost 5-1 at home to Everton on May 8, remember - but it's a thing of beauty when it comes off. See the 3-0 win at Arsenal just six days later.

Meanwhile, Julen Lopetegui left his position as Wolverhampton manager after nine months in charge and less than a week before the start of the Premier League season.

The former Spain and Real Madrid coach was reportedly unhappy with the club's financial situation. Wolves and Lopetegui "have reached an agreement to part ways," the club said in a statement.

The Spaniard took charge in November with the team in last place in the league and guided Wolves comfortably to safety and a 13th-place finish.

"However, the head coach and club acknowledged and accepted their differences of opinion on certain issues and agreed that an amicable end to his contract was the best solution for all parties," the club said.

Wolverhampton is reportedly set to hire Gary O'Neil, who departed Bournemouth during the offseason, as a replacement.

"Talks have been ongoing in recent weeks, held with the utmost respect and cordiality, affording the club time and space to begin work on finding a successor, while also ensuring that Julen and his backroom staff could continue their planned preparation to ensure the playing squad would be in the best possible condition for the start of the Premier League season," the team said.

Wolverhampton opens its season at Manchester United next Monday. "On behalf of everyone at the club, I'd like to thank Julen and his staff for their dedication and hard work during their time at the football club," sporting director Matt Hobbs said. "They were brought in with the primary aim of keeping the club in the Premier League last season, an objective which they achieved with games to spare."

The club's statement included comments from Lopetegui, who thanked the front office, the players and fans.

"I wish Wolves and everybody at the club the very best of luck for the future, and thank them for the opportunity granted at the time to take charge of this wonderful club," he said.

MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, Aug 9, (AP): Results and standings from the MLB games on Tuesday.															
American League East Division				National League East Division				American League Central Division				National League Central Division			
W	L	Pct	GB	W	L	Pct	GB	W	L	Pct	GB	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	4	St. Louis	2	LA Angels	7	San Francisco	5	Minnesota	61	54	530	—	—	—	—
Detroit	6	Minnesota	0	Philadelphia	8	Washington 1st game	4	Cleveland	59	55	518	1-1/2	—	—	—
Cleveland	1	Toronto	0	Miami	3	Cincinnati	2	Detroit	50	63	442	9	—	—	—
Houston	7	Baltimore	6	Chicago Cubs	3	NY Mets	2	Chicago	46	69	440	1-1/2	—	—	—
Kansas City	9	Boston	3	Atlanta	8	Pittsburgh	6	Kansas City	37	78	322	23	—	—	—
NY Yankees	7	Chicago W. Sox	1	Washington	5	Philadelphia 2nd game	4	Minnesota	60	55	522	—	—	—	—
Seattle	2	San Diego	0	Colorado	7	Milwaukee 10th inn	3	Cleveland	55	59	482	4-1/2	—	—	—
Texas	6	Oakland	1	LA Dodgers	5	Arizona	4	Detroit	50	63	442	9	—	—	—
								Chicago	46	69	440	1-1/2	—	—	—
								Kansas City	37	78	322	23	—	—	—
								Texas	68	46	596	—	—	—	—
								Houston	65	49	570	3	—	—	—
								Seattle	61	52	540	6-1/2	—	—	—
								Los Angeles	57	58	496	11-1/2	—	—	—
								Oakland	32	82	281	36	—	—	—



Switzerland's Stefan Bissegger, Stefan Kung, Mauro Schmid, Elise Chabbey, Nicole Koller and Marlen Reusser celebrate on the podium after winning gold in the Team Time Trial Mixed Relay race on day six of the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships in Glasgow, Scotland. (AP)

Sports

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Kopeccky dents British track dominance

Swiss edge France for mixed team relay title

GLASGOW, Aug 9, (AP): Lotte Kopeccky finally put a dent in Britain's dominance of the velodrome at the cycling world championships.

One day after the home nation took two more gold medals in track cycling, the Belgian multi-disciplinary standout regained her points race world title from Britain's Neah Evans with a dominant performance. Kopeccky and Australia's Georgia Baker gained a lap on the field early, and that proved to be decisive in the duo going one-two in the 100-lap race.

Kopeccky finished with 39 points, including the 20 she earned from gaining a lap and the points she gained for the sprints that come every 10 laps. Baker wound up with 31 points for her lap and sprints, while Tsuyaka Uchino of Japan won the final sprint worth double the points

CYCLING

to finish with 14 and earn the bronze medal.

Evans, who gained a lap but then lost one, finished tied with Lily Williams of the U.S. with nine points apiece, just outside a podium spot.

"In the end I just had to focus on Georgia," said Kopeccky, the 2021 champion who finished fourth a year ago, when Evans won the gold medal. "If I stayed right behind her it couldn't go wrong anymore, so that's what I did."

In other world championships, Jeffrey Hoogland of the Netherlands won his third straight title and fourth overall in the men's 1-kilometer time trial; the Swiss road team comprised of three men and three women narrowly beat France to win the mixed team relay; and Jan Willem van Schip and Yoeri Havik of the Netherlands held on in the final sprint of the men's Madison to win the gold medal by just two points over second-place Britain and three over New Zealand.

It was the first men's Madison title for the Dutch since its introduction at the world championships in 1995.

Evans, who joined Elinor Barker in winning the women's Madison a day earlier, jumped to an early lead in the points race by edging Kopeccky and Baker in a tight sprint. Kopeccky bounced back to take the second sprint, then hid in the back of the peloton as Evans expended energy trying to nail back a breakaway, before pouncing on the opportunity.

Kopeccky charged around the outside and straight to the front, and Baker soon joined her. The duo took points at the next sprint before gaining their ever-important lap, putting significant pressure on Evans over the final 40 laps of the race.

Evans and Williams took laps to gain 20 points, but they later lost them when they dropped a lap. By the time the final sprints were winding down, the only questions left were whether Kopeccky or Baker would win and whether Evans would medal.

Kopeccky never gave Baker a chance to shake loose on the final sprint, securing her gold medal, while Evans made a desperate charge in an attempt to earn bronze. She faded badly, though, and Uchino was able to charge past to take third place.

In the men's time trial, Matthew Glaetzer of Australia posted the fastest time before Hoogland stepped onto the track.

The Dutch sprinter raced away from the start line and had moved ahead by a half-second by the first



Competitors at the start of the Mixed Team Relay race during day seven of the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships at the Glentress Mountain Bike Trail Centre, Peebles, Scotland. (AP)



Poland's Mikolaj Penar in the BMX Freestyle Flatland Men Elite qualification event on day six of the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships in Glasgow, Scotland. (AP)

time check, and Hoogland maintained that lead over the first two laps of the four-lap ride. He slowly ceded time over the back half of the ride but stopped the clock in 58.222 seconds and win his ninth world title in various events.

Glaetzer wound up with the silver medal and fellow Aussie Thomas Cornish took bronze.

The men's Madison - an endurance relay involving handoffs throughout the 200-lap race - came down to the final sprint, where the Netherlands got third-place points to lock up the gold medal. New Zealand won the sprint to vault ahead of Belgium for the bronze medal, while Britain took second in the sprint and earned the silver medal.

Out on the roads of Glasgow, Scotland, the Swiss mixed relay team of Stefan Bissegger, Stefan Kung, Mauro Schmid, Elise Chabbey, Nicole Koller and Marlen Reusser stopped the clock in 54 minutes, 16.20 seconds - despite a fall by Reusser, who got back on her bike fast enough to keep from losing too much time.

The French team finished seven seconds back in second while Germany was 51 seconds down in third place.

Financial 'incentives' for shooters qualifying for Paris Oly: KSF chief

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 9, (KUNA): Kuwaiti shooters who manage to claim a berth in next year's 2024 Paris Summer Olympics will be given up to KD 5,000 (USD 15,000) in pecuniary rewards, the sport's local body said.

The initiative aims to serve as an "incentive" for Kuwaiti athletes to book their tickets to the showpiece event, subsequently, representing their home country on the international stage, Kuwait Shooting Federation chief Duaij Al-Otaibi said in a statement.

Kuwaiti shooters, who qualify for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, will also get a monthly reward of KD 300 to "aid in their preparations" ahead of the event, he said.

OLYMPICS

August will feature the Asian and World Shooting Championships, in South Korea and Azerbaijan, respectively, both of which are qualifying events for the Paris Olympic Games.

European champions England favorites

WC wide open after so many heavyweights eliminated

AUCKLAND, New Zealand, Aug 9, (AP): The United States' hold on the Women's World Cup is over, and two-time champion Germany also exited the tournament. Olympic gold medalist Canada was bounced, and Marta and her Brazil team were knocked out before she had a chance to become the first player to score in six World Cups.

Yes, the heavyweights of women's soccer have all been eliminated, and yes, it has created a wide-open World Cup. The eight teams that advanced to the quarterfinals represent some traditional powers, one previous World Cup winner and two teams making their debut in the final eight.

England, the European champion, is the betting favorite on FanDuel Sportsbook. But a violent tackle by Lauren James late in England's knockout win over Nigeria means the Lionesses will be without the star forward when they face Colombia. The Superpoderosas are feisty and were led by 18-year-old star Linda Caicedo into their first quarterfinals just four years after Colombia failed to even qualify for the tournament.

Australia, the co-host, has been to the quarterfinals three times previously, but now faces an experienced France team that has won 16 of 18 matches in 2023. France's only loss? A 1-0 defeat to - surprise, surprise - Australia in a friendly a week before the start of the World Cup.

Spain makes its first appearance in the quarterfinals behind 13 goals scored through its four games. It faces the Netherlands, the team that lost to the United States in the 2019 finale. The Dutch failed to qualify for the first six editions of the World Cup, but once they made it in, they've been among the best. The Netherlands made it to the knockout round in its 2015 debut and the championship game four years ago, and now is hoping for a second shot at the title.

And finally, Japan, the only team remaining to have a World Cup title. The Japanese last won the championship all the way back in 2011 - they beat the U.S. - and the Americans avenged the loss four years later when Japan wound up runner-up. Japan has rolled to four easy wins so far in this tournament and has conceded only one goal.

The Japanese play Sweden, the team that ended America's run toward an unprecedented third consecutive World Cup title. Sweden,

which dealt the United States its earliest exit in tournament history, has been to the semifinals three different times, including in 2019.

The third-ranked Swedes are the top-rated team by FIFA still in this World Cup, and Sweden is a three-time tournament bronze medalist. Sweden was runner-up to Germany in 2003.

A look at the final eight teams still playing in the wide-open Women's World Cup:

Sweden

Sweden plays Japan on Friday at Eden Park in Auckland in one of the better pairings of the tournament.

The Swedes have played in all nine editions of the World Cup,

SOCCER

and four times they've had the title nearly within reach. Sweden lost to Japan in the 2011 semifinals, its third and most recent World Cup meeting with the Japanese.

Sweden goalie Zecira Musovic was spectacular against the United States; she had 11 saves in the 0-0 draw, helping Sweden advance 5-4 on penalty kicks.

Japan

Japan is the only team remaining with a World Cup title and the Japanese have steamrolled their way into the quarterfinals.

Japan blasted past Zambia and Costa Rica, then handed Spain a jarring 4-0 loss. That win over

a strong Spain squad made Japan a quiet contender. Japan then knocked off Norway 3-1 to continue its offensive onslaught.

Netherlands

With so many big teams out, this is the Netherlands' chance to finally close out a World Cup title. But the Dutch play Spain in the New Zealand capital of Wellington without star midfielder Danielle van de Donk.

She's the one who tussled with American captain Lindsey Horan earlier in the tournament, and her yellow card in the Netherlands' 2-0 win over South Africa means she won't play in the quarterfinal.

Spain

Spain was commanding in wins over Costa Rica and Zambia, but then was stopped cold by Japan in a humbling group play defeat.

La Roja rebounded with a 5-1 rout of Switzerland in the knockout round. Spain coach Jorge Vilda made five changes to the lineup that was embarrassed by Japan, and two of the moves were the players' World Cup debuts.

Aitana Bonmati stepped up and scored twice in the Spain bounce-back.

Australia

Australia finally got Sam Kerr back onto the field after the Matildas' superstar missed all of group play with a thigh injury. She only came on in the final 10 minutes of Australia's quarterfinal win over Denmark, but she was supposed to

be the star of the tournament.

More than 75,000 spectators attended the Matildas' quarterfinal victory and the Sydney Opera House was alit in the yellow and green team colors. The pressure is on for the co-hosts to deliver.

France

France slid under the early radar with a scoreless draw against Jamaica in the opening round, but Le Bleus have been a force since. The fifth-ranked team has cruised into the quarterfinals. France helped knock off Brazil and Marta, and has outscored its opponents 12-4 in the three games since.

France is coached by Herve Renard, who led Saudi Arabia to a shocking upset of eventual champion Argentina and Lionel Messi at least year's men's World Cup.

England

England is the enigma. The European champion not winning the World Cup with so many challengers already out would be a bit of an upset.

The Lionesses are fourth in the FIFA rankings, right behind Sweden, but haven't had consistent play. They won a penalty shootout against Nigeria to advance to the quarterfinals.

But they also lost James, who was given a red card for a violent tackle late in the Nigeria game. The Chelsea forward is out at least against Colombia on Saturday in Sydney.

Colombia

Colombia is new to this big stage and at 25th is the lowest-ranked team still playing in the tournament.

But Colombia is no pushover and has been very physical to get to the quarterfinals four years after failing to even qualify for the World Cup. The competition knows to expect a bruising match - one week before the tournament, Ireland abandoned a friendly against Colombia after only 20 minutes because of "overly physical" play.

Colombia is led by Caicedo, a rising star for Real Madrid, and the teenager dazzles on the field and also with her wide smiles that play to the cameras. Caicedo has had health issues; she battled ovarian cancer when she was 15, and during group play had at least two frightening episodes with what Colombia has called exhaustion. The team has insisted Caicedo is fit.



Minnesota United midfielder Wil Trapp (left), vies for the ball against Toluca midfielder Fernando Navarro during the second half of a Leagues Cup soccer match in St. Paul, Minn. Minnesota won 4-2 on penalty kicks after 2-2 draw. (AP)