



Biden envoy pushes Saudi-Israeli ties

Storming of Al-Aqsa Mosque condemned

Permanent end sought to Yemen conflict

Kuwait hands statement to ICJ on Israeli Palestine occupation

KUWAIT CITY, July 29, (KUNA): Kuwait's Foreign Ministry said Thursday State of Kuwait, represented by its diplomatic mission in The Hague, submitted on Tuesday a written memo on an advisory opinion, based on UN General Assembly Resolution 247-77 that was adopted on December 30, 2022.

The resolution requests the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to adopt an opinion on the consequences of continued Israeli occupation violations of the Palestinian people's self-determination, said the ministry in a press release.

Kuwait's memo noted that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories deprives the Palestinian people of their inherent right to self-determination, and undermines efforts targeting an intended Pales-

tinian state and all aspects of life for the Palestinian people.

It also affirmed that the State of Kuwait opposes the use of force or threatening to use it by any means in international relations, while underlining the necessity of respecting states' independence and sovereignty, and ensuring the protection of civilians.

The ministry, further, voiced utter confidence in the attention paid by the ICJ to the documents of Kuwait and other sisterly and friendly countries as well as international organizations, calling for an ICJ resolution to end immediately the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories.

Continued on Page 4

WASHINGTON, July 29, (AP): US President Joe Biden dispatched his national security adviser Jake Sullivan to Saudi Arabia on Thursday for talks with the Kingdom's de facto leader Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman as the White House pushes for a normalization of relations between the country and Israel.

The White House in a brief statement said that Sullivan arrived in Jeddah on Thursday for talks with the crown prince, who is often referred to by his initial MBS, and other Saudi officials. The wide-ranging talks covered initiatives to "advance a common vision for a more peaceful, secure, prosperous, and stable Middle East," and efforts to find a permanent end to the years-long conflict between the Saudis and Iran-allied Houthis in Yemen, according to the White House.

Sullivan and the prince also discussed the Biden administration's hopes to normalize relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia, according to a White House National Security Council official familiar with the matter. The official was not authorized to comment publicly

and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

For its part, the Kingdom's state-run Saudi Press Agency acknowledged the meeting, saying only that the two sides "discussed the Saudi-U.S. strategic relations and ways to enhance them in various fields, in addition to the latest regional and international developments of mutual concern."

The Kingdom released no images of the meeting, which saw Saudi Arabia's defense and energy ministers attend, along with the head of its Public Investment Fund. The U.S. has been trying to get Riyadh to end its war in Yemen while also trying to lobby it over global oil prices, without much success.

The effort to strengthen the historically fraught relationship between the Middle East's two significant powers comes after the Trump administration helped usher in the "Abraham Accords," normalizing relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Morocco.

A normalization deal with Saudi Arabia, the most powerful and wealthy Arab state, has the potential to reshape the region and boost Israel's standing in historic ways. But brokering such a deal is a heavy lift as the kingdom has said it won't officially recognize Israel before a resolution to the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Continued on Page 4

NewsWatch

BEIRUT: A motorcycle planted with explosives detonated in a Damascus suburb near a Shiite Muslim shrine Thursday, killing at least six people and wounding dozens a day before the solemn holy day of Ashoura, state media reported, citing the interior ministry.

Syrian Health Minister Hassan al-Ghabash said in a statement that 26 people wounded in the blast in the Sayida Zeinab neighborhood were being treated at several hospitals. Twenty others were treated on site or discharged, he said. (AP)

DOHA: Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdul Rahman said Friday that his country will provide USD 100 million to help alleviate the humanitarian situation in Ukraine.

He said in a tweet after his visit to Ukraine, that Doha "will allocate 50 university scholarships for Ukrainian students to study in Qatar." (KUNA)

DOHA: Qatar urged Thursday all parties in Niger to avoid escalation, give priority to the voice of wisdom, and pursue dialogue to overcome the crisis in Niger.

In a statement, the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that it is following with great concern the current developments in Niger, underlining Qatar's keenness to restore security and stability in Niger and hope to preserve constitutional institutions and the rule of law in order to achieve the aspirations of the Nigerien people for development and prosperity. (KUNA)

BAGHDAD: Kurdish-led armed groups in Iraq and Syria alleged that Turkish airstrikes killed a total of eight of their fighters Friday.

The counterterrorism service of the regional government in the semi-autonomous Kurdish region in northern Iraq said in a statement that four members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, were killed and another wounded in a Turkish drone strike in Sharbazher district in Sulaymaniyah in the Kurdish region of Iraq. (AP)

IRBIL: Four people were killed and five others injured when Turkish drones attacked a vehicle in Sulaymaniyah Governorate, Kurdistan region, north Iraq, on Friday.

The vehicle was carrying suspected members of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), local security sources said in a press release, noting that the attack took place in Sharbazher District. (KUNA)

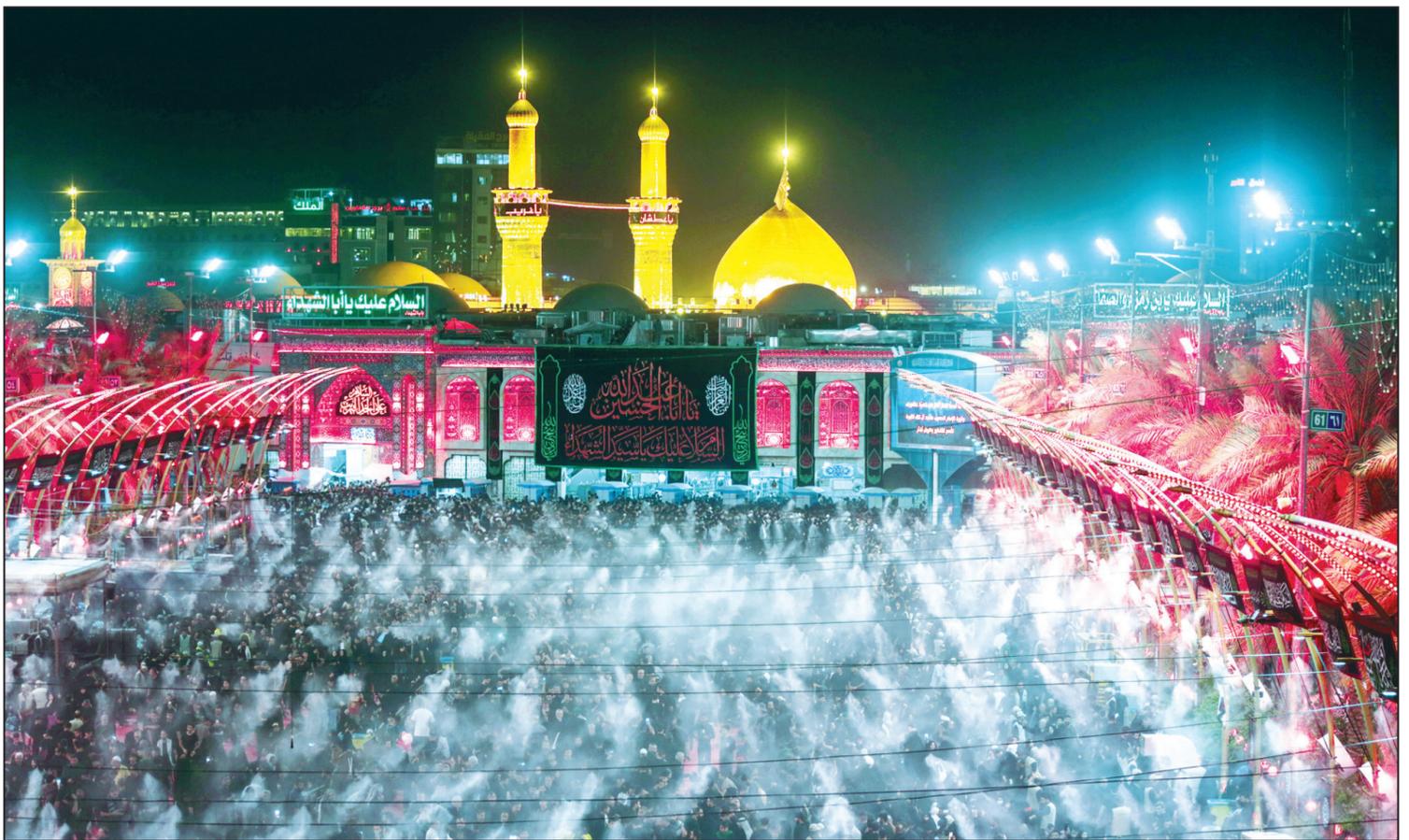
JERUSALEM: The Israeli military killed a 14-year-old Palestinian boy in the occupied West Bank on Thursday, Palestinian health officials said, as an ultranationalist Israeli Cabinet minister visited a sensitive Jerusalem holy site that has been a flashpoint for violence between Israel and the Palestinians.

The visit by Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir to the disputed hilltop compound comes during a period of heightened Israeli-Palestinian violence in the West Bank for the past year and a half and threatens to inflame already surging tensions. (AP)

ALGIERS: The Algerian investigating judge ordered holding in custody 12 persons suspected of involvement in the deadly wildfires in several parts of the country on Sunday and Monday.

The department of combat against terrorism and transnational organized crime brought the charges against the suspects under article 11 of the penal code, secretary of the republic at Sid Amhamed court in Algiers said on Thursday.

The fires claimed 34 lives, including 10 military personnel, injured dozens of others and inflicted extensive material damage in the eastern states of Algeria, according to the Ministry of Interior. (KUNA)



Shiites participate in the Ashoura procession on the 9th day of Muharram in Karbala, Iraq, Friday, July 28, 2023. (AP)

Security forces on high alert

Millions commemorate mourning day of Ashoura

TEHRAN, July 29, (AP): Millions of Shiite Muslims in Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and around the world on Friday commemorated Ashoura, a remembrance of the 7th-century martyrdom of the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) grandson, Imam Hussein (RA), that gave birth to their faith.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban cut mobile phone services in key cities holding commemorations for fear of militants targeting Shiites, whom Sunni extremists consider heretics. Security forces in neighboring Pakistan as well stood on high alert as the commemorations there have seen attacks in the past.

Not all Shiites, however, were to mark the day Friday. Iraq, Lebanon and Syria planned their remembrances for Saturday, which will see a major suburb of Beirut shut down and the faithful descend on the Iraqi city of Karbala, where Imam Hussein (RA) is entombed in a gold-domed shrine.

Shiites represent over 10% of the world's 1.8 billion Muslims and view Imam Hussein (RA) as the rightful successor to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Hussein's death in battle at the hands of Sunnis at Karbala, south of Baghdad, ingrained a deep rift in Islam and continues to this day to play a key role in shaping Shiite identity.

Over 1,340 years after Hussein's martyrdom, Baghdad, Tehran, Islamabad and other major capitals in the Middle East were adorned with symbols of Shiite piety and repentance: red flags for Hussein's blood, symbolic black funeral tents and black dress for mourning, processions of men and boys expressing fervor in the ritual of chest-beating and self-flagellation with chains.

In Iran, where the theocratic government views itself as the protector of Shiites worldwide, the story of Imam Hussein's (RA) martyrdom takes on political connotations amid its tensions with the West over its advancing nuclear program.

Iranian state television aired images of commemorations across the Islamic Republic, tying the event to criticizing the West, Israel and the U.S. drone strike that killed Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani in 2020. Anchor Wesam Bahrani on Iran's state-run English-language broadcaster Press TV referred to America as the "biggest opponent of Islam" and criticized Muslim countries allied with the U.S.

Men wore black, rhythmically beating their chests in mourning or using flails to strike their backs. Some wore red headbands, as black and red banners bore Hussein's name. Some sprayed

water over the mourners in the intense heat.

"Every year everyone joins hands in solidarity," said 23-year-old Mohammad Hajatmand, who took part in a procession in Tehran. Hussein "was martyred very brutally and when anyone hears the story of Ashoura, regardless of their religion, their hearts will be broken and they will sympathize with him."

The commemoration in Iran also comes as Tehran prepares for the one-year anniversary of the death of Mahsa Amini. Her death launched protests nationwide in Iran that reportedly saw more than 500 protesters killed and some 20,000 others detained. Authorities have begun stepping up their enforcement of mandatory hijab, or headscarf, laws for women in recent weeks.

In the suburb of Sayida Zeinab near Syria's capital, Damascus, security forces guarded checkpoints after a bomb hidden in a motorcycle exploded Thursday, killing at least six people and wounding dozens more. On Tuesday, another bomb in a motorcycle wounded two people. The suburb is home to a shrine to Zeinab, the daughter of the first Shiite imam, Ali, and granddaughter of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Continued on Page 4



Shiite Muslims attend the Ashoura mourning ritual, in Istanbul, Turkey, Friday, July 28, 2023. Shiite Muslims around the world on Friday commemorated Ashoura, a remembrance of the 7th-century martyrdom of the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) grandson, Imam Hussein (RA), that gave birth to their faith. (AP)

Rapper dead in Spanish prison

BARCELONA, July 29, (AP): A former British rap artist who allegedly became a jihadist in Syria where he was accused of posting a photo of a victim's severed head has died in custody while awaiting a trial verdict in Spain, the Interior Ministry said Thursday.

Abdel-Majed Abdel Bary was found dead in a Spanish prison Wednesday, the ministry said. The cause of death is yet to be confirmed. The former rap artist was detained at Puerto III prison in the southern Spanish city of El Puerto de Santamaria, The Associated Press has learned.

Abdel Bary was arrested in 2020 when he was accused of heading a jihadist terror cell and charged with illegal financing of terrorism. He faced up to 9 years in prison in a trial that concluded on July 14, and was awaiting a verdict.

A prison officer who maintained daily contact with Abdel Bary said that his body showed no signs of violence.

Abdel Bary had been under strict rules that included 20 hours a day of solitary confinement. He had not been a problem inmate and was not on any psychiatric treatment, said the officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Abdel Bary, 32, left London in 2013 to join an Al Qaeda faction and later ISIS militias in Syria. He made a name for himself on social media sites by showing himself clutching the severed head of one of his alleged victims.

New applications in Sweden

Saudis caution against further Quran burning

RIYADH, July 29, (Agencies): Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah said Friday the recurrence of the desecration of the Holy Quran could incite hatred and hamper the dialogue among peoples with different cultures.

In phone call he received from Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs Tobias Billstrom, the Saudi minister reaffirmed the Kingdom's categorical rejection of any tampering with the Holy Quran, according to a statement from the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Bin Abdullah urged the Swedish authorities to adopt urgent measures against the attempts of extremists to desecrate the holy book and offend Muslims worldwide. Meanwhile, Billstrom denounced, on behalf of his government, any attempts to desecrate the Holy Quran.

He regretted that some people abuse the provisions in the constitution of Sweden related to the freedom of expression.

The Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs called in Charge D'Affaires of Denmark Embassy in Riyadh on Thursday and handed her a protest note over the recent burning of a copy of the Holy Quran.

The Danish envoy was told that Kingdom of Saudi Arabia categorically rejects all acts that could foment hatred among people with different religions, according to a statement from the Saudi Ministry.

The Kingdom urges the Danish authority to halt such heinous acts that run counter to religious teach-

ings and international norms.

An extremist group staged a demonstration in front of the Iraq Embassy in Copenhagen on Friday and burnt a copy of the Holy Quran which drew outcry from across the Muslim world.

Elsewhere, Egypt's Foreign Ministry summoned Thursday Danish Ambassador and inform her about the country's "strong resentment and condemnation" of burning copies of the Holy Quran in front of foreign diplomatic missions in Denmark.

In a statement, the Ministry affirmed Egypt's firm stance calling for taking "tangible" measures by authorities in Denmark and other countries, which witnessed similar incidents, to halt such "sorrowful" acts.

In Stockholm, Sweden's prime minister said Thursday that police have received several permit applications for the burning of religious texts in the country next week, and that he fears this may escalate tensions further with the Muslim world.

In his first public comments since the start of the Quran burning crisis that has severely strained Stockholm's ties with Muslim nations, Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson told Swedish news agency TT he was "extremely concerned" about a new wave of desecrations.

"It's the police that make those decisions, not me. If they (permits) are granted, we face a number of days with the obvious risk of serious things happening," Kristersson told TT.

## Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 03:36 Asr ..... 15:30  
 Sunrise .. 05:06 Maghrib .. 18:42  
 Zohr ..... 11:54 Isha ..... 20:09

# Local

## Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

**By Day:** Very hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind with speeds of 10-35 km/h.  
**By Night:** Hot to rather hot with

## Weather

light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind with speeds of 06-30 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	49	37
Kuwait Airport	49	29
Abdaly	49	31

Jahra	50	33
Salmyiah	45	36
Ahmadi	47	37
Nuwaisib	50	32
Wafra	49	31

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

## 'Workshop package' launched

# PAY provides chance for young Kuwaitis to develop talents, skills

KUWAIT CITY, July 29: The Public Authority for Youth (PAY) has recently launched a comprehensive "workshop package" that covers various creative fields, with the aim of providing opportunities for young Kuwaitis to develop their talents and skills, reports Al-Rai daily.

The daily added this is seen by the authority as a significant step to support the country's youth and nurture their creative capabilities.

In this regards, the Director of the Creative Production Department at the Authority, Saleh Al-Salami, announced the initiative, emphasizing the Authority's commitment to supporting Kuwaiti youth and providing them with avenues for growth. The workshop package includes specialized courses in collaboration with experts and specialists from various creative artistic sectors.

The first workshop of the current season, titled "Drama from Idea to Implementation," was conducted in cooperation with the esteemed director, Muhammad Daham Al-Shammari.

The workshop delved into various aspects of the director's role, including personality, cultural background, and the impact of social diversity. Participants also

explored various topics and issues that contribute to a director's awareness and help solidify their creative footprint in the industry.

Following the success of the drama workshop, the Authority organized an "Art of Acting" course, led by the talented artist Abdullah Al-Turkmani. This course aimed to contribute to the development of Kuwaiti youths who have a deep passion for the art of acting.

In another exciting addition to the workshop package, art critic Abdel Sattar Naji conducted a workshop on "Film Criticism." This workshop provided insights into the world of film critique, allowing participants to explore the intricacies of analyzing and evaluating cinematic works.

Director Al-Shammari expressed his appreciation for the Public Authority for Youth's role in organizing such specialized workshops. He highlighted how these workshops offer an enriching experience for ambitious young participants, both male and female, who possess a keen interest in artistic and creative pursuits.

Abdullah Al-Turkmani also praised the acting course, recognizing its potential to nurture the capabilities of Kuwaiti youth who aspire to make a mark in the field of

acting.

Abdel Sattar Naji echoed the sentiments of the other facilitators and participants, emphasizing that these workshops reflect the General Authority for Youth's dedication to nurturing young talent and guiding them towards broader creative horizons.

Overall, the Authority said Kuwait's initiative to conduct specialized workshops in creative fields stands as a testament to the nation's commitment to its youth and their creative aspirations.

□ □ □

**MEW floats tender:** The Ministry of Electricity and Renewable Energy has floated a tender for agricultural work and maintenance for monitoring and control centers in Jabriya, Madinah, Jahra and Shuaiba, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to information that the daily obtained, the closing date for the tender is Aug 20, 2023; indicating the owners of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) wishing to apply for the tender must attach a valid certificate issued by the National Fund for the Care and Development of Small and Medium Enterprises with their bids, including the approval as a small or medium enterprise.



KUNA photo

The Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah expresses his condolences to UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan on Saturday over the demise of Sheikh Said bin Zayed Al-Nahyan.

## HH Amir Rep expresses condolences

The Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, along with an accompanying delegation, expressed his condolences to UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan on Saturday over the demise of Sheikh Said bin Zayed Al-Nahyan.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman expressed sincere condolences

for UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan over the passing away of Sheikh Saeed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

This came in a phone conversation initiated by Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported on Thursday.

Earlier today, Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman sent cables of condolences to the UAE President. (KUNA)

## Verses from poetry put on walls

# Oxford University honors AlBabtain

KUWAIT CITY, July 29, (KUNA): Abdulaziz Saud AlBabtain Cultural Foundation announced Saturday that Oxford University chose some verses of Poet Abdulaziz AlBabtain to be engraved on one of its walls, in recognition of the poet's projects.

The University selected three verses of 'Alibdaa alkhald' Poem, 'immortal innovation', to be written in Arabic on a wooden board on a wall of a hall, the foundation said in a statement to KUNA.

The board was put in a distinguished place in the Faculty of the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, humanitarian sciences department, to attract the visitors, mainly the Arabs who feel pride for the poet's innovation, it added.

In 2016, Poet AlBabtain planted the 'tree of peace' on which he wrote, in both English and Arabic, a 'dedication of Kuwait's people to this scientific edifice to express continued appreciation and love'.

In addition, Al-Babtain was honored by the university in 2016, writing his name on Laudian Professor of Arabic as 'Abdulaziz Saud AlBabtain Laudian Professor of Arabic'.



Poet Abdulaziz AlBabtain

Established in 1636, the Laudian Chair in Arabic is one of the oldest professorships of Arabic in Europe.



The meeting in progress.

## Union meets to tackle challenges

# No visas for new fishermen: KFU

KUWAIT CITY, July 29: The Kuwait Fishermen Union (KFU) held a press conference to present the challenges facing the fishing profession that cause the scarcity of the local product and its absence from the market, reports Al-Anba daily.

Head of the union Dhafer Al-Soyyan affirmed that the shrimp fishing permits were reduced due to the absence of more than 80 fishermen, and the fishing boats that currently fish do so with almost half of their manpower.

He said, "We submitted requests for entry visas but failed to receive a response".

The role of the union is to provide food security from marine products in the Sharq and Fahaaheel markets, but we need appropriate support.

We demand an increase in fish subsidies, which have not increased in 30 years, similar to other productive sectors. What is happening makes the fishing profession repulsive and unattractive even to those with fishing licenses who are burdened with debts and become threatened all the time.

Many owners of fishing licenses want to leave the profession. What is happening is heavier on the shoulders of the fisherman".

Al-Soyyan stressed the importance of meeting the demands of fishermen and working to eliminate all challenges, the first of which is restoring the share of diesel and gasoline to what it was before the recent decision to reduce the share to half of the subsidy committee issued in the month of May 2023, especially since the current quota ended more than a week before the end of the month.

He indicated that there are fishing boats

that have so far not been fueled with diesel, with the start of the shrimp fishing season in the regional waters on Tuesday, August 1.

Al-Soyyan addressed the issue of labor shortage, insisting that issuance of entry visas have not been opened so far.

He said the labor shortage has actually led to the suspension of some fishing boats, while others have a shortage of labor force.

Al-Soyyan called for maintaining the price balance and promoting the local product, affirming the importance of approving the fishing of Cod (meed) fish in Kuwait Bay according to the controls and conditions set by the Environment Public Authority (EPA) and the fisheries sector of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR), especially since it is allowed to fish in the bay for other fish.

Concerning the high prices of fish, he said, "Fishermen are usually accused of hiking the prices, but the same accusations were not leveled against the importer despite the high prices.

Fishing process is laborious. The cost of the fishing trip, the lack of support, the lack of fish, the length of the trip, the lack of labor, and the stopping of many fishing boats are other obstacles. We support the preservation of fish wealth and the organization of the fishing process, but at the same time we demand the removal of the challenges facing the fishing sector."

Regarding the high prices of Cod, Al-Soyyan said, "A decision was issued by the EPA to ban fishing inside Kuwait Bay almost five years ago. We sent many letters to allow Cod fishing only in the bay, but we are yet to be granted the green light."

# Hygiene crisis at T1 terminal

'Cleaning contract still not renewed'

## Kuwait Amir congratulates Peru

KUWAIT CITY, July 29, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has addressed a cable to Peruvian President Dina Boluarte, expressing deep congratulations on her country's national day.

His Highness the Amir wished President Boluarte good health, the Republic of Peru and the friendly Peruvian people

full-scale progress and prosperity.

### Crown Prince

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has addressed a cable to Peruvian President Dina Boluarte, expressing deep congratulations on her country's national day.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished President Boluarte good health and well-being.

## KUWAIT CITY, July 29: The hygiene crisis at Kuwait International Airport's Terminal T1 has resurfaced again, threatening to turn the country's facade and airport into a hotbed of neglect, especially at the height of the summer vacation and congestion, reports Al-Qabas daily.

According to official documents and correspondence, the cleaning contract signed with a company expired on July 25 and has not been renewed yet.

The cleaning company at Kuwait International Airport threatened to hand over the site and withdraw its machinery and equipment due to the expiry of its current contract and the failure to notify it about the extension of the contract, in addition to the failure to settle its financial dues.

Meanwhile, informed sources reported that the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had addressed the control agencies, including the State Audit Bureau, on January 13, to extend the contract with the company at a value of KD 805,000. The operating agencies are still awaiting approvals.

They affirmed their criticism of the non-renewal of the cleaning contract, insisting that not issuing a decision in this regard is illogical in light of the travel season and the open-skies policy that requires an integrated plan to provide all services at the airport.

In an official address indicating the aggravation of the crisis, the cleaning company had hinted at handing over the site and leaving it completely due to the expiry of its current contract on July 25, stressing that it had not been notified of the extension.

According to a letter, the cleaning company contracting with the DGCA submitted a letter on July 11 regarding following up the grievance regarding non-payment of due invoices and imposing discounts for the contract for cleaning work at Kuwait International Airport.

### Contract

It said, "With reference to our previous letters to you regarding the expiry of the extension period for the airport cleaners' contract, as well as the grievance over non-payment of due invoices and the imposition of discounts for the same contract, as well as the letter on submitting a price offer to renew the contract, we did not receive any response from the DGCA, especially with the end of the contract period."

The company stressed the need to lift the injustice inflicted on them and work to pay the bills due without calculating any deductions.

It highlighted its willingness to continue providing the required services.

The company specified its requirements to continue providing services in the event that the due bills are paid in full and without any deductions before July 25, notifying them officially by a written letter of approval of the price offer and the extension of the contract.

It said, "We previously submitted a price offer as a gesture of goodwill, but this offer is not considered an implicit acceptance on our part to extend the contract. This matter remains dependent on the airport management implementing our requirements to continue providing services."

### Letter

On July 18, the company submitted another letter regarding handing over the site and withdrawing the machinery and equipment for the cleaning contract.

It said the DGCA did not initiate the payment of the value of the outstanding invoices to date, adding, "Since we have not received any written notification from DGCA indicating approval to extend the current contract, which expired on July 25, according to the price offer, we call for instructions to be given to the concerned authorities to facilitate the process of withdrawing all the machinery and equipment used in the project."

It demanded the full settlement of their dues as soon as possible.

The cleaning company stated that it is related to other projects, so it has stopped renewing the residence permits of workers registered on the airport contract as of June 1, 2023.

It indicated that it is currently registering them on other government contracts, in preparation for evacuating and handing over the sites handed over to them, in the event that the invoices are not paid and the contract is not renewed according to the legal procedures followed.

## 'Kuwait will start 'Durra' production'

KUWAIT CITY, July 29: Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil, Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment and acting Minister of Finance Dr Saad Al-Barak has confirmed that "Kuwait will start ex-

ploration and production in Al-Durra field," reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a press statement recently, Al-Barak disclosed: "This will be done without waiting for the demarcation of the border with Iran."

## Other Voices

# Education, scientific research 'vital' factor for development

By Ahmad alsarraf

Higher education and scientific research are among the most important factors for development and progress in any country, society, or even a small factory. Without it, there is no guarantee of progress, not even of not being late.

The Arab nation faces huge challenges in education and research, and most of them have excuses because of their difficult political and financial conditions, and the corruption of their systems, but what is our excuse in Kuwait?

It is clear to every discerning person that "education" does not receive the slightest interest in Kuwait, other than the extravagant spending on salaries. It is also clear that the government is following the saying of the late Lebanese Parliament Speaker Ahmad Al-Asaad, when his constituents criticized him for not having schools in their villages, he responded to them that he was educating his son, "Kamil", for their sake!

The Iraqi expatriate professor, Muhammad al-Rubaie, says that he devoted almost all of his time, two decades ago, to studying the education situation in the Arab countries, and Iraq in particular, especially in the scientific fields on indoctrination, lack of interest in critical and analytical thinking, refusal to apply modern technologies in the field of teaching and scientific research, and so on!

It is fortunate for Kuwait that the circumstances endowed it with a personality such as Representative Hamad Al-Matar, representative of the Muslim Brotherhood Party, and

the head of the Education Committee, on whose honorable shoulders the nation placed its hopes in the development of education, but he was distracted from the task -- and also, fortunately -- by asking the government, through an official letter directed to the Chairman of the Council, of the need to open a shop for changing car oils in the city of Sabah Al-Ahmad!

A good doctor needs a good education.

A good engineer needs a good teacher.

A clean politician needs an advanced education.

An accomplished nurse needs a distinguished educational system.

And so it is with all other professions and businesses, without exception. Without education, no country can advance.

Those concerned are divided into three groups:

The first one knows the importance of education, and knows the seriousness of the situation, but is a helpless minority, and has nothing to do, or has completely lost hope and surrendered to the situation.

The second acts as if the matter does not concern it, as it has what it needs, inside and outside the country, and the progress and development of education is at the bottom of its list of interests; likes to scoop and walk, whenever the udder becomes dry and the crops become dry.

And the third, which represents the vast majority, was ignored, and often deliberately, with premeditation, by directing its attention to other matters!

You have to think, with me, about it carefully, maybe there is some hope, or some glimmer of light, but I can't discern it, nor see it, at the end of the tunnel!

□ □ □

e-mail: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw



alsarraf

# diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## 'Govt's work program 2023 needed more realistic approach'

"FOR decades, Kuwait has faced a decline in international indicators of good governance, such as the Corruption Perceptions Index by Transparency International and the Global Governance Index by the World Bank. Over the years, successive governments, members of the Kuwaiti National Assembly, and civil society have acknowledged the need to address this issue and study the indicators' results to overcome stagnation in the state's public administration. However, progress has been slow in achieving this crucial goal," columnist **Dr. Muhammed Hussein Al-Dalal** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.



Dr Al-Dalal

"Recently, the government presented its program to the National Assembly, drawing attention from various members of the Assembly and specialists. While this article aims to highlight some main issues affecting the program, it does not provide a comprehensive evaluation. The most critical concern contributing to Kuwait's low scores in international indicators is the government's effectiveness and its ability to implement development plans and programs.

"One notable observation is that the government has formulated ambitious programs and projects without fully considering its human and administrative capabilities. Did the government adequately fulfill its strategic planning duties before approving such programs? Were the strengths and weaknesses of state institutions assessed, and were lessons learned from past failures? Also, were the political realities taken into account when setting priorities and goals? A more realistic approach could lead to better developmental government performance.

"The program did make some positive strides by emphasizing the importance of good governance and introducing technology in government operations.

"However, it lacked clear projects to implement governance principles in the public administration of the state. The focus on governance in cooperative societies should have been balanced with efforts to enhance governance in the government sector, particularly in the Council of Ministers. Additionally, the program overlooked the approved project to implement the national framework for governance of the administrative apparatus, which is currently on hold.

"Prioritization remains a concern. While establishing a platform to receive reports of family violence is commendable, it is crucial to give priority to implementing the already approved laws before moving on to new projects.

"For example, a strategic plan for education development should precede listing projects related to building a robust education system, which is currently lacking in the government's approach.

"Furthermore, the program lacks clear direction and priorities regarding required legislation, such as combating corruption and establishing controls for appointing leaders. These crucial areas should have been among the main

axes of the program. "In terms of youth, sports, and culture, the program overlooked projects that support national values, encourage reading, and develop public libraries. Additionally, it failed to recognize the role of the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Literature in promoting Kuwaiti patriotism and the Arab-Islamic identity.

"Surprisingly, the program omitted projects related to judiciary development and policies supporting foreign policy and the state's external role, which are essential considering regional and international conditions.

"In conclusion, the government of Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has a historic opportunity to correct course, given remarkable parliamentary cooperation. It must address the imbalances in its program and strengthen its capabilities to create a more effective and realistic action plan. The support of civil society and specialists will be crucial in achieving success."

**Also:**

"The wise government's commitment to providing reassurance and comfort to retirees are highly valued and commended, because the retirees have dedicated their careers to serving diligently until retirement. During the recent regular session of the National Assembly, the government not only addressed concerns such as improving citizens' standard of living and political reforms but also demonstrated its dedication to the well-being of Kuwaiti retirees," columnist **Dr Muhammad Khaled Al-Azmi** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"Retirees hold a special place in our hearts, having fulfilled their duties to the nation with utmost dedication as they transit into retirement, it is the government's responsibility to ensure they continue to live comfortably. Many retirees have children still pursuing their education, and some may face health challenges due to their advanced age, requiring additional care and attention.

"Life inevitably leads us all to this phase, where youth makes way for age, making support for retirees a crucial priority. We aim to provide retirees with enhanced security and remind them that retirement does not mean being forgotten or neglected.

"To cope with the rising cost of living, it is imperative to increase the salary ceiling for retirees, enabling them to support their dependents who are still in the process of education.

"Moreover, we should recognize the immense value of the experiences possessed by retirees and consider re-employing them when necessary. Many technical professions, such as engineering, medicine, accounting, education, law, and advisory roles, benefit greatly from accumulated experience. Age should not hinder retirees from sharing their expertise in these fields.

"Indeed, there are thousands of retirees willing to serve the country further

by passing on their knowledge through training and mentoring the younger generation. Embracing their expertise will contribute significantly to the progress and development of Kuwait.

"Retirees are our strategic reserve of accumulated experience, and we must not overlook their potential. They are invaluable assets, and the country needs them just as they need the government's support to ensure stability and comfort during their retirement.

In conclusion, let us unite in prayer for the protection of Kuwait, its Amir, the trustworthy Crown Prince, the people of Kuwait, and all who call this land their home. May they be safeguarded from all harm as we work together for the betterment of our nation."



"Concerns are many, the legacy is heavy, and many years of failure have directly contributed to the deterioration we are experiencing today in terms of the work of many ministries and government agencies that have caused concern and suffering for citizens due to mismanagement," columnist and **E-Media Union Chairman Faisal Al-Sawgh** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"In any political conflict, there is great interest in media campaigns and counter-propaganda whenever the fronts heat up and the number of losses increases with them. This may turn into a serious political dilemma that is difficult to address, especially if the clashes acquire a centralized character, thereby, making it impossible to succeed. People ask and try to get answers.

"His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, we appeal to you as loyal people and members of the Fourth Authority. I urge you to reconsider many of the files that cause crises in the country. I urge you to reconsider the most important file you have – the media system. Please pay attention to it and review it. Please assign experts in the media to develop it. The media, Your Highness, is a double-edged sword.

"Your Highness, the Prime Minister, I wish you will monitor the performance, follow up the achievements and verify them, considering some officials shun national competencies for their personal interests. Please personally supervise the fight against quotas and parachute appointments. Please play your role in supporting the creative and loyal sons of this dear country.

"Your Highness, the Prime Minister, we wish that you follow up the government performance through the sincerity and conscience of the Kuwaiti people who are loyal to you, particularly if they have proof. You must issue a directive to activate the role of the official spokesperson of the government to respond to allegations, rumors and questions about governmental tasks in order to achieve psychological stability. He should communicate with all media platforms, and use certain methods to explain the plans and programs of the government, instead of the fake accounts that have nothing to do with the work and jurisdiction of the government."

— Compiled by **Mai Elsoukay**



KUNA photo

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Dr. Badr Al-Mutairi speaking at the event.

### Hajj mission members honored

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Dr. Badr Al-Mutairi affirmed recently that the success of the Kuwaiti Hajj mission for the Hajj season 1444 AH is a new page to be added to its record full of outstanding achievements.

Al-Mutairi said in a speech delivered at the ceremony honoring the members of the Hajj mission at the Ministry's headquarters that this success is due to the dedication and solidarity of the mission members, in addition to their sincerity and cooperation in the tasks entrusted to them and their work in the spirit of one team.

He added that the successes of the Kuwaiti Hajj missions that have continued and extended over the years in the Hajj seasons have become a proverb and a beacon that guides generations.

He praised the distinguished role of the members of the mission, indicating that this success is not a coincidence, but rather the result of concerted efforts, sincere intentions, wise leadership, and honest and informed management. He praised the efforts of all the concerned authorities participating in the Hajj mission and the owners of the Kuwaiti campaigns in caring for the guests and performing their duties with perfection. (KUNA)

## Garages, workshops sealed

120 citations issued in Shuwaikh raids

**KUWAIT CITY, July 29:** During an inspection campaign inside the Shuwaikh Industrial Area personnel from the General Traffic Department issued 120 citations against abandoned garages, workshops and vehicles, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

The campaign, which was carried out by the inspection team of the Technical Inspection Department, with the participation of government agencies, was led by Assistant Director General of Technical Affairs in the General Traffic Department, Brigadier General Muhammad Al-Adwani.

During the campaign, six expatriates – violators of the residence permit – were taken into custody and the Kuwait Municipality issued 112 citations against violating workshops.



**Worker killed:** A worker died today, Friday, after falling in an elevator of a house under construction in South Abdullah Al-Mubarak, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

The Public Relations and Media Department of the General Fire Force stated that after a report was received by the Central Operations Department about an accident involving a worker falling in a house under construction in the South Abdullah Al-Mubarak area firefighting teams from the Istiqlal Fire Station and personnel from the Search and Rescue Center rushed to the site and referred the corpse to Forensics.

Security personnel are investigating the incident.



**Video clip not local:** The Ministry of Interior has clarified that the viral video of a delivery bike rider checking and tampering with a meal did not happen in the State of Kuwait, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

The Public Relations and Security Media Department in the ministry urged everyone to be careful spreading false information.

### Justice, equality has no strategic alternative link

**KUWAIT CITY, July 29:** In pursuit of justice and equality among various disciplines, the government is addressing salary disparities among employees in the state's administrative apparatus, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

The sources told the daily that what is currently being worked on has nothing to do with the strategic alternative. The proposed measures seek to achieve balance and fairness based on sector wise distribution and specialization.

The government is committed to offering practical and sustainable models that ensure stability across job categories. Recognizing the flaws in the current salary determination mechanism, the authorities are taking a technical approach to rectify the situation and promote fairness.

To achieve this, the government is conducting a thorough financial and technical analysis, working in collaboration with the Tripartite Global Consulting Group and in coordination with the "Oliver Wyman" company. The goal is to avoid burdening the state budget with additional deficits, given the existing financial challenges.

Preliminary estimates indicate that the previous "alternative" proposal would cost the state budget approximately one billion dinars, potentially exacerbating the deficit. Thus, it requires careful examination to achieve its objectives without adverse consequences.

It is acknowledged that any haphazard salary increase in the public sector could lead to further budgetary strain in subsequent years. To prevent an exodus of talent from the public sector to the private sector, and to maintain job stability, the labor market needs comprehensive restructuring.

Overall, the government is determined to find a balanced and just solution to address salary differences and enhance the overall efficiency and stability of the state's administrative apparatus.

### Sheikh Talal sends UAE condolences

Mol condoles with Saudi counterpart

**KUWAIT CITY, July 29, (KUNA):** Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior (MoI) Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent Friday a cable of condolences to his Saudi counterpart Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Nayef Al-Saud on the victims of the fighter jet which crashed during a training mission in Khamis Mushait.

Sheikh Talal expressed his sincere sympathy over the martyrdom of the aircraft crew, praying to Allah the Almighty to bestow his mercy upon the souls of the martyrs, and bring solace to their relatives, the Ministry's security media and public relations' department said in a news statement.

Sheikh Talal also prayed to Allah to maintain security and stability to Saudi Arabia under its wise leadership, it noted.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's First Deputy

Prime Minister and Minister of Interior (MoI) Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent Friday a cable of condolences to the President of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on the demise of Sheikh Saeed bin Zayed, Abu Dhabi Ruler's Representative.

Sheikh Talal expressed his sincere sympathy over Sheikh Saeed bin Zayed's demise, praying to Allah the Almighty to bestow his mercy upon Sheikh Saeed, and bring solace to Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed and UAE's people, the Ministry's security media and public relations' department said in a news statement. Sheikh Talal phoned, and sent a cable of condolences to, UAE's Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan on Sheikh Saeed's demise, the statement added.

### Move to reinforce Guard activities

**KUWAIT CITY, July 29:** First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled in what is seen as a significant move, has issued a decision to amend Ministerial Resolution No. 2411/2008 concerning the organizational structure of the Ministry of Interior and its subsequent amendments, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

Article 1 of the decision says the Maritime Transport Department and the Audit and Quality Department will be integrated into the existing departments under the umbrella of the General Directorate of the Coast Guard which falls under the juris-

diction of the Ports and Borders Security Affairs Sector.

This is done to enhance the capabilities and efficiency of the Coast Guard by incorporating departments that deal with crucial aspects of maritime operations following which the Coast Guard will be better equipped to oversee and manage maritime transportation activities, ensure safety and security of vessels and passengers.

Additionally, the Audit and Quality Department will play a vital role in upholding strict standards and improving the overall performance and quality of services provided by the Coast Guard.

### News in Brief

**CP audiences:** His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received, on Wednesday at Bayan Palace, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Crown Prince also received Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil, State Minister for Economic Affairs and Investments and Acting Minister of Finance Dr. Saad Al-Barrak. (KUNA)

**Thai envoy takes post:** Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Wednesday received the credentials of Thailand's Ambassador in Kuwait Ekapol Poolpipat.

This came during the meeting held at the Foreign Ministry, with Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah wishing the new ambassador best of luck and closer relations between both friendly countries. (KUNA)



Sheikh Salem

**Temporary jobs given:** Director of the Center for Development of Media Skills at Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Abrar Al-Ghanem declared on Thursday that the new agency has provided temporary jobs for high-school students.

The gesture was intended to back a program launched by the Public Authority for Youth, "a job opportunity," a part of coordination between KUNA and the authority, Al-Ghanem said in a statement. The PAY program scheduled in July and August aims at habituating the students as a prelude to occupying jobs in the future.

She affirmed keenness on holding such cooperation with other institutions and centers to give a hand in making a generation capable to catch up on technological progress and the information revolution. (KUNA)



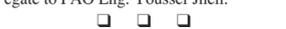
**Success achieved:** Kuwait's chief delegate to the UN Food Systems Summit +2 Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+2) shared the successes, made by her country in strengthening the food security system, with attendees at the gathering on Wednesday. Reem Al-Fleij, Director-General of the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN), said Kuwait was able to tackle numerous complicated challenges in ensuring food security through launching an umbrella organization for coordinating the efforts of competent agencies.

She was speaking to a plenary session on "Empowering National Convenors towards 2025 - systems leaders for transformative action," at the end of the summit.

The State of Kuwait was able to ensure the safety and quality of foods, particularly when it comes to children and school students, as per the parameters set by the first UNFSS in 2021, Al-Fleij affirmed.

The three-day UNFSS+2, hosted by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome, brought together over 2000 participants from 180 countries, including FAO Director-General QU Dongyu and more than 20 heads of state and government and 125 ministers, to explore challenges and opportunities to transform agrifood systems.

Led by Al-Fleij, Kuwait's delegation included the country's Permanent Delegate to FAO Eng. Youssef Jheil.



**Scholarship program:** The Private Universities Council has amended the internal scholarship program for academic year 2023/2024, which will be presented from Aug 2-13, reports **Al-Anba** daily.



## أطلب معنا مباشرة

### ORDER WITH US DIRECTLY

مفعل محل

www.MUGHALMAHAL.COM

واستمتع بعروضنا المميزة

AVAIL SUPER OFFER

USE CODE : OFF15

SCAN FOR ORDER



1800188

'Ghassan's journey was full of achievements, national giving'

# Kuwait mourns the passing away of businessman Al-Khaled

KUWAIT CITY, July 29: Kuwait lost the prominent businessman Ghassan Ahmed Saud Al-Khaled, who passed away after a journey full of achievements, national giving, and contribution to the renaissance of Kuwait, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Al-Khaled's departure is a great loss for the Kuwaiti business sector, as he is considered one of the most important economists in Kuwait and the Arab world, after he succeeded in establishing an economic entity whose investments exceeded the borders of the country to the countries of the region for nearly 34 years in the field of

business administration. During his activity-filled life, he experienced many economic challenges and major crises that afflicted the local and global economies, including the "Souk Al Manakh" crisis, passing through the financial crisis that struck the world in 2008, up to the repercussions of

the corona pandemic, as his companies were able to deal with these issues efficiently and competently. No one forgets the amount of effort and life that the late businessman spent in establishing and building a group of companies, which are in fact economic entities that have contributed to supporting

the national economy and providing job opportunities for a large number of citizens. Al-Khaled, who holds a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from West Virginia University, USA, has held the position of Vice Chairman and CEO of ACICO Industries since 2017, Chairman of

the Board of Directors, Managing Director of the Empty Concrete Industries Company in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, Managing Director of Ghassan Khaled Ahmed Al-Khalid and Partners Company, and General Manager, CEO of ACICO International Real Estate Company.

# Six public benefit bodies decry tampering with women's rights

'Some deputies focus on personal matters'

KUWAIT CITY, July 29: Six public benefit societies have called for an end to tampering with the gains of Kuwaiti women, criticizing some in the National Assembly who are hostile to the march of Kuwaiti women and public freedoms, noting that some deputies focus on personal matters and ignore the great national issues, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The associations said in a statement, a copy of which has been received by the daily, "We are following with great concern what is happening under the dome of the National Assembly -- hostility to the march of Kuwaiti women, their gains and public freedoms,

"We especially mention the draft law proposed by the government regarding the establishment of the

## KU Council looks into contracts of retirees

KUWAIT CITY, July 29: The Council of Kuwait University, headed by Acting Director Dr. Fayez Al-Dhafiri, discussed the request to terminate the contracts of all retirees who used their expertise at the university -- both Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti -- in accordance with the decisions of the Council of Ministers, and the adoption of executive steps for the requirements of the Scopus database of scientific journals, and the proposed amendments to the regulation of intellectual property and patents regulation, in the university, reports Al-Rai daily.

Sources said the council also discussed the Medical Sciences Center's proposal for the rules for transferring students between the faculties of dentistry and pharmacy, in addition to approving promotions for some faculty members and renewing the assignment of some cultural attachés.

It indicated that he discussed the equation of the IELTS test scores for the English language with the scores for the ability test for the English language, according to a clear ladder.

General Elections Commission, in which Article 16 requires women to adhere to the rules and provisions. Article 35 of the constitution stipulates that "freedom of belief is absolute, and the state protects the freedom to perform religious rites in accordance with customs," not to mention the ruling of the Constitutional Court in 2009, which affirmed the constitution's rejection of these loose and contradictory theses.

"For the essence of the constitution which was established in the light of the openness of Kuwaiti society, the strengthening of the role of women in it and respect for her

choices. In light of this, we demand a review of the draft law presented in general, with the abolition of Article 16 thereof."

Some members also proposed a proposal to prevent women from playing the role of judge under the pretext that Sharia prohibits women's guardianship, while the position of the judiciary has moved in our time from the stage of individual guardianship to institutional jurisdiction, which denies the religious prohibition of women's judicial position, so we demand the refusal to discuss this issue because it is an achievement. It has been achieved

and there are many qualified women who are currently playing the role of judges, say sources.

The public benefit societies -- Women's Social Cultural Association, Kuwait Alumni Association, Kuwaiti Social Association, Development Entrepreneurship Association, Kuwaiti Society for National Fraternity and the National Association for Family Safety -- went on to say it is unfair for Kuwaiti women to remain in a state of constant struggle to obtain the simplest gains, and then they must wage another struggle to preserve what they have achieved.



Shaikh Firas Saoad



Muhammad Al-Huwaila

## Minister attends central market opening

# 'MoSA committed to supporting, developing co-operative sector'

KUWAIT CITY, July 29: Minister of Social Affairs, Shaikh Firas Saoad Al-Malek Al-Sabah, has expressed his commitment to supporting and developing cooperative societies, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Speaking at the inauguration of the Sabah Al-Ahmad Cooperative Society's central market, which was attended by MPs Muhammad Al-Huwaila and Muhammad Al-Mahan, Shaikh Firas said that under the guidance of His Highness the Prime Minister, the ministry aims to provide better services to the people and achieve more significant milestones in the region.

Sultan Al-Otaibi, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Sabah Al-Ahmad Cooperative, highlighted the cooperative's dedication to serving the residents and shareholders of the association. He emphasized that with the support of the relevant authorities and the cooperation of the Board of Directors, the cooperative has evolved from its humble beginnings to become an advanced association. Social services and other important initiatives have been generously funded to achieve this progress.

Shaikh Firas, assured that the ministry remains steadfast in its support for cooperative societies and is committed to overcoming any challenges they may encounter.

During the event, it was announced that



Muhammad Al-Mahan

the cooperative will open its fourth central market in the city, increasing the total number of branches to 21. The cooperative has been successful, with annual sales reaching 35 million dinars, bank deposits amounting to about 13 million dinars, and an annual profit of half a million dinars.

## Kuwait hands

Continued from Page 1

In addition, it restated Kuwait's principled and unwavering position supporting the Palestinian cause and all international efforts to give the Palestinian people all their legitimate rights of an independent state on the pre-1967 border with Jerusalem being its capital.

Also:

**KUWAIT CITY:** Kuwait's Foreign Ministry on Thursday voiced the country's emphatic condemnation and denunciation of the storming, by the national security minister of Israeli occupation and a group of settlers, of Al-Aqsa Mosque.

The ministry, in a press release, termed this as a fresh provocative act and continuous breach of international humanitarian law and international charters.

It reiterated Kuwait's utter opposition to the continuation of these escalatory policies, illegal practices and recurrent violations that provoke the sentiments of millions of Muslims across the world.

It reaffirmed Kuwait's unwavering position supporting the swift intervention of the international community and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) by shouldering responsibilities by ceasing these blatant breaches and respecting Muslim sanctuaries and as well as providing the required international protection for the Palestinian people.

## Biden envoy

Continued from Page 1

Sullivan's visit comes after Secretary of State Antony Blinken traveled to the Kingdom last month in part to promote normalization between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

During Blinken's recent visit, Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said that normalization with Israel would have "limited benefits" without "finding a pathway to peace for the Palestinian people."

The Saudis have also shown hesitance to proceed with normalizing relations with Israel at a time when it is led by the most right-wing government in its history, and when tensions have soared with the Palestinians. Meanwhile, Israel remains mired in a political crisis over Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's plan to weaken its judiciary, a move which has unleashed the biggest protests in the country's history.

The Saudis have repeatedly called for the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank, east Jerusalem and Gaza, territories Israel seized in the 1967 war.

Saudi Arabia has also pushed increasingly for a nuclear cooperation deal that includes America allowing it to enrich uranium in the Kingdom - something that worries nonproliferation experts, as spinning centrifuges open the door to a possible weapons program.

Prince Mohammed already has said the Kingdom would pursue an atomic bomb if Iran had one, potentially creating a nuclear arms race in the region as Tehran's program continues to advance closer to weapons-grade levels.

## Millions commemorate

Continued from Page 1

Local resident Mustafa Semaan, 41, said the area had seen a resurgence of religious tourism after security stabilized amid Syria's ongoing war and the worst of the coronavirus pandemic.

"I don't believe the religious observances will be affected (by the recent bombings), but the economic situation as a result of visitors coming from outside Syria may be affected," Semaan said. "If this continues, if there were a third attack, there might be a very negative impact."

On Friday, the Islamic State claimed responsibility for the recent attacks in a statement, claiming that Thursday's attack killed about 10 and wounded about 40 others "during their annual polytheistic rituals." The group's extreme interpretation of Islam holds Shiite Muslims to be apostates.

In 2014, IS overran large swaths of Syria and Iraq and declared the entire territory a "caliphate," where it imposed a radically brutal rule. The U.S. and its allies in Syria and Iraq, as well as Syria's Russian-backed government troops, fought against it for years, eventually rolling it back. However, the extremist group's cells have continued to carry out attacks.

Iraq will see the main observance of the Ashoura on Saturday in Karbala, where hundreds of thousands are expected and many will rush toward the shrine to symbolize their desire to answer Hussein's last cries for help in battle. Convoys of the faithful arrived throughout the day Friday.

Meanwhile, hundreds of Iraqi Shiites in Baghdad's Sadr City participated in Ashoura rituals, including slashing their heads with swords and self-flagellation in a show of grief.

Those marking the commemoration in Kabul, Afghanistan, beat their backs bloody with chains and knives in ritual bloodletting known as "tatbir," meant to recreate the blood flowing from the slain Hussein. The practice has become debated among Shiite clerics in recent decades.

"We have only one problem that (the Taliban) are preventing us to raise our flags and enter (the city) with the flags," said Karbalayee Rashid, an organizer of the Kabul commemoration. "Thank God the security has been taken care. It is OK, but there are more limits in this country this year than last year."

In Pakistan, authorities stepped up security as an Interior Ministry alert warned that "terrorists" could target Ashoura processions in major cities. Security was tight in the capital, Islamabad, where police were deployed at a key Shiite place of worship.

The main Ashoura processions also got underway in the eastern city of Lahore in the Punjab province, where thousands of police officers have been deployed. Processions in Karachi and elsewhere were also starting. There was no immediate report of any violence.

"The Imam's lesson is ... hold on to patience," said Anam Batool, a mourner who took part in a commemoration in Islamabad. "After that, resist falsehood, stand with the truth. Where you must raise your voice against oppression, raise your voice there."

# July

## Room Promotion

Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
<b>NOW</b>	<b>NOW</b>
<b>BHD 61.000/-net</b>	<b>BHD 136.198/-net</b>
Weekends (Thursday & Friday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
<b>NOW</b>	<b>NOW</b>
<b>BHD 69.000/-net</b>	<b>BHD 153.222/-net</b>

Promo period from 4<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023
Terms & conditions apply\*

Tel: +973 17701201 - Ext. 351 | Email: reservation@albander.com | www.albander.com | @albanderhotelandresort

Other Voices

# China's economic growth stable and sound in H1 2023

By Zhang Jianwei

Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait

In the first half of 2023, the Chinese economy has shown encouraging recovery momentum, with the gross domestic product (GDP) up by 5.5% year on year. Facing the multiple tests of increased downward pressure on global growth and a complex and grave international environment, the Chinese economy has achieved notable growth by virtue of the country's enormous market, sound industrial system and well-established infrastructure. Such growth, high in both valuation and quality, highlights the tremendous potential and strong resilience of the Chinese economy. The overall trajectory of encouraging economic rebound will remain unchanged.

### High-quality development contributes to global economic recovery

China is the second largest economy in the world, with its GDP exceeding 120 trillion yuan, or 18 trillion U.S. dollars. It has not been easy for such a big economy to achieve a medium-high growth of 5.5%. In the first quarter of this year, China's GDP grew by 4.5% year on year, while GDP in the U.S., the eurozone, Japan and Brazil rose by 1.8%, 1%, 1.9% and 4%, respectively. China's economic growth rate remains the fastest among major economies in the first half of the year, when some other economies even entered a technical recession. Major international organizations have recently increased their expectations for global economic growth. One of the key reasons behind this is that China has maintained its economic recovery. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), China is projected to account for about one third of global growth in 2023. The economic data of the first half of this year shows that China remains a key driver and major engine of global economic recovery.

### New growth drivers invigorate China's development

China's economic growth in the first six months was the result of constant efforts to strengthen international momentum for development. The contribution of final consumption expenditure to economic growth

exceeded 70%, while the service sector contributed to more than 60% of economic growth. As consumer confidence kept increasing, China's consumption continued to rebound. Take the tourism sector for example. The number of tourism revenue in the first six months surged 95.9% year on year. Many tourists from Gulf countries like Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates have visited China. As China-Kuwait cooperation on culture and tourism deepens, China will surely be a favorite destination for Kuwaiti tourists. Meanwhile, China's economic growth was propelled by innovation. In the first half of the year, the added value of information transmission, software and information technology services increased by 12.9% and the output of new energy vehicles grew by 35%. China's production of integrated circuits in June totaled 32.2 billion units, up 5.7 percent compared with last year. China is now working to build new pacesetters for scientific and technological innovation and explore new pathways to green transformation.



Amb Zhang

### High-standard opening-up brings development opportunities to the world

China's economic growth in the first half of the year also resulted from collaboration with a large group of trading and investment partners. Bearing in mind unity, coordination and mutually beneficial cooperation, China has been working to enhance economic and trade exchanges with the rest of the world. From January to June this year, the total value of imports and exports of goods rose by 2.1% year on year. The imports and exports with countries along the Belt and Road grew by 9.8%, showing that the spillover effect of foreign trade continues to grow. Among them, China's trade volume with Kuwait in the first six months of 2023 reached 11.33 billion U.S. dollars. China's exports to Kuwait increased by 15.8% year on year to reach 2.62 bil-

lion U.S. dollars. This demonstrates that the fundamentals of economic and trade exchanges between China and Kuwait have remained stable. When it comes to foreign investors, they also expressed optimism about the Chinese market. International well-known enterprises including Siemens and AstraZeneca have expanded their investment in China, showing their confidence in China's economic prospects in the long term. Statistics show that foreign direct investment in the Chinese mainland, in actual use, was 703.65 billion yuan, or about 98.5 billion U.S. dollars in the first half. Some 24,000 new foreign firms established themselves in China during the same period, marking a 35.7 percent rise year on year. Kuwaiti enterprises also showed strong interest in the Chinese market, as they have bought more shares in the Chinese stock market. According to a Chinese media report, the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) now holds over 97 million Chinese A-shares worth two billion yuan (about 280 million U.S. dollars) in total. The year 2023 marks the 10th anniversary of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China will hold the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. Kuwait and other countries are welcomed to the forum to share the fruits of China's development. We should work together to build the Belt and Road as a "path of happiness" benefiting the whole world.

As Chinese President Xi Jinping remarked in his 2023 New Year Address, "The Chinese economy enjoys strong resilience, tremendous potential and great vitality. The fundamentals sustaining its long-term growth have remained strong. As long as we stay confident and strive for progress while maintaining stability, we will realize the goals we have set." The Chinese economy has delivered a notable result in terms of both quantity and quality in the first half. Looking ahead to the latter half of the year, with growing market demands, stronger momentum for innovation-driven development and further improved environment for trade and investment, China has the confidence and ability to advance its high-quality development. China hopes to share new development opportunities with the rest of the world through its achievements in modernization and together make the world a better place.



The Egyptian Minister of Awqaf Mukhtar Gomaa, the Grand Mufti of Egypt, Dr. Shawky Allam, and the General Director of the Kuwaiti Zakat House, Dr. Majid Al-Azmi, during the inauguration of the Kuwait Mosque in 6th of October City in Giza, west of Cairo.



Photo during the inauguration of the Kuwait Mosque in 6th of October City in Giza, west of Cairo.



KUNA photos  
Kuwait Mosque in 6th of October City in Giza, west of Cairo.

## Kuwait Mosque in Egypt's Giza opens

CAIRO, July 29, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Office for Charity Projects in Cairo inaugurated on Friday Kuwait Mosque in 6th of October City in Giza.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Al-Awqaf Minister Mukhtar Gomaa, Egypt Mufti Dr. Shawqi Allam and Director General of Kuwait Zakat House Dr. Majid Al-Azmi.

Al-Azmi told KUNA that the mosque was built with financial contributions from Kuwaiti good doers.

Sara Al-Mutairi, the director of the Kuwaiti office, said in remarks to KUNA that the mosque would be particularly useful for residents of 6th of October City.

The Kuwaiti alms house has executed a total of 62 ventures in Giza Governorate, he added.

Gumaa, the mufti, Al-Azmi, the deputy of the Kuwaiti ambassador Dr. Nayad Al-Tayyar performed Friday prayers at the mosque, construction of which cost USD 267,000.

# Loans up 3.93 pct compared to 1.55% residents deposits in H1

Government deposits increased by 16.05 percent

**KUWAIT CITY, July 29:** During the first half of the year total deposits from residents increased by approximately 1.98 percent, reaching 47.839 billion dinars by the end of last month. This was a rise from 46.91 billion dinars at the end of December 2022, and an annual increase of around 1.55 percent compared to the level at the end of June the previous year, which was 47.108 billion dinars, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to the monthly statistics issued by the Central Bank of Kuwait, the Al-Rai daily said, deposits of public institutions decreased by about 9.95 percent during the first half, amounting to 6.085 billion dinars, down from 6.757 billion at the end of the previous year.

On the other hand, government deposits increased by 16.05 percent, reaching 3.876 billion dinars, compared to 3.34 billion in the previous year by the end of December 2022.

### Deposits

Private sector deposits totaled approximately 37.876 billion dinars at the end of last month, marking a 2.89 percent increase during the first half compared to 36.812 billion dinars at the end of last year.

Among these, private sector deposits in dinars increased by 3.34 percent, going from 35.037 billion dinars to 36.206 billion dinars. However, deposits in foreign currencies decreased by about 5.92 percent, declining from 1.774 billion dinars to 1.669 billion dinars.

On the subject of credit facilities, the total credit extended to residents and non-residents amounted to about 52.983 billion dinars at the end of June, showing a 1.02 percent increase during the first half compared to 52.447 billion at the end of December of the previous year. Moreover, this represented a 3.93 percent increase on an annual basis, compared to the figure of 50.981 billion dinars recorded in June the previous year.

Personal facilities experienced a slight decline in June, amounting to 18.485 billion dinars, which is a decrease of 0.08 percent compared to May when it was 18.499 billion dinars.



KUNA photo

Part of the signing of a cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority.

### Social Affairs Ministry, CITRA sign joint co-op deal

The Ministry of Affairs has signed a cooperation agreement with the Communications Authority, aimed at facilitating coordination and communication procedures between them in order to block any fake and suspicious websites working to launch campaigns to collect donations, whether from inside or outside Kuwait, without obtaining prior licenses, in order to protect donors' money and to preserve the reputation of charitable work in Kuwait.

Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Abdulaziz Al-Mutairi said that the signing of the agreement with "Etisalat" was the result of great and continuous cooperation between them, to extend the supervisory authority over collecting donations and preserving

the reputation of charitable work in the country.

Al-Mutairi added that taking advantage of the digital and electronic development made it easier to control the fake links issued by some parties calling for donations without prior approval from the ministry.

He referred to checking the links in cooperation with the authority, which showed that they are fake and issued from outside Kuwait, and do not belong to any internal party or concerned with charitable work, and work has been done to stop them.

He pointed out that the Charitable Associations Department will monitor all electronic payment links for charitable works, in coordination with the Communications Authority, to take the necessary measures re-

garding them, block them and stop their activity.

He indicated that the aim of the blocking is to provide protection for donors, and there will be no restrictions on charitable work.

In turn, Omar Al-Omar, Chairman of the Communications Board of Directors, pointed out that the agreement aims to facilitate procedures for correspondence with government agencies to block some websites that violate the law.

He added that the protocol organizes and facilitates procedures, and in cases of monitoring abuses in some charitable campaigns without licenses, immediate measures are taken through the liaison officers directly, according to the presented case. (KUNA)

However, they recorded a marginal increase of 0.04 percent during the first 6 months of the year, compared to their level at the end of last year, which was 18.477 billion dinars.

Consumer loans saw a decline of about 0.41 percent in June, with a value of 1.941 billion dinars, compared to 1.949 billion in May. This led to a 1.32 percent decrease during the first half, compared to the end of December of the previous year when it was 1.967 billion dinars.

Housing loans also experienced a slight decline on a monthly basis,

dropping by about 0.006 percent to reach 15.826 billion dinars in June, compared to 15.827 billion in May.

However, they witnessed a 0.55 percent increase during the first 6 months of the year compared to their level at the end of last year when it was 15.74 billion dinars.

Regarding loans for the purchase of securities (shares), their total value reached about 3.25 billion dinars at the end of June, indicating a 1.25 percent increase during the first half compared to 3.291 billion at the end of December 2022.

Notably, loans for purchasing shares by individuals decreased by about 9.94 percent, reaching 1.187 billion dinars, down from 1.318 billion at the end of the previous year, but corporate equity loans increased by 4.56 percent, rising from 1.973 billion dinars to 2.063 billion.

Loans from non-bank financial institutions (investment companies) increased significantly by 20.55 percent during the first half, reaching 1.912 billion dinars at the end of June, compared to 1.586 billion at the end of the previous year.

### Enhancing cooperation, coordination between gov't institutions, civil society and private sector

# CAS launches 'website' to monitor Sustainable Dev't Goals indicators

**KUWAIT CITY, July 29:** The Director General of the Central Administration of Statistics, Munia Al-Qabandi, announced the launch of the official website for monitoring and indicators of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, reports Al-Anba daily.

Al-Qabandi said in a press statement that official statistics and data derived from national statistical systems constitute the basis and framework for monitoring data and indicators of the goals and objectives of sustainable development.

Meanwhile, the sources added that the CAS worked to collect data and monitor indicators in order to achieve Kuwait's direction to implement the 2030 sustainable development plan and to issue voluntary national reports that include monitoring and analysis of the country's sustainable development goals.

The sources indicated that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was officially launched on January 1, 2016, and accordingly, the department launched the official website to monitor the indicators of the sustainable development goals.

The same sources pointed out that the website includes an automated system that includes a database for monitoring and measuring the indicators of the goals and objectives of sustainable development 2030, by linking with the agencies that provide indicators data and meeting local, regional and international requirements.

Regarding the most important outputs of the site, the sources said that it is a database of indicators of sustainable development goals and the issuance of a comprehensive report on the current situation of Kuwait at the levels of indicators of the goals and objectives of sustainable development 2030 (monthly - quarterly - annually), in addition to issuing reports on the providers of indicators data and methods of completing the data.

The sources stressed that CAS seeks to achieve several goals in this field, the most important of which is data collection and processing, developing statistical indicators and periodic reports that measure the progress made in achieving the goals, and developing the necessary capacities and

capabilities of government institutions, civil society and the private sector to collect and analyze data effectively.

### Transparency and accountability

Al-Qabandi said the goals also included enhancing cooperation and coordination between government institutions, civil society and the private sector to achieve the goals, as well as enhancing transparency and accountability in collecting and analyzing data, providing statistical reports, developing and producing statistical information and updated reports to help in decision-making and setting public policies in areas such as the economy, health, education and the environment.

She stated that among the goals is also achieving sustainable and comprehensive development in all aspects of economic, social and environmental life and enhancing balance between economic, environmental and social development, as well as enhancing awareness of the importance of statistical data and its role in making informed decisions and set-

ting effective priorities to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

She said that a technical working group has been formed to monitor and follow up the indicators of the sustainable development goals and to participate in the work of the permanent national steering committee for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Kuwait.

She added that she had also promoted awareness, spread knowledge, and introduced development goals and their importance by holding technical workshops and attending local, regional and international seminars and conferences.

She indicated that the administration focuses its efforts on achieving the sustainable development plan and intensified its support provided in order to enhance data collection and build statistical capacities and try to find new sources of data in its systems to meet the needs and adhere to its responsibility as the responsible and coordinator of the national statistical system in addition to providing statistics and official data that form the necessary basis, framework for global indicators.

A Qatar Airways plane prepares to take off at San Francisco International Airport in San Francisco Dec 22, 2020. Qatar Airways said Thursday, July 27, 2023, it earned a profit of \$1.2 billion over the last fiscal year, boosted in part by the small country on the Arabian Peninsula hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup. (AP)



## Qatar Airways posts a \$1.2 billion profit over the last fiscal year

Qatar Airways said Thursday it earned a profit of \$1.2 billion over the last fiscal year, boosted in part by the small Arabian Peninsula country's hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Qatar Airways, like other carriers in Gulf Arab nations, relies on the country's location to ferry passengers between the East and West. Its earned revenue of \$20.9 billion over the year is up from \$14.4 billion the year before. Those figures stand in contrast to the \$4.1 billion loss it suffered in the 2021

fiscal year amid the coronavirus pandemic and the grounding of its fleet. Qatar Airways' profit of \$1.2 billion is down slightly from \$1.5 billion last fiscal year. Part of that came from a spike in operating expenses, particularly in jet fuels as energy prices rose after the grip of the pandemic loosened and air travel resumed. Qatar Airways received a \$3 billion infusion from the government during the pandemic to keep it afloat. "As the global travel industry contin-

ued its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, we consolidated our position as the airline of choice for millions of passengers across the globe," Qatar Airways CEO Akbar Al Baker said in a statement. The World Cup played a large role in Qatar Airways' success as well, with FIFA saying some 3.4 million spectators were on hand inside stadiums for the tournament. Many flying in used Qatar Airways' global network for their flights. (AP)

## Market Movements

28-07-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
UAE	-	DFM +0.19	JAPAN	-	Nikkei -0.40
PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100 +0.89	PHILIPPINES	-	PSEi -0.79
			SAUDI	-	Tadawul -0.49
			EGYPT	-	EGX 30 -0.33

# Business

## Bond purchases fine-tuned for more flexibility

# Japan's central bank retains key interest rate at minus 0.1%

TOKYO, July 29, (AP) - Japan's central bank opted Friday to keep its benchmark interest rate at minus 0.1% but fine-tuned its bond purchases to allow greater flexibility in its policies given the "high uncertainties" facing the world's third-largest economy.

The Bank of Japan said it needed a nimbler approach to keep financial markets stable as it works toward a goal of keeping inflation near 2%, the level it says is needed for sustained economic growth. The bank's governor, Kazuo Ueda, said the move was a not a step toward giving up its ultra-lax monetary policy.

The BOJ said it would offer to buy 10-year Japanese government bonds at 1% each business day. It also said 0.5% upper and lower limits on its yield, which were imposed under the bank's "yield curve control program" would be handled more flexibly.

After the BOJ's announcement, the yield on the 10-year government bond surged to 0.575%, but ended the day at 0.55%. The yield on the 10-year U.S. Treasury rose to nearly 4.04% before it fell back to 3.98% early Friday U.S. time.

The aim of the Bank of Japan's ultra-lax monetary policy is still to keep long-term interest rates near zero. For many years it has kept rates low. For the past decade, it has also used massive asset purchases to keep credit cheap to try to spur investment and spending and prop up economic growth.

As the Federal Reserve and other major central banks have raised interest rates to slow lending and curb inflation, the BOJ has felt pressure to adjust that stance. Japan's inflation rate has lagged behind the torrid price increases seen last year in the U.S. and Europe but in June topped 3%.

The BOJ has resisted raising its longstanding minus 0.1% benchmark rate out of concern that growth in Japan, the world's third-largest economy, may slow given risks of recession in the U.S. and other major economies. A slump in China has added to those uncertainties.

Ueda, who took up his post in April, said Friday that the central bank would not allow the 10-year Japanese government bond yield to rise above 1%. He denied it was a step toward "normalizing" policy toward a more neutral stance.

"This isn't a step toward normalization. We're still far from where we can raise short-term rates," Ueda told reporters.

Friday's decision followed a flurry of speculation over potential policy changes. Markets tend to get a jolt from any whiff of a change, and on Friday the benchmark Nikkei 225 fell by as much as 2.6% before ending 0.4% lower, at 32,759.23. But banks rallied on expectations of higher returns, with the TOPIX Banks index

## India and Japan look to collaborate in building semiconductors, resilient supply chains

NEW DELHI, July 29, (AP) - India and Japan explored collaborating in critical technologies, including semiconductors and resilient supply chains, as part of plans to reach a target of \$35.9 billion Japanese investment in the country by 2027, officials said on Friday.

Foreign Ministers of India and Japan, S. Jaishankar and Yoshimasa Hayashi, met in New Delhi on Thursday and also discussed ways to deepen defense equipment and technology cooperation. Hayashi is on a two-day visit to the Indian capital.

Russia's war in Ukraine has disrupted the global supply of parts and raw materials needed to complete a variety of products - from cars to computer chips. Hayashi and Jaishankar also emphasized the crucial role of a strong partnership between India and Japan in ensuring an open and prosperous Indo-Pacific region that is inclusive and rules-based, a statement by India's External Affairs Ministry said.

They discussed cooperation under multilateral and plurilateral frameworks, including the Quad grouping that also includes the United States and Australia, the statement said. The grouping aims at countering the growing challenge posed by an aggressive China in the region.

Japan considers India an indispensable partner in achieving a free and open Indo-Pacific, Hayashi said at a meeting with business leaders from the two countries.

up 4.6%.

"We still think that a slowdown in inflation will convince the bank to keep its short-term policy rate unchanged over the coming months," Capital Economics said in a research note. But it said given signs that prices are rising along with wages, "the risks of the Bank tightening policy in earnest are rising."

Friday's statement revised the central bank's estimate for economic growth in the current fiscal year, ending in March, to 1.3% from 1.4%. It raised the forecast for core inflation excluding food to 2.5% from an earlier 1.8%.

"With extremely high uncertainties surrounding economies and financial markets at home and abroad, the Bank will patiently continue with monetary easing while nimbly responding to developments in economic activity and prices as well as financial conditions," said the statement issued after the BOJ's policy meeting.

He said he has been encouraging Japanese companies to invest in 15 key sectors identified by India as eligible for subsidies. These include telecommunications equipment, automobiles, and applied chemical batteries.

"All of this has led to the remarkable growth in Japanese investment into crucial technologies such as medical equipment, electronics, and household electric appliances," Hayashi said.

Jaishankar and Hayashi expressed satisfaction at the strengthening of defense and security cooperation between the two countries, including regular exercises and talks between all three services, the statement said.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambitions to build a chipmaking industry suffered a potential setback earlier this month as electronics giant Foxconn backed out of a \$19.5 billion semiconductor joint venture with Indian mining conglomerate Vedanta Ltd.

In February last year, the two companies announced their joint venture to manufacture chips and display panels in India.

India has made building a chipmaking sector a national priority as part of a self-reliance policy to secure stable supplies. It is offering financial incentives of up to 50% of project costs under a \$10 billion plan for semiconductor and display manufacturing projects.

The gap between Japan's negative benchmark rate and rates in the U.S. has caused the Japanese yen to weaken against the U.S. dollar. That has amplified price pressures in Japan, raising costs for consumers and manufacturers given the country's heavy reliance on imports, for which prices have risen sharply since the pandemic.

A major reason the BOJ moves so cautiously in adjusting its policies is the fear of overshooting its goals.

"Despite today's surprise tweak to the (yield curve control) policy, we continue to believe that Governor Ueda is determined to avoid premature tightening and will take time to carefully assess whether the economy is on track to achieve 2% inflation within his five-year term," Oxford Economics said in a commentary.

# WS returns to rallying following reports on profits and inflation

Asian shares mixed, Tokyo falls as BoJ adjusts bond purchase policy

NEW YORK, July 29, (AP) - Wall Street's rally got back on track Friday following more encouraging profit reports and the latest signal that inflation is loosening its chokehold on the economy.

The S&P 500 rose 1% to its highest close in more than 15 months. The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 176 points, or 0.5% after breaking a 13-day winning streak the day before. The Nasdaq composite jumped 1.9% as Big Tech stocks led the market.

Stocks have been rising recently on hopes high inflation is cooling enough to get the Federal Reserve to stop hiking interest rates. That in turn could allow the economy to continue growing and avoid a long-predicted recession. The S&P 500 closed out its third straight winning week and its ninth in the last 11.

A report on Friday bolstered those hopes, saying the inflation measure the Fed prefers to use slowed last month by a touch more than expected. Perhaps just as importantly, data also showed that total compensation for workers rose less than expected during the spring. While that's discouraging for workers looking for bigger raises, investors see it adding less upward pressure on inflation.

The hope among traders is that the slowdown in inflation means the Federal Reserve's hike to interest rates on Wednesday will be the final one of this cycle. The federal funds rate has leaped to a level between 5.25% and 5.50%, up from virtually zero early last year. High interest rates work to lower inflation by slowing the entire economy and hurting prices for stocks and other investments.

Critics, though, say the stock market's rally may have gone too far, too fast. The full effects of the Fed's rate hikes have yet to make their way fully through the system. Other parts of the economy could still crack under the pressure, like the three U.S. bank failures this spring that shook confidence. Plus, inflation remains above the Fed's target level, and the central bank could have to keep the brakes on the economy a while to get it down to target.

"Don't underestimate central bank commitment to 2% inflation," Bank of

## Biden jokes Republicans may impeach him because inflation is starting to 'cool down'

AUBURN, Maine, July 29, (AP) - President Joe Biden - buoyed by new signs the economy is continuing on the upswing - took a swipe on Friday at House Republicans' flirtations with an impeachment inquiry, quipping that GOP lawmakers may decide to impeach him because inflation is cooling down.

Standing in a textile manufacturing facility in Auburn Biden pointed to inflation statistics that showed the U.S. has the lowest rate of price increases among the world's biggest economies. Though he was careful to say he was not taking a victory lap on the economy, Biden suggested that his Republican opponents in Congress may need to find a fresh line of attack against him because of improving economic circumstances.

"Maybe they'll decide to impeach me because it's coming down," Biden said. "I don't know. I'd love that one."

Earlier this week, House Speaker

America economists wrote in a BofA Global Research report.

Still, hopes for a halt to rate hikes helped technology stocks and others seen as big beneficiaries from easier rates to rally and lead the market Friday.

Microsoft, Apple and Amazon each rose at least 1.4% and were the three strongest forces pushing upward on the S&P 500.

Companies also continued to deliver stronger profits for the spring than analysts expected. Roughly halfway through the earnings season, more companies than usual are topping profit forecasts, according to FactSet.

Intel rose 6.6% after reporting a profit for the latest quarter, when analysts were expecting a loss.

Food giant Mondelez International climbed 3.7% after reporting stronger results for the spring than expected. The company behind Oreo and Ritz also raised its forecasts for financial results for the full year.

### Asia

Asian shares were mixed on Friday after the Bank of Japan adjusted its bond purchase policy but kept its negative benchmark interest rate un-

Kevin McCarthy made his most direct remarks yet that GOP lawmakers could launch an impeachment inquiry into Biden over unproven claims of financial misconduct related to Hunter Biden, the president's son. However, the California Republican has acknowledged privately that it's too soon to know whether the president was aware of - much less involved in - his son's financial dealings in a way that would rise to the level of impeachable conduct.

While McCarthy publicly floated the inquiry this week, the White House has engaged little with those efforts, instead focused on promoting "Bidenomics" and the president's domestic agenda. Aides have repeatedly played down any inquiry as a hypothetical and pointed out the hesitation among McCarthy's own ranks about pursuing impeachment against the president.

"We're not going to get into what House Republicans want to do, may

not do, hypotheticals, that's on them," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters on Air Force One en route to Maine earlier Friday.

"What I can speak to is exactly what we're doing today, right? We're going to Maine. We're going to be able to talk about an issue that matters to Americans: investing in America, manufacturing, bringing good union-paying jobs back to America."

Indeed, that was the focus of the White House on Friday, as Biden used the trip to Maine to sign an executive order that would encourage companies to manufacture new inventions in the United States. It was Biden's first trip to the state as president.

"I'm not here to declare victory on the economy. We have more work to do," Biden said. But "we have a plan for turning things around. 'Bidenomics' is just another way of saying restoring the American dream."

4.3%. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 declined 0.7% to 6,877.93.

The Shanghai Composite index jumped 1.9% to 3,276.03, while in Hong Kong the Hang Seng added 1.4% to 19,920.46. The Kospi in Seoul gained 0.2% to 2,608.32.

Markets in India and Thailand were closed for holidays.

### Europe

Stocks climbed in Europe on Thursday after the European Central Bank raised interest rates and left unanswered whether more increases are coming. The French CAC 40 jumped 2.1%, and Germany's DAX returned 1.7%.

### Oil

In other trading Friday, U.S. benchmark crude oil shed 21 cents to \$79.88 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It rose \$1.31 on Thursday to \$80.09 per barrel.

Brent crude, the pricing basis for international trading, declined 26 cents to \$83.53 per barrel.

### Currencies

The euro slipped to \$1.0979 from \$1.0980.

use the euro currency. Rather, results for individual banks will be used by banking regulators in determining how much capital they need to hold in reserve.

Banks are crucial to the European economy because companies get most of their financing from them, instead of from financial markets - the opposite

## KNPC's first KD1 bln net profit

By Kamel Al-Harami  
Independent Oil Analyst

BRAVO to our Kuwaiti refining company for its first ever one-billion-dinar net profit for the year ending March 2023, since its inception.

Kuwait began its venture in refining in the early 60s. Back then, Kuwait was the first OPEC member and national oil company to invest in refining. About 60 percent of it was owned by the government, and 40 percent by the private sector. Followed by other oil producing countries, Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) had set examples for joint ventures between government and private owners with courage in using their monies in such an unknown venture.

Today after 60 years, we are rewarding ourselves with the first billion-dinar profit. We owe the fully dedicated employees and management of our two refineries of Mina Abdullah and Al Ahmadi in every sector for such success under the severe diligent environment that is surrounded by all sorts of danger, in every unit and on every inch of the refinery's premises 24/7.

Last year, with the increased oil prices, the refining margin was pushed to a new level of more than \$30 a barrel in some refineries out-

side the Arabian Gulf region that yields much higher percentages of light products like gasoline, diesel, and kerosene.

In our case, we just managed to complete the upgrade of our two refineries to become the most modern, meeting all the advanced market requirements and product specifications, in order to be rewarded with high profits per barrel of refining.

On the other hand, Kuwait owns a third new refinery - Al-Zour, which has a production capacity of 615,000 barrels per day and will be onstream soon. Unfortunately, this one does not belong to KNPC. It is the replacement of Shuaiba refinery, the 1st national one in the region and with all national companies. Such an unwise decision taken by the KPC board just does not make any sense. The board must promptly switch its decision to put Al-Zour refinery back to where it belongs, which is to KNPC, instead of wasting resources, diverting our experienced staff, and duplicating the same function into two separate entities.

Time has come for the KNPC board to take the necessary action, and stop such madness of having two separate companies for refining activities.

Well done to the KNPC staff and management. Thank you for your efforts, determination, and quality of work. Kuwait is proud of you. We may ask for a profit of KD 1.5 billion for next fiscal year ending on March 24.

Congratulations to all of us.

email: nafikuwait@yahoo.com



Al-Harami

## Germany used to be world's export powerhouse. Now, it's not growing

FRANKFURT, Germany, July 29, (AP) - The German economy is still failing to grow, figures showed Friday, as the country that should be the industrial powerhouse for all of Europe struggles with high energy prices, rising borrowing costs and a lagging rebound from key trading partner China.

Economic output in Germany stagnated in the April-to-June quarter, the Federal Statistics Office said. That follows a decline of 0.1% in the first three months of the year and a drop of 0.4% in the last three months of 2022 as the energy shock from Russia's war in Ukraine echoed through Europe's largest economy.

It comes after the International Monetary Fund forecast this week that Germany would be the globe's only major economy to shrink this year, even with weak economic growth around the world amid rising interest rates and the threat of growing inflation.

In Germany, the economy has been buffeted by several challenges. Above all, its long-term dependence on Russian natural gas to fuel industry backfired when the invasion of Ukraine led to the loss of most of Moscow's supply and to higher costs for energy-intensive industries such as metals, glass, cars and fertilizer.

Higher interest rates from the European Central Bank have weighed on construction projects that depend on

borrowing. Meanwhile, the rebound in China, Germany's largest trade partner, after the end of drastic COVID-19 restrictions has been less than many had hoped for.

The second-quarter economic performance was "far from satisfactory," said Vice Chancellor and Economy Minister Robert Habeck.

He urged action on his proposal to cap energy prices for industry with government help, which has run into skepticism in parts of the governing coalition, and more investment in future-oriented technology such as renewable energy.

"What Germany needs is a targeted impulse for investment and breathing room for our energy-intensive industry," he said.

Longer-term factors such as an aging population, lagging use of digital technology in business and government, excessive red tape that holds back business launches and public construction projects, and a shortage of skilled labor also have weighed on the economy.

Yet the slowdown does not resemble a classic recession because jobs are abundant, with companies competing for workers and complaining of skills shortages. The unemployment rate was only 2.9% in May, well below the eurozone's 6.5% - one of the lowest rates on record.

## Europe's banks could survive a drastic economic downturn, stress test shows

FRANKFURT, Germany, July 29, (AP) - Europe's banking sector could withstand a severe economic downturn without depleting their financial buffers against losses, the European Central Bank said Friday.

A survey of 98 large and medium-sized banks done by the ECB's supervisory arm

in conjunction with the European Banking Authority showed that even in the most adverse scenario - a fall of almost 10% in economic output over three years - banks would still have enough capital to cover losses and then some.

The stress test was not a pass-fail exercise for banks in the 20 countries that

**KFH employees serve customers in 9 branches in Türkiye**

As part of its constant efforts to offer the best banking experience, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) assigned a team of employees to Türkiye to serve customers and visitors during the summer.

The employees were assigned to nine branches of KFH-Türkiye: two in Bursa, four in Istanbul and one branch each in Trabzon, Izmit and Kuzadasi.

KFH's team, who went through an intensive course before the start of their mission, will continue to work until the first week of September. They were also introduced to

the services and products provided by KFH-Türkiye to best serve its customers.

KFH has always given top priority for customers' needs especially during travel season. In response to their demands, KFH-Türkiye team has been assigned to serve those customers who are staying in Türkiye throughout the year. Those who own real estate and commercial activities and have financial and banking transactions with the bank on an ongoing basis, can open accounts in KFH-Türkiye to benefit from the many services and advantages provided by

the bank. KFH Group Deputy General Manager - Products, Nehal Almosalem, stressed that delegating employees to work in Türkiye is a proactive step, and an initiative adopted by KFH to deliver the best experience for customers staying in Türkiye. Almosalem explained that KFH always seeks to offer innovative means to serve its valued customers and facilitate all their local and international financial transactions. This standpoint was behind the formation of the team, which includes a number of distinguished employees.



KFH Group Deputy General Manager - Products, Nehal Almosalem.

**Revenue increase of 8% year-on-year**

**Burgan reports KD 108m in revenues and KD 18 mln in net profit in H1 '23**

KUWAIT CITY, July 29: Burgan Bank ("Burgan" or "the Bank") announced its financial results for the first half of 2023 (H1'23), for the period ending June 30, 2023.

The Bank reported robust Revenue of KD 108 million during H1'23 which was up 8% year-on-year (y-o-y). Higher revenues were driven by a strong Non-Interest Income of KD 47 million (+28% y-o-y) and Net-Interest Income of KD 61 million (vs KD 63 million in H1'22). The Net interest Margins (NIM) were almost flat at 1.9% in H1'23, as compared to 2.0% in H1'22; while the Cross-Sell Ratio improved from 37% in H1'22 to 44% in H1'23 (+680bps), due to higher fee and commission-based income supported by recoveries. The Operating Expenses stood at KD 54 million in H1'23 as compared to KD 46 million in H1'22. The marginal y-o-y increase in expenses was largely attributable to higher staff expenses amongst others, and mainly in Kuwait and Turkey. Consequently, the Bank reported stable Operating Profits of KD 54 million during H1'23 (H1'22: KD 54 million). The Bank's Credit Costs were higher in H1'23 at 90bps, comparable to 30bps in H1'22, however the impacts from the net monetary losses were lower at KD 7 million, compared to KD 11 million in H1'22. As a result, the Bank reported a Net Income of KD 18 million for the first half of 2023. For accurate comparison, the above H1'22 financial figures have been adjusted for Bank of Baghdad's (BoB) contributions, as it was sold in February 2023 and these contributions are not part of H1'23 financials.

Burgan maintained its strong asset quality during H1'23 with a Non-performing Loan (NPL) ratio of 2% and a Provision Coverage of 216%. Moreover, the Bank's capital metrics remained solid with a higher Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) ratio of 11.5%, Tier 1 capital ratio of 14.1% and a Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) of 17.8%.

Commenting on Burgan's H1 results, the Bank's Chairman, Sheikh Abdullah Nasser Al-Sabah, said: "The Bank's financial results for the first six months of 2023 signify a stable performance, bolstered by a strong foundation as we continue pursuing excellence and innovation in the banking sector. From this standpoint, we remain persistent in implementing the Bank's proactive-long-term strategy, which is crucial in supporting our sustainable growth ambitions, fortifying our competitiveness, and driving shareholder value."

The Chairman added: "What we're conveying is a renewed commitment to positioning ourselves as a top Bank in Kuwait; delivering a superior customer experience, growing our human capital, achieving key environmental, social and governance (ESG) commitments, and investing heavily in digitalization. Speaking of human capital, we are pleased to report that our Kuwaitization employment percentage was 82% at the end of June 2023."

Moreover, the Chairman highlighted that Burgan continued to receive recognition for its creditworthiness during the second quarter of 2023, which is a clear indication of the Bank's solid financial core and its stable standing. He noted that Capital Intelligence (CI) af-



Sheikh Abdullah Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Chairman.

firmed the Long-term Foreign Currency and the Short-term Foreign Currency ratings of Burgan at "A+" and "A1", respectively. At the same time, CI also confirmed Burgan's Standalone Rating at "bbb+", Core Financial Strength at "bbb+", and Extraordinary Support Level as "High".

As a further testament to investor confidence in Burgan's overall credit profile, the Bank successfully closed the syndication for its global USD 800 million unsecured term loan facility due to strong demand from international and regional partners. "Completing a landmark syndication with commitments exceeding the proposed issue size reflects the trust of international markets in Burgan's brand and, by extension, the Kuwaiti banking system," the Chairman said, highlighting that this transaction will strengthen Burgan's bank sheet, further diversify its funding sources, and safeguard against unforeseen risks and fluctuations.

Burgan Bank remains steadfast in employing the latest innovative banking practices and cutting-edge technologies centered around the ongoing and constant evolution of digital transformation. In this regard, the Bank has been striving to help serve customers better and faster to address their modern needs, working toward providing the ultimate streamlined banking experience. As an illustration, Burgan announced, during Q2'23, that all customers may easily open its AI-Rateb Salary Account and Kanz Account in just less than a minute using the Burgan Bank Mobile Application.

In addition to striving to provide a seamless banking experience, Burgan Bank continues to seek out innovative ways to reward its loyal customers and offer the best banking products, services and benefits that suit their daily lifestyles. Accordingly, the Bank launched a new series of Cashback cards featuring the highest cashback rate in the Kuwaiti market, up to 15%, and a wide range of benefits designed for customer convenience. In the same vein, the Bank revamped its Kanz Draw Account to reward its customers and maximize their chances of winning valuable and life-transforming prizes. The remodeled draw account prizes grant customers an exclusive opportunity to win KD 2,000 in the monthly draw and KD 500,000 in the semi-annual draw, while the annual draw awards one lucky winner with the

**Gulf Bank records KD 35.8 mln in net profit for first half of '23**

Increase of 18.3% compared to 2022

**KUWAIT CITY, July 29: Gulf Bank K.S.C.P. announced its financial results for the first half ending 30 June 2023. The Bank reported a net profit of KD 35.8 million, an increase of KD 5.6 million or 18% compared to 2022 first half net profit of KD 30.3 million.**

The increase in the Bank's net profit was mainly driven by a 9% or KD 6 million increase in net interest income for the first half 2023. As a result, operating income grew by 8% or KD 6.9 million to reach KD 92.3 million and operating profit before provisions grew by 12% to reach KD 49.3 million for the same period.

Subsequently, the Bank's return on assets improved from 0.9% in the first half of 2022 to 1.1% in first half of 2023 and return on equity grew from 9.1% to 10.1%.

For the second quarter of 2023, the Bank reported a net profit of KD 18.5 million, an increase of 22% over the second quarter of 2022. Operating income for the second quarter of 2023 was to KD 45.9 million, an increase of 5% compared to the same period of last year and operating profit was KD 24.3 million, with an increase of 9% over the same period of last year.

As for asset quality, the non-performing loans (NPL) ratio stood at 1% as of 30 June 2023, similar to the prior year. Additionally, the Bank continues to have significant non-performing loans coverage ratio of 546% including total provisions and collaterals.

Total credit provisions as of 30 June 2023 reached KD 307 million whereas IFRS 9 accounting requirements (i.e., ECL or expected credit losses) were KD 185 million. As a result, the Bank has very healthy excess provision level of KD 122 million, which is above what is required by the IFRS9 accounting requirements.

Compared to first half 2022, total assets increased by 1% to KD 6.9 bil-

lion while loans and advances reached KD 5.2 billion. Shareholders' equity increased by 7% to reach KD 723 million and total deposits stood at KD 5.2 billion.

The Bank's regulatory Tier 1 ratio as of 30 June 2023 was 13.9%, above the regulatory minimum of 12% and the Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) was 16.1%, which is above the regulatory minimum of 14%.

Commenting on the first half of 2023 financial results, Gulf Bank's Chairman Mr. Jassim Mustafa Boodai said: "We are proud of the notable achievements and strong financial performance Gulf Bank has accomplished in the first half of 2023. We remain focused on delivering exceptional services, launching innovative products, and prioritizing customer satisfaction to meet their evolving needs."

**Core Banking System Implementation**

One of the key milestones of Gulf Bank during the first half of 2023 was the implementation of phase I of the new core banking system. This milestone represents a major leap forward in the Bank's digital transformation journey. It empowers the Bank to provide enhanced services, improve efficiency, and deliver seamless customer experiences. The new system's deployment showcases Gulf Bank's commitment to better serve its valued customers using cutting-edge technology.

By going live with the core banking system, Gulf Bank has demonstrated its dedication to adaptability, innova-



Gulf Bank's Chairman Mr. Jassim Mustafa Boodai.

tion, and pioneering in an increasingly competitive environment. The phase I of the new system's integration will enable Gulf Bank to streamline operations and optimize processes to further solidifying its position as a trusted financial partner.

Commenting on the launch of phase I of the new core banking system, Mr. Boodai said: "The successful deployment of the first phase of the new core banking system is a testament of our commitment to innovation and digital transformation. We are confident that these strategic milestones will further enhance our ability to deliver unparalleled banking experiences to our customers. With a clear vision and robust strategies in place, Gulf Bank is poised for continued success and sustainable growth."

**AIDanah Grand Prize Increase**

During the first half of the year 2023, Gulf Bank has announced an increase in the annual grand prize value of the AIDanah account, in celebration of AIDanah's 25th anniversary. The annual grand prize has been raised from KD 1.5 million to KD 2 million, becoming the world's largest cash prize linked to a bank account.

**Empowering and Mentoring Youth**

Gulf Bank is happy to complete the second edition of the "Datathon" competition that empowers young talents in the areas of data analytics, data modeling, and visualization. This initiative aims to attract and invest in youth, fostering their growth and providing them with valuable mentorship opportunities. By nurturing young talents, Gulf Bank contributes to the development of the data analytics community and promotes an innovation mindset in the future generations. As a result of this commitment, Gulf Bank was awarded during the eighteenth 2023 Finnovex Awards Summit, Qatar, with The Prestigious Excellence in Data Innovation Award, in recognition of its unparalleled excellence in leveraging data to drive transformative change and create new opportunities in the banking industry.

**Recognition of Creditworthiness**

Gulf Bank's creditworthiness and financial strength is recognized internationally. During the first half of

2023, Capital Intelligence affirmed the Bank's Long-Term Foreign Currency Rating at 'A+' with a Stable Outlook. In addition, Capital Intelligence has affirmed the Bank's KWD50 million Basel III-compliant Tier 2 Subordinated Bonds at "BBB+" with a "Stable" Outlook. Furthermore, Fitch Ratings has assigned Gulf Bank a Long-Term Issuer Default Rating of 'A' with a 'Stable' Outlook, and Moody's Investor Services has assigned the Bank a Long-Term Deposits rating of 'A3' with a 'Stable' Outlook.

These ratings are a testament to Gulf Bank's solid financial performance, experienced management, and ability to navigate the global banking landscape successfully.

**Appreciation**

Mr. Boodai concluded his remarks by stating: "Gulf Bank remains dedicated to its long-term vision of delivering sustainable growth to its various stakeholders. We look forward to the second half of 2023 with great optimism, building upon the successes of the first half and to further elevate our position as a leading financial institution in Kuwait."

He added: "On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank our shareholders for their ongoing trust, and our employees for their commitment and dedication. I would also like to thank the Central Bank of Kuwait for their continuous support. Finally, I want to thank our clients for their loyalty, and reiterate our commitment to offering them the best banking experience."

**Key positive indicators:**

- First Half 2023 net profit of KD 35.8 million, an increase of 18.3% compared to the same period of 2022.
- Return on assets improved in the first half of 2023 to 1.1% and return on equity grew to 10.1%.
- Non-performing loan ratio for the First half 2023 was 1%, with a strong non-performance loan coverage ratio of 546%.
- Capital ratios as of the First half 2023, Tier 1 ratio was 13.9% and Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) was 16.1%.

grand prize of KD 1,500,000.

Concluding his statement, the Chairman thanked Burgan Bank's Board of Directors, Executive Management, shareholders, customers, and

all employees across every department for their invaluable contributions to drive the Bank forward and help it achieves sustainable growth.

It serves to note that the consolidated

financials for Burgan include the results of the Group's operations in Kuwait, as well as its share of results from its subsidiaries, namely: Burgan Bank Turkey, Gulf Bank Algeria, and Tunis International

Bank. Through this regional reach, Burgan Bank has one of the largest regional branch networks across Kuwait, Turkey, Algeria, Tunisia and a representative office in the United Arab Emirates.



Officials and the invited guests pose for a group photo.



South African fruits on display.



Display of South African cultural dance.

**'LuLu Proudly South Africa 2023' fest a resounding success**

LuLu Hypermarket's festival of South African products titled, 'LuLu Proudly South Africa 2023', was a major success, drawing thousands of visitors to all outlets of the hypermarket in Kuwait.

The event, which is being held from 27 July to 1 August, was in-

augurated by the South African Ambassador, H.E. Manelisi Genge, along with LuLu Hypermarket's top management in Kuwait, at the Al-Qurain outlet on 27 July. The festival of South African products offered amazing discounts and special offers on all branded prod-

ucts from South Africa.

Adding to the excitement of the six-day festival were special performances by South African music bands, and traditional dances by South Africa artists, as well as large displays of South African foods and goods. In addition to the colorful

decor of South African flags and festoons, all outlets of the hypermarket featured huge cutouts and images of iconic places and attractions of the Rainbow Nation.

Other highlights of the celebration included South African street food stalls and free samplings

of special foods of South Africa. Among the major South African brands featured at the fest were Blue Diamonds, Heartland, Bokomo, Bakers, Wellingtons, Ceres, The Harvest Table, and Robinsons.

The event's success opened the

door for more exciting celebrations in the coming years. It was a welcoming opportunity for customers to experience the vibrant culture of South Africa and to sample some of the delicious food that the region has to offer.



Cutting of the inaugural ribbon.



Branded products from South Africa.



Some of the items.

**Austria discovers largest gas field in 40 years**

The Austrian gas conglomerate OMV announced on Friday discovery of the largest gas field in the country since 40 years ago. OMV said in a statement the Wittau Tief-2a exploration well would be confirmed a new natural gas discovery. The OMV operated well, located in Lower Austria, was drilled at a final depth of 5,000 meters after five months of operations. "The positive result of our exploration is an exciting news for OMV

and its customers. As we continue to work on our strategy to diversify our supply sources of natural gas, this new find marks a major contribution to the natural gas supply of our customers especially in Austria, with an expected increase of our local production," said Alfred Stern, Chairman of the OMV Executive Board and CEO. A preliminary evaluation indicates potential recoverable resources of approximately 48 TWh

(28 million barrels of oil equivalent). After full development of the discovery, OMV expects its natural gas production in Austria to increase by 50 percent. OMV is currently considering different options to further appraise the field, as well as a fast-track development in conjunction with the OMV-operated natural gas facility in Aderklaa, situated 10 km from the new discovery. (KUNA)

**Westinghouse awarded trio of grants from UK**

Westinghouse Electric Company announced today that the U.K. Government's Nuclear Fuel Fund has awarded three grants to upgrade and expand the Springfields Fuel Fabrication Facility to support the United Kingdom's next-generation nuclear reactors. The Westinghouse Springfields Fuel Fabrication Facility in the U.K. has manufactured world-class nuclear fuel and related products and services for nearly 75 years.

The three awards totalling £10.5 million will future-proof the U.K. nuclear fuel industry by developing more variants of light water reactor fuels, including for the AP1000® reactor and the AP300™ small modular reactor. The funding also supports potential production of High Enriched Low Assay Uranium-based (HALEU) Advanced Nuclear Fuels for the U.K.'s new Generation III and IV fission reactors. Additionally, Westinghouse

will partner with Terrestrial Energy and the National Nuclear Laboratory to pilot supply of enriched Uranium Tetrafluoride (UF4) and molten salt fuel for use in Terrestrial's Integral Molten Salt Reactor. "This investment from the Nuclear Fuel Fund is a vote of confidence in the capabilities of our Springfields manufacturing site," said Tarik Choho, Westinghouse President of Nuclear Fuel. (Business Wire)

**The Conversation**

**Why 'fusion ignition' is being hailed as a major breakthrough in fusion – a N-physicist explains**

By Carolyn Kuranz  
University of Michigan

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

American scientists have announced what they have called a major breakthrough in a long-elusive goal of creating energy from nuclear fusion. The U.S. Department of Energy said on Dec. 13, 2022, that for the first time – and after several decades of trying – scientists have managed to get more energy out of the process than they had to put in. But just how significant is the development? And how far off is the long-sought dream of fusion providing abundant, clean energy? As an associate professor of nuclear engineering at the University of Michigan who has worked at the facility that just broke the fusion record, I can explain this new result. Fusion is a nuclear reaction that combines two atoms to create one or more new atoms with slightly less total mass. The difference in mass is released as energy, as described by Einstein's famous equation,  $E = mc^2$ , where energy equals mass times the speed of light squared. Since the speed of light is enormous, converting just a tiny amount of mass into energy – like what happens in fusion – produces a similarly enormous amount of energy. Researchers at the U.S. Government's National Ignition Facility in California have demonstrated, for the first time, what is known as "fusion ignition." Ignition is when a fusion reaction produces more energy than is being put into the reaction from an outside source and becomes self-sustaining. The technique used at the National Ignition Facility involved shooting 192 lasers at a 0.04 inch (1 mm) pellet of fuel made of deuterium and tritium – two versions of the element hydrogen with extra neutrons – placed in a gold canister. When the lasers hit the canister, they produce X-rays that heat and compress the fuel pellet to about 20 times the density of lead and to more than 5 million

degrees Fahrenheit (3 million Celsius) – about 100 times hotter than the surface of the Sun. If you can maintain these conditions for a long enough time, the fuel will fuse and release energy. The fuel and canister get vaporized within a few billionths of a second during the experiment. Researchers then hope their equipment survived the heat and accurately measured the energy released by the fusion reaction. To assess the success of a fusion experiment, physicists look at the ratio between the energy released from the process of fusion and the amount of energy within the lasers. This ratio is called gain. Anything above a gain of 1 means that the fusion process released more energy than the lasers delivered. On Dec. 5, 2022, the National Ignition Facility shot a pellet of fuel with 2 million joules of laser energy – about the amount of power it takes to run a hair dryer for 15 minutes – all contained within a few billionths of a second. This triggered a fusion reaction that released 3 million joules. That is a gain of about 1.5, smashing the previous record of a gain of 0.7 achieved by the facility in August 2021. Fusion energy has been the "holy grail" of energy production for nearly half a century. While a gain of 1.5 is, I believe, a truly historic scientific breakthrough, there is still a long way to go before fusion is a viable energy source. While the laser energy of 2 million joules was less than the fusion yield of 3 million joules, it took the facility nearly 300 million joules to produce the lasers used in this experiment. This result has shown that fusion ignition is possible, but it will take a lot of work to improve the efficiency to the point where fusion can provide a net positive energy return when taking into consideration the entire end-to-end system, not just a single interaction between the lasers and the fuel. There are a number of pieces of the fusion puzzle that scientists have been

steadily improving for decades to produce this result, and further work can make this process more efficient. First, lasers were only invented in 1960. When the U.S. government completed construction of the National Ignition Facility in 2009, it was the most powerful laser facility in the world, able to deliver 1 million joules of energy to a target. The 2 million joules it produces today is 50 times more energetic than the next most powerful laser on Earth. More powerful lasers and less energy-intensive ways to produce those powerful lasers could greatly improve the overall efficiency of the system. Fusion conditions are very challenging to sustain, and any small imperfection in the capsule or fuel can increase the energy requirement and decrease efficiency. Scientists have made a lot of progress to more efficiently transfer energy from the laser to the canister and the X-ray radiation from the canister to the fuel capsule, but currently only about 10% to 30% of the total laser energy is transferred to the canister and to the fuel. Finally, while one part of the fuel, deuterium, is naturally abundant in sea water, tritium is much rarer. Fusion itself actually produces tritium, so researchers are hoping to develop ways of harvesting this tritium directly. In the meantime, there are other methods available to produce the needed fuel. These and other scientific, technological and engineering hurdles will need to be overcome before fusion will produce electricity for your home. Work will also need to be done to bring the cost of a fusion power plant well down from the US\$3.5 billion of the National Ignition Facility. These steps will require significant investment from both the federal government and private industry. It's worth noting that there is a global race around fusion, with many other labs around the world pursuing different techniques. But with the new result from the National Ignition Facility, the world has, for the first time, seen evidence that the dream of fusion is achievable. (AP)

**COP28 president urges G20 to take a leadership role on climate action**

'Doubling adaptation finance by 2025 is a critical first step'

**CHENNAI, India, July 29, (PR Newswire):** With only 124 days left before COP28 UAE, COP President-Designate Dr. Sultan Al Jaber today urged G20 nations to take a leadership role on climate action, and said that their decisions will have an enormous influence on the outcomes for all countries.

In a speech at the G20 Climate Sustainability Ministerial Meeting in Chennai, Dr. Al Jaber expressed his concern that his call at last week's meeting in Goa to triple renewable energy capacity by 2030 has "yet to find expression in G20 outcomes," despite its importance to the goal of keeping 1.5C within reach.

"As a group, the G20 represents 85 per cent of the world's GDP and 80 per cent of the world's emissions. What you decide will have a huge influence on outcomes for everyone, everywhere," Dr. Al Jaber told ministers. "There is still time for the G20 to show leadership, and I am calling on all of you to work with your leaders to drive global climate action in this critical decade."

"Yesterday we issued a joint statement with UNFCCC Executive Secretary Simon Stiell, calling on the G20 to show leadership in closing the gaps across all of the pillars of the Paris Agreement and help the world get on track to keep 1.5C within reach." Dr. Al Jaber also called on all parties to show solidarity and demonstrate commitment to the UN Secretary General's Climate Solidarity Pact and Acceleration Agenda.

"I made the case for all parties to get behind a rapid scale up of renewable energy, while we comprehensively decarbonize the current energy system and build towards a system free of all unabated fossil fuels," added Dr. Al Jaber.

The President-Designate also highlighted the importance of making progress on adaptation, with parties having signed up to the Global Goal on Adaptation under the Paris Agreement.

"We all signed up to this. We are all responsible for its success," he said. "Yet today, the science and our senses are telling us that the world is more vulnerable, less resilient and lacks the critical capacity to deal with mounting climate impacts."

Dr. Al Jaber added: "Right now, many of the indicators are going in the wrong direction. Temperature records continue to be broken, with this month officially recorded as the hottest in history. We are losing biodiversity. Agricultural land is being degraded. And food insecurity is increasing."



The 'Safer' tanker is seen on Monday, June 12, 2023, off the coast of Yemen. A senior United Nations official says a salvage team is set to begin siphoning oil out of the decaying tanker moored off the coast of Yemen. (AP)

**UN says operation to siphon oil out of a rusting tanker moored off Yemen begins**

CAIRO, July 29, (AP): An international team began siphoning oil out of a decrepit oil tanker off the coast of Yemen on Tuesday, the United Nations chief said, a crucial step in a complex salvage operation aiming to prevent a potential environmental disaster.

For years, many organizations have warned that the neglected vessel, known as SOF Safer, may cause a major oil spill or even explode.

"The ship-to-ship transfer of oil which has started today is the critical next step in avoiding an environmental and humanitarian catastrophe on a colossal scale," U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a statement.

More than 1.1 million barrels of oil stored in the rusting tanker were being moved to another vessel the U.N. pur-

chased, he said. The oil transfer came after months of on-site preparatory work and is scheduled to be completed in less than three weeks, the U.N. said.

The Safer tanker was built in the 1970s and sold to the Yemeni government in the 1980s to store up to 3 million barrels of export oil pumped from fields in Marib, a province in eastern Yemen. The ship is 360 meters (1,181 feet) long with 34 storage tanks.

It is moored 6 kilometers (3.7 miles) from Yemen's western Red Sea ports of Hodeida and Ras Issa, a strategic area controlled by the Iranian-backed Houthis rebels who are at war with the internationally recognized government.

The vessel has not been maintained for eight years and its structural integ-

egrity is compromised, making it at risk of breaking up or exploding. Seawater has entered the engine compartment, causing damage to the pipes and increasing the risk of sinking, according to internal documents obtained by The Associated Press in June 2020.

For years, the U.N. and governments of other countries as well as environmental groups have warned that if an oil spill - or explosion - occurs, it could disrupt global commercial shipping through the vital Bab el-Mandeb and Suez Canal routes, causing untold damage to the global economy.

The tanker carries four times as much oil as was spilled in the 1989 Exxon Valdez disaster off Alaska, one of the world's worst ecological catastrophes, according to the U.N.

Organization. The President-Designate invited all G20 nations to partner on this to ensure the resilience of global health systems.

The President-Designate reiterated the need to "move the needle on adaptation finance" which is only around 10 percent of that allocated for mitigation.

"Doubling adaptation finance by 2025 is a critical first step but we need to look at directing a solid proportion of all climate finance toward adaptation responses," he said. "The more that is invested in adaptation, the greater our collective resilience to climate impacts will be."

**Study carried out by HEC**

**Groundbreaking ABS study explores potential of commercial N-propulsion**

HOUSTON, July 29, (Business Wire): The transformational impact of nuclear propulsion on the design, operation and emissions of a 14k TEU container vessel and a 157k DWT Suezmax tanker have been modeled by ABS and Herbert Engineering Corp. (HEC) in a groundbreaking study.

ABS commissioned HEC to carry out the study to explore the potential of advanced modern reactor technology for commercial marine propulsion. The study is designed to help industry better understand the feasibility and safety implications of nuclear propulsion and to support future development projects.

The study, which involved input from leading nuclear reactor developers, modeled the impact of two, lead-cooled, 30MW fast reactors on the container carrier, finding it would likely increase cargo capacity and operational speed, while eliminating the need for refueling during its entire 25-year lifespan. On the Suezmax vessel, the study found the addition of four, 5MW, heat-pipe microreactors, while decreasing cargo capacity, would raise operational speeds and only require refueling once during its 25-year life. Both concept vessels would emit zero CO<sub>2</sub>.

"Our findings from this latest cutting-edge research underscore why the industry cannot afford to ignore the vast potential offered by nuclear propulsion both in terms of emissions reduction and operational efficiency. A net-zero world is more easily realized through nuclear propulsion, and we are putting in place the foundations for that future today. Turning this into a practical reality will require significant public sector support and ABS is well placed to bring governments and industry together," said Christopher J. Wiernicki, ABS Chairman and CEO. "Advanced or small modular reactors

address many of the issues traditionally associated with nuclear for commercial maritime use, with enhanced safety and efficiency, reduced cost and waste and proliferation prevention. Nevertheless, many questions need to be answered and it is critical that industry evaluate these technologies with a laser focus on safety."

"HEC is pleased to be able to support ABS and explore the practical application of nuclear power on board. This study is helping us to understand in detail both the potential of modern reactor technology and how this will affect the design and operation of future vessels," said Robert Tagg, Senior Principal Naval Architect at HEC.

ABS is playing a pioneering role in supporting the development of nuclear propulsion for commercial vessels. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has awarded ABS a contract to research barriers to the adoption of advanced nuclear propulsion on commercial vessels. The DOE has also contracted ABS to support research into thermal-electric integration of a nuclear propulsion system on a commercial vessel being carried out by the University of Texas.

ABS, a leading global provider of classification and technical advisory services to the marine and offshore industries, is committed to setting standards for safety and excellence in design and construction. Focused on safe and practical application of advanced technologies and digital solutions, ABS works with industry and clients to develop accurate and cost-effective compliance, optimized performance and operational efficiency for marine and offshore assets.

HEC provides marine consulting, ship design, and software development services to shipowners, operators, shipyards, and government agencies.

**US mortgage delinquency rate drops to an all-time low in May**

IRVINE, Calif., July 29, (BUSINESS WIRE): CoreLogic®, a leading global property information, analytics and data-enabled solutions provider has released its monthly Loan Performance Insights Report for May 2023.

For the month of May, 2.6% of all mortgages in the U.S. were in some stage of delinquency (30 days or more past due, including those in foreclosure), representing a 0.1 percentage point decrease compared with 2.7% in May 2022 and a 0.2 percentage point decrease compared with 2.8% in April 2023.

To gain a complete view of the mortgage market and loan performance health, CoreLogic examines all stages of delinquency. In May 2023, the U.S. delinquency and transition rates and their year-over-year changes, were as follows:

The U.S. overall mortgage delinquency rate again fell to a historic low in May, returning to the level seen in March of this year, while the near-all-time low foreclosure rate has not changed since spring 2022. However, 14 states and nearly 170 metropolitan areas saw overall delinquencies increase year over year in May, similar to April data. Still, despite this pattern

and gradually declining U.S. home price gains over the past year, overall mortgage performance remains quite healthy, boosted by steady employment numbers.

"May's overall mortgage delinquency rate matched the all-time low, and serious delinquencies followed suit," said Molly Boesel, principal economist at CoreLogic. "Furthermore, the rate of mortgages that were six months or more past due, a measure that ballooned in 2021, has receded to a level last observed in March 2020."

"A very strong job market continues to help borrowers pay their mortgages on time," Boesel continued. "The U.S. economy has added nearly 25 million jobs since April 2020 and about 4 million in the last year. As a result, the unemployment rate has ranged from 3.4% to 3.7% for the past 16 months. While the job market may slightly weaken over the next year, we project that mortgage performance will remain healthy."

The data in The CoreLogic LPI report represents foreclosure and delinquency activity reported through May 2023. The data in this report accounts for only first liens against a property and does not include secondary liens.

The Conversation

‘Blindly eliminating biases can have unintended consequences’

# Eliminating bias in AI may be impossible – tame it instead

By Emilio Ferrara  
University of Southern California

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

When I asked ChatGPT for a joke about Sicilians the other day, it implied that Sicilians are stinky.

ChatGPT can sometimes produce stereotypical or offensive outputs. As somebody born and raised in Sicily, I reacted to ChatGPT’s joke with disgust. But at the same time, my computer scientist brain began spinning around a seemingly simple question: Should ChatGPT and other artificial intelligence systems be allowed to be biased?

You might say “Of course not!” And that would be a reasonable response. But there are some researchers, like me, who argue the opposite: AI systems like ChatGPT should indeed be biased – but not in the way you might think.

Removing bias from AI is a laudable goal, but blindly eliminating biases can have unintended consequences. Instead, bias in AI can be controlled to achieve a higher goal: fairness.

As AI is increasingly integrated into everyday technology, many people agree that addressing bias in AI is an important issue. But what does “AI bias” actually mean?

Computer scientists say an AI model is biased if it unexpectedly produces skewed results. These results could exhibit prejudice against individuals or groups, or otherwise not be in line with positive human values like fairness and truth. Even small divergences from expected behavior can have a “butterfly effect,” in which seemingly minor biases can be amplified by generative AI and have far-reaching consequences.

Bias in generative AI systems can come from a variety of sources. Problematic training data can associate certain occupations with specific genders or perpetuate racial biases. Learning algorithms themselves can be biased and then amplify

existing biases in the data.

But systems could also be biased by design. For example, a company might design its generative AI system to prioritize formal over creative writing, or to specifically serve government industries, thus inadvertently reinforcing existing biases and excluding different views. Other societal factors, like a lack of regulations or misaligned financial incentives, can also lead to AI biases.

It’s not clear whether bias can – or even should – be entirely eliminated from AI systems.

Imagine you’re an AI engineer and you notice your model produces a stereotypical response, like Sicilians being “stinky.” You might think that the solution is to remove some bad examples in the training data, maybe jokes about the smell of Sicilian food. Recent research has identified how to perform this kind of “AI neurosurgery” to deemphasize associations between certain concepts.

Effects

But these well-intentioned changes can have unpredictable, and possibly negative, effects. Even small variations in the training data or in an AI model configuration can lead to significantly different system outcomes, and these changes are impossible to predict in advance. You don’t know what other associations your AI system has learned as a consequence of “unlearning” the bias you just addressed.

Other attempts at bias mitigation run similar risks. An AI system that is trained to completely avoid certain sensitive topics could produce incomplete or misleading responses. Misguided regulations can worsen, rather than improve, issues of AI bias and safety. Bad actors could evade safeguards to elicit malicious AI behaviors – making phishing scams more convincing or using deepfakes to manipulate elections.

With these challenges in mind, researchers are working to improve data sampling techniques and algorithmic fairness, especially in settings where certain sen-

sitive data is not available. Some companies, like OpenAI, have opted to have human workers annotate the data.

On the one hand, these strategies can help the model better align with human values. However, by implementing any of these approaches, developers also run the risk of introducing new cultural, ideological or political biases.

There’s a trade-off between reducing bias and making sure that the AI system is still useful and accurate. Some researchers, including me, think that generative AI systems should be allowed to be biased – but in a carefully controlled way.

For example, my collaborators and I developed techniques that let users specify what level of bias an AI system should tolerate. This model can detect toxicity in written text by accounting for in-group or cultural linguistic norms. While traditional approaches can inaccurately flag some posts or comments written in African-American English as offensive and by LGBTQ+ communities as toxic, this “controllable” AI model provides a much fairer classification.

Controllable – and safe – generative AI is important to ensure that AI models produce outputs that align with human values, while still allowing for nuance and flexibility.

Even if researchers could achieve bias-free generative AI, that would be just one step toward the broader goal of fairness. The pursuit of fairness in generative AI requires a holistic approach – not only better data processing, annotation and debiasing algorithms, but also human collaboration among developers, users and affected communities.

As AI technology continues to proliferate, it’s important to remember that bias removal is not a one-time fix. Rather, it’s an ongoing process that demands constant monitoring, refinement and adaptation. Although developers might be unable to easily anticipate or contain the butterfly effect, they can continue to be vigilant and thoughtful in their approach to AI bias. (AP)

The Conversation

X design clumsy

# Dunkin’ Donuts, Lego rebrands succeeded - but X missed mark

By Matthew Pittman  
University of Tennessee

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

Twitter has swapped the fluffy bird that used to symbolize the social media platform for a spindly black X. Ditching the company’s well-known logo and changing its name to a letter often associated with danger, death and the unknown is only the latest user-aggravating step CEO Elon Musk has taken since he bought Twitter in October 2022 for US\$44 billion.

But it’s the most visually jarring one. The reaction has mainly been a mix of ambivalence, ridicule and scorn. For the most part, longtime Twitter users are unhappy at what they perceived as another unnecessary change that’s eroding their enthusiasm for the social media platform. It’s hard to find anybody praising the change so far, except perhaps some of Elon Musk’s most devoted fans. Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey signaled that he was finding the uproar overblown.

I’m paying close attention to this corporate pivot because I’m a scholar of design who researches social media and brand campaigns. Logos and brand names change all the time and rarely cause this much commotion. But because these changes go deeper than most, I believe the risks of damage to the company are greater.

Smitten

X might strike you as a weird brand name, and the change may seem to have happened out of the blue, but Musk has long been smitten with the letter.

In 2000, the founders of PayPal ousted him as CEO for trying to change its name to “X.” His Tesla models are famously named S, 3, X and Y – which displayed together basically spell out the word “SEXY,” and one of his many children is named X on his birth certificate.

I would describe the new logo, submitted by a Twitter user, as a white-on-black, sans-serif X consisting of two strokes. It’s minimal and modern – and a stark departure from Twitter’s iconic blue-and-white bird. That shade of blue makes you feel calm and serene; black conveys sophistication and mystery.

And yet even people who know nothing about design are poking fun at the logo’s simplicity and unprofessional execution. To me, the logo looks suitable for a metaverse strip club or a dating app for robots.

Oddball branding is hardly unusual for a big tech company.

When Facebook rebranded itself as Meta in 2021, it was part of a comprehensive, strategic and long-term plan. The transformation signified the company’s aspiration to shift from a social media platform to an enterprise focused on the metaverse.

While the goal of a vibrant metaverse remains more theoretical than imminent, the rebranding still gave Meta some momentum as it now seeks to shift its focus to artificial intelligence.

Meta’s rebranding highlights the importance of staying relevant and embracing innovation. The company discerned the changing landscape and demonstrated a willingness to adapt in response to shifting consumer needs and preferences. When it realized the metaverse wasn’t materializing, the company focused elsewhere.

Perhaps that openness to trying new things explains why the rollout of Threads, Meta’s new competitor for the social media platform formerly known as Twitter, is apparently off to a strong start.

When Dunkin’ Donuts trimmed its name to Dunkin’ in 2018, the reception was mostly positive. Its customers

seemed to get that the company wanted to move away from being closely associated with donuts – a high-calorie pastry with little nutritional value – and toward becoming a “beverage-led, on-the-go brand.”

That rebrand succeeded, and the company has also stuck with the slogan it adopted a dozen years earlier: “America runs on Dunkin’.”

Lego had another rebranding effort that business school students learn about as a model.

Lego was profitable, popular and beloved for the entire 20th century, but around 2003 its sales began to wane. Presumably, kids had too many other toys and digital devices to play with and simply didn’t have the time or patience to assemble small, colorful, plastic blocks anymore.

Undeterred, Lego conducted extensive market, ethnographic and psychological research to better understand how people in general, and children in particular, play with its wares. The company’s management realized that Lego products can be tied to just about anything.

Lego blocks are used both in original ways – kids make their own creations – and derivative ways, whether it’s recreating a pirate ship or a dinosaur seen in a beloved movie.

So the company began to partner with “Star Wars,” Nintendo, “Jurassic Park” and other brands to market special Lego sets. It also released a movie in 2014 that grossed nearly \$500 million – boosting Lego sales and profits.

Many corporate rebrands either don’t work or don’t do much to help their companies.

In 2000, BP changed its branding from British Petroleum to Beyond Petroleum.

Despite efforts to reposition itself as an environmentally responsible company, its actions revealed a contradictory truth. While BP reportedly invested over \$100 million in the rebranding effort, it continued to spend billions more on oil exploration than renewable energy initiatives. BP abandoned the campaign a few years after its massive 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Strong

After merging with US Airways in 2013, American Airlines rebranded away from its iconic 1968 logo, which had blue and red letters and an eagle between them symbolizing American power and ingenuity, to a sleek red-and-blue stripe with an abstract eagle beak separating the company’s colors.

The company called the new logo a “flight symbol.” Some design experts dubbed it a travesty.

Despite the contention, the company retained the new look.

I doubt the X rebrand will succeed – and not just because I dislike the new name and logo.

There are some challenging legal issues with naming a major company a letter of the alphabet. The letter X’s use as a brand is already banned in certain countries because of its prevalence in pornography branding.

And the rollout has been messy on the company’s own website. Musk reportedly swiped the @x handle from its original user without offering any compensation.

What’s more, many users had already left the platform because of technical glitches and increased hate speech; the switch to X could make them less likely to come back and won’t make others more eager to stick around.

In Musk’s quest to create what he says will become an app that “does everything,” I believe that his X rebrand took Twitter one more step toward being good for hardly anything. (AP)

Tech never good or bad: Salesforce CEO

# ‘AI is the most important tech wave in any lifetime’

Sage uses human-to-AI controller

## Sysdig unveils generative AI to boost cloud security

SAN FRANCISCO, July 29, (AP): Salesforce founder and CEO Marc Benioff has become something of a vanishing breed during the nearly quarter century he has been running the company that pioneered the concept of selling software as an online subscription. While Benioff remains in charge at Salesforce, other billionaire founder/CEOs such as Amazon’s Jeff Bezos, Google’s Larry Page and Netflix’s Reed Hastings have all stepped away from groundbreaking companies born during the 1990s.

Benioff, 58, isn’t ready to leave Salesforce yet, even though he has amassed an \$8 billion fortune and just went through a challenging stretch that might have caused many CEOs to head for the exit. In January, Benioff decided to lay off 8,000 Salesforce employees after overseeing a pandemic-driven expansion that included a nearly \$28 billion acquisition of the popular workplace tool Slack and then grappled with an investor backlash triggered by a nearly 50% drop in the company’s stock price last year. The shares have recovered most of their losses so far this year on the strength of a revived revenue growth.

The Associated Press recently sat down with Benioff for an interview that has been lightly edited for clarity.

**Question:** How does the landscape look to you as the pandemic fades into the rearview mirror?

**Answer:** When I look back at 2019, we had really gone through three huge waves of technology: cloud computing, mobile and social. And now we are going into the fourth wave, which is probably the most important one in AI (artificial intelligence), which is not just the most important technology of our lifetime, but probably the most important in any lifetime. It’s going to be a new world of technology that’s as exciting as all the other worlds put together.

**Q:** Is this on the scale of the development of nuclear bombs back in World War II?

**A:** Technologies are never good or bad, it’s what we do with them that matters. Nobody wants a Hiroshima moment to understand how dangerous AI is. We want to be able to kind of get our heads around the tremendous consequences of the technology that we are working with. And that’s going to require a multi-stakeholder approach – companies, governments, non-governmental organizations and



Benioff

SAN FRANCISCO, July 29: Sysdig, the leader in cloud security powered by runtime insights, has announced Sysdig Sage, a generative AI assistant built on a unique AI architecture specifically designed for cloud security. Sysdig Sage goes beyond typical AI chatbots to employ multistep reasoning and multidomain correlation to quickly discover, prioritize, and remediate risks specific to the cloud. It also leverages the power of Sysdig runtime insights to reveal hidden connections between risks and security events that would otherwise go undetected.

The Sysdig generative AI architecture transcends standard AI chatbots that are designed to answer a specific question using a single large language model (LLM) and stateless analysis. Instead, Sysdig Sage uses a unique human-to-AI controller that mediates user interactions with LLMs to provide more advanced, tailored recommendations. This unique architecture:

- Deploys multistep reasoning: Sysdig Sage uses multistep reasoning, an iterative process that delivers relevant context to uncover hidden connections, prioritize risks, and accelerate investigations. For example, it can explore risk factors along multiple attack paths including trails of seemingly low-risk events that, in aggregate, pose a significant risk.
- Performs multidomain correlation: Sysdig Sage aggregates and analyzes telemetry from multiple domains including vulnerabilities, compliance, permissions, and runtime. Instead of

others to put together the guidelines for this technology.

**Q:** Have you been surprised or alarmed by how quickly things seem to be advancing since the release of the ChatGPT bot late last year?

**A:** We are moving from the generative ChatGPT phase, which is phase one, into a stage where we are about to see agents that are quite alive and aware and able to take these kinds of massive actions. These are called multimodal agents, that is they can move from text to speech to video. And then we are going to move into something that is maybe more multisensory, where these agents are going to be more aware of us and we are going to be more aware of them.

None of us are really ready for this

wasting time context switching between multiple tools or relying on the post-processing of logs, users get relevant data and visualizations in a single place so that they can take timely and informed action.

- Tailors detection using open source Falco: The collective knowledge of the Falco open source community is integrated into Sysdig Sage right out of the box. Sysdig Sage can optimize Falco detection rules to the user’s environment so that they can detect threats and attacks earlier. Originally created by Sysdig, Falco is the open source solution for cloud threat detection, with more than 65 million downloads.

- Takes action: Sysdig Sage takes action after discerning risks and priorities based on the relevant context from the full line of investigation and questioning. Users can then grant approval to execute recommended actions, saving valuable time when it matters the most – during the attack.

“Generative AI has the power to improve security, but it must be harnessed in a way that addresses the unique challenges of the cloud,” said Loris DiGianni, Founder and CTO of Sysdig. “With Sysdig Sage, we are adding the power of generative AI to our cloud security platform to help practitioners by empowering them with cloud security expertise, uncovering hidden security connections that are otherwise not obvious, and ultimately helping them work smarter and respond faster.”

because none of us have had this experience before. We are on the threshold of a dramatic change in the way we work with computers. We are going to work side by side with them. And, in many cases, they are going to augment or extend what we have been doing. They are going to be taking actions without our knowledge.

**Q:** Salesforce is one of many tech companies that now allow employees to work remotely at least a few days a week. How has the pandemic changed the nature of work?

**A:** We are all using technology to find more freedom in our lives. Things are back to normal, but people do go to the office less. And that is not going to change. We are never going back to the way it was.

‘Play-to-earn’ using blockchain technology

# Brilliantcrypto generates economic value in metaverse with gemstones

TOKYO, July 29: The wholly owned subsidiary of COLOPL, Inc. (HQ: Minato City Tokyo; CEO: Takashi Miyamoto), Brilliantcrypto, Inc. (HQ: Minato City Tokyo; CEO: Naruatsu Baba), announced its new blockchain game “Brilliantcrypto,” which introduces the new “Proof of Gaming” concept at the global Web3 conference “WebX” (held on 25/07/2023).

Brilliantcrypto is a blockchain game where players around the world become miners and excavate the mines with the aim of finding gemstones and tokens. Users buy pickaxes in the in-game marketplace, and use items like the “detector” while carrying out mining. By mining,

players can obtain tokens and gemstones, and there will be the possibility



New blockchain game ‘Brilliantcrypto’

to bring the gemstones, which can turn into NFTs, into many different

metaverse worlds. There will also be the possibility to buy and sell the gemstones, as well as use them.

Simply put, “Proof of Gaming” is the game model version of “Proof of Work,” which is Bitcoin’s consensus algorithm.

In Bitcoin, mining is carried out in the form of a tremendous amount of hash calculations, which in turn guarantees value on the blockchain. Similarly, in Brilliantcrypto, mining will be carried out in the form of people throughout the world playing the game, which will guarantee the value of gemstones in the digital world.

The metaverse is currently being developed, and we believe that one

reason that could be given for it not fully catching on yet is that there is currently no “economic value.” If the value of digital world gemstones is guaranteed by “Proof of Gaming,” it becomes possible to use them not only in-game, but also in many different metaverse worlds, and so becomes possible to exchange them and use them.

Therefore, the more exchanges begin to take place, the more the demand for gemstones with value will grow, and the more people from around the world will gather to play the game. We believe that through this cycle, “Proof of Gaming” will be activated further and as a result, true economic value will be generated in

the metaverse.

In recent years, “play-to-earn,” which made it possible to earn money while playing games using a combination of blockchain technology and cryptocurrency, has been gathering global attention.

On the other hand, there has existed a sustainability issue with play-to-earn, as the system only allows individual, early adopters to actually make a profit. Through guaranteeing the value of digital world gemstones with Brilliantcrypto’s “Proof of Gaming” model, societal value will be generated and brought out into the world. That is why we believe sustainable play-to-earn can finally be made a reality.

'Thought-driven therapy is a game-changer'

# AI implant restores feeling, movement in paralysis patient

MANHASSET, N.Y., July 29: In a first-of-its-kind clinical trial, bioelectronic medicine researchers, engineers and surgeons at Northwell Health's The Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research have successfully implanted microchips into the brain of a man living with paralysis, and have developed artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms to re-link his brain to his body and spinal cord. This double neural bypass forms an electronic bridge that allows information to flow once again between the man's paralyzed body and brain to restore movement and sensations in his hand with lasting gains in his arm and wrist outside of the laboratory. The research team unveiled the trial participant's groundbreaking progress four months after a 15-hour open-brain surgery that took place on March 9 at North Shore University Hospital (NSUH).

and rehabilitation at Northwell Health, spent months mapping Mr. Thomas' brain using functional MRIs to help pinpoint the areas responsible for both arm movement and for the sensation of touch in his hand. Armed with that information, surgeons performed a grueling 15-hour surgery at NSUH, during parts of which the study participant was awake and giving surgeons real-time feedback. As they probed portions of the surface of his brain, Mr. Thomas would tell them what sensations he was feeling in his hands.

"Because we had Keith's images, and he was talking to us during parts of his surgery, we knew exactly where to place the brain implants," said Ashesh Mehta, MD, PhD, professor at the Feinstein Institutes' Institute of Bioelectronic Medicine, director Northwell's Laboratory for Human Brain Mapping and the surgeon who performed the brain implant. "We inserted two chips in the area responsible for movement and three more in the part of the brain responsible for touch and feeling in the fingers."

## Connects

Back in the lab, through two ports protruding from Mr. Thomas' head, he connects to a computer that uses AI to read, interpret and translate his thoughts into action, known as thought-driven therapy and the foundation of the double neural bypass approach.

The bypass starts with Mr. Thomas' intentions (ie. he thinks about squeezing his hand), which sends electrical signals from his brain implant to a computer. The computer then sends signals to highly flexible, non-invasive electrode patches that are placed over his spine and hand muscles located in his forearm to stimulate and promote function and recovery. Tiny sensors at his fingertips and palm send touch and pressure information back to the sensory area of his brain to restore sensation. This two-arm electronic bridge forms the novel double neural bypass aimed at restoring both movement and the sense of touch. In the lab, Mr. Thomas can now move his arms at will and feel his sister's touch as she holds his hand in support. This is the first time he has felt anything in the three years since his accident.

Remarkably, researchers say Mr. Thomas is already starting to see some natural recovery from his injuries thanks to this new approach, which could reverse some of the damage for good. His arm strength has more than doubled since enrolling in the study and he is beginning to experience new sensations in his forearm and wrist, even when the system is off.

Previous research by Prof. Bouton, and later, by other groups, used a single neural bypass to help people move paralyzed limbs again with their thoughts. In those cases, doctors implanted one or more microchips in the brain that bypassed the spinal cord injury altogether and used stimulators to activate target muscles. However, that approach only worked while participants were hooked up to computers, often only available in laboratories, and did not restore movement and feeling in the actual limb while promoting plasticity for long-lasting natural recovery.

"This is the first time the brain, body and spinal cord have been linked together electronically in a paralyzed human to restore lasting movement and sensation," said Chad Bouton, professor in the Institute of Bioelectronic Medicine at the Feinstein Institutes, vice president of advanced engineering at Northwell Health, developer of the technology and principal investigator of the clinical trial. "When the study participant thinks about moving his arm or hand, we 'supercharge' his spinal cord and stimulate his brain and muscles to help rebuild connections, provide sensory feedback, and promote recovery. This type of thought-driven therapy is a game-changer. Our goal is to use this technology one day to give people living with paralysis the ability to live fuller, more independent lives."

## Injury

Paralyzed from the chest down, Keith Thomas, 45, of Massapequa, NY, is the first human to use the technology. During the height of the pandemic, on July 18, 2020, a diving accident caused Mr. Thomas to suffer injury at the C4 and C5 level of the vertebrae in his spine, leaving him unable to move and feel from the chest down. Alone and isolated in the hospital for more than six months, Mr. Thomas found new hope by participating in Prof. Bouton's clinical trial and is grateful to be a part of something so historic and much larger than himself.

"There was a time that I didn't know if I was even going to live, or if I wanted to, frankly. And now, I can feel the touch of someone holding my hand. It's overwhelming," said Mr. Thomas. "The only thing I want to do is to help others. That's always been the thing I'm best at. If this can help someone even more than it's helped me somewhere down the line, it's all worth it."

Over a hundred million people worldwide live with some form of movement impairment or paralysis. This clinical trial aims to restore lasting physical movement - outside of the research lab - and re-establish the sense of touch. Feinstein Institutes' researchers and clinicians, including Santosh Chandrasekaran, PhD and Adam Stein, MD, chair of physical medicine



Clinical trial participant, Keith Thomas, poses with the Feinstein Institutes research team, including Prof. Chad Bouton (right) who is principal investigator of the trial.

New therapies show improvement in Cerebral Palsy kids

# SpineX tech treats root cause of CP thru spinal cord neuromodulation

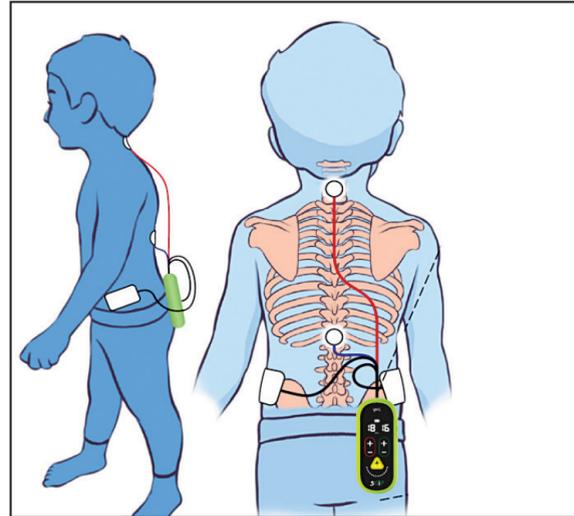
LOS ANGELES, July 29: Cutting-edge neuromodulation research being conducted by the SpineX team is once again being recognized by the world's leading scientists, with the publication this month of two more peer-reviewed publications, both in Frontiers.

Frontiers is a leading journal in its field, publishing rigorously peer-reviewed research in rehabilitation from biological, clinical, and socio-humanistic perspectives. Its publications investigate new ways to optimize the functioning and wellbeing of people who experience disability, focusing on rehabilitation as the health strategy of the 21st century.

"Having our research validated by our peers and published in Frontiers is an honor, and also a testament to the innovation driving this work," says SpineX CEO Parag Gad. "Thanks to this research, we can now confidently say that consistent, ongoing noninvasive spinal cord neuromodulation results in demonstrable improvement of sensorimotor function in children with Cerebral Palsy."

Cerebral Palsy (CP) is the most common of all childhood disabilities, with about 500,000 children and over 250,000 adults in the United States living with the disease. It's caused by abnormal neural connectivity between the brain and spinal cord, and affects motor function, impeding the ability to move voluntarily, and causing inability or difficulty walking and other day-to-day challenges.

SpineX is applying its novel, patented neuromodulation technology that acts as a hearing aid for the spine; amplifying the correct neural signals in order to help the patient better control muscle movement.



SpineX is applying its novel, patented neuromodulation technology that acts as a hearing aid for the spine; amplifying the correct neural signals in order to help the patient better control muscle movement.

ogy that acts as a hearing aid for the spine; amplifying the correct neural signals in order to help the patient better control muscle movement. The company has been conducting clinical trials of its non-invasive therapy platforms which have the potential to dramatically improve the lives of children living with CP. As demonstrated in recent publications, the company's proprietary SCIP™ device targets the abnormal connectivity between brain and spinal

cord, thereby treating the root causes of CP. SpineX plans on conducting a multisite trial starting in 2024 following which it will approach the US FDA for regulatory approval.

"Our experience with SCIP has been a true game-changer for our child," says Jessica and Van Oldham, whose nine-year old daughter Annika lives with CP. "When she started her first series of therapy sessions, we saw almost immediate results. She went from using a walker

or crutches almost exclusively to standing up straighter and using just one crutch/walking stick. She has also begun to walk independently in our home."

Annika received SCIP over two near-consecutive therapy sessions, one of 16 weeks and the other of 10 weeks duration. The therapy is non-invasive and pain-free, making it ideal for treating children and adults.

In addition to advancing SCIP therapy for CP, SpineX has pioneered SCONE™ therapy. An experimental medical device that treats urinary incontinence in adults, SCONE allows people living with neurogenic bladder due to spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis or stroke to live their lives on their own terms. Neuromodulation continues to bring dramatic, tangible results for patients afflicted with different debilitating chronic illnesses.

"As parents of a child with CP it's a bit like fitting together a puzzle," says Annika's mother, Jess. "This is a very large piece of the puzzle; we saw more positive change in our daughter over the two courses of SCIP™ therapy than we did in the first seven years of her life. She says she feels more aligned and is literally taking bigger steps all the time."

SpineX Inc., a clinical stage bioelectric MedTech company developing Noninvasive Spinal Neuromodulation devices as a platform technology. SCONE™ and SCIP™ are two FDA-designated Breakthrough Devices being developed by SpineX for the treatment of adults with Neurogenic Bladder and Children with Cerebral Palsy respectively.

## Smartphone app empowering behavioral changes

# 'Braincure' uses BHQ Actions to improve brain health

TOKYO, July 29: bspr Inc (Shibuya-ku, Tokyo, CEO: Yosuke Toyama), in collaboration with BHQ Corp (Saitama City, Saitama Prefecture, CEO: Masahito Kawamori), announces the release of the beta version of the smartphone app "Braincure" that utilizes the internationally standardized brain health index BHQ (Brain Healthcare Quotient)\* and encompasses "18 Guidelines for Your Brain Health" (BHQ Actions)\*\*, in California, USA from September 2023.

"Braincure" is the first smartphone app to include BHQ Actions. By inputting daily activities aligned with BHQ Actions (healthcare, exercise, social life, diet, rest, learning, environment), users can estimate their brain health conditions through the calculated BHQ score. Furthermore, the app will provide brain health information based on the BHQ Actions and encourage actions to exercise, improve diet, and reduce stress to help users maintain and improve brain health.

In addition to the four main features of the "Brain health maintenance app" developed by bspr Inc. - "Walking", "Diet", "Brain Training", and "Estimated BHQ" - "Braincure" has added new features based on BHQ Actions, including "Social Life" to inquire about interactions with others, "Rest" to assess sleep conditions and stress



The first smartphone application Braincure covering 18 Guidelines for Your Brain Health (BHQ Actions).

levels, and "Environment" to explore living environment and interactions with nature. These additional features allow for a comprehensive calculation of the estimated BHQ score. In the future, we plan to add the feature of providing information based on BHQ Actions to help app users change their

behavior. We will conduct a beta test of "Braincure" for expatriates of Japanese companies in California, USA from September 2023. We are calling for organizations and companies that wish to participate in the beta test to demonstrate the effectiveness

of "Braincure" in maintaining and promoting employee health, such as companies that have challenges in managing the health of their expatriate employees.

Following the beta testing phase, bspr Inc. will improve the functionality of the app based on user feedback, leading to an official nationwide launch in the United States in December 2023. Our vision extends to expand our services to Asian countries and other regions. By providing services tailored to regional needs and lifestyles, we aim to further contribute to the enhancement of brain health.

BHQ was developed as a result of the latest brain science research by brain scientists and medical professionals, led by Yoshinori Yamakawa (Director of Brain Impact, Kyoto University Project Professor), under the Cabinet Office IMPACT Yamakawa Program, and has been approved as an international standard.

BHQ Actions are behavioral guidelines derived from lifestyle habits and psychological characteristics scientifically proven by the BHQ project members, who are specialists in neuroscience. They are considered effective for maintaining and improving brain health and comprise "18 Guidelines for Your Brain Health."

## MEDICAL CLASSIFIEDS

Take care of your health

To advertise in this page please call: (+965) 24813566 Ext.: 513 or E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

### GENERAL PHYSICIANS

EVERY DAY 6.00 AM - 11.00 PM

CITY CLINIC MIRQAB

Dr. Ashok B Deb  
MBBS

CITY CLINIC KHAITAN

Dr. Alen Rajesh Singala  
MBBS

Dr. Mohsin Alam Khan  
MBBS, MPH PGT (Tropical Medicine)

Dr. Rehana Alaudeen  
MBBS

Dr. Syed Raheel Haider  
MBBS

22497080

22497060

1880020

Mawash building - opp Safat post office - Mirqab

2 nd Floor Mohammed Abdullah Al Zamami Building Block 17  
Bn Al Zahra Street Khaitan

Home Collection Services Available

We Accept All Major Insurance Card

### SHIFA AL JAZEERA MEDICAL CENTRE

الفروانية FARWANIYA

Obstetrics & Gynecology

Our gynecology department, the most dependable one in Kuwait, offers below services:

Dr. Rekha Thomas

MBBS, DGO, MS

Ob & Gynaecology

- Special Care and treatment during prenatal and postnatal periods.
- Treatment of other gynecological problems such as disturbances of menstruation recurrent miscarriages etc.,
- Diagnosis and treatment of infertility cases.
- Treatment of patients with high-risk pregnancies; managing complex problems related to reproductive endocrinology and infertility
- Screening programmes for early detection of tumours, breast cancer, cervical cancer, ovarian cancer etc.

Behind Maghateer Commercial Complex & Opp. Police station - Farwaniya

24 734 000

60 749 749

www.shifaaljazeera.com.kw

Scott drops 'Utopia,' his first album since Astroworld tragedy

Worker warned organizer before crowd surge at '21 Scott show

Music

HOUSTON, July 29, (AP) — Just moments before rap superstar Travis Scott took the stage at the deadly 2021 Astroworld festival, a contract worker had been so worried about what might happen after seeing people getting crushed that he texted an event organizer saying, "Someone's going to end up dead," according to a police report released Friday.

The texts by security contract worker Reece Wheeler were some of many examples in the nearly 1,300-page report in which festival workers highlighted problems and warned of possible deadly consequences. The report includes transcripts of concertgoers' 911 calls and summaries of police interviews, including one with Scott conducted just days after the event.

The crowd surge at the Nov. 5, 2021, outdoor festival in Houston killed 10 attendees who ranged in age from 9 to 27. The official cause of death was compression asphyxia, which an expert likened to being crushed by a car. About 50,000 people attended the festival.

"Pull tons over the rail unconscious. There's panic in people eyes. This could get worse quickly," Reece Wheeler texted Shawna Boardman, one of the private security directors, at 9 p.m. Wheeler then texted, "I know they'll try to fight through it but I would want it on the record that I didn't advise this to continue. Someone's going to end up dead."

Scott's concert began at 9:02 p.m. In their review of video from the concert's livestream, police investigators said that at 9:13 p.m., they

heard the faint sound of someone saying, "Stop the show." The same request could also be heard at 9:16 p.m. and 9:22 p.m.

In an Aug. 19, 2022, police interview, Boardman's attorneys told investigators that Boardman "saw things were not as bad as Reece Wheeler stated" and decided not to pass along Wheeler's concerns to anyone else.

A grand jury declined to indict anyone who was investigated over the event, including Scott, Boardman and four other people.

During a police interview conducted two days after the concert, Scott told investigators that although he did see one person near the stage getting medical attention, overall the crowd seemed to be enjoying the show and he did not see any signs of serious problems.

"We asked if he at any point heard the crowd telling him to stop the show. He stated that if he had heard something like that he would have done something," police said in their summary of Scott's interview.

Hip-hop artist Drake, who performed with Scott at the concert, told police that it was difficult to see from the stage what was going on in the crowd and that he didn't hear concertgoers' pleas to stop the show.

Security

Marty Wallgren, who worked for a security consulting firm hired by the festival, told police that when he went backstage and tried to tell representatives for Scott and Drake that the concert needed to end

because people had been hurt and might have died, he was told "Drake still has three more songs," according to an interview summary.

Daniel Johary, a college student who got trapped in the crush of concertgoers and later used his skills working as an EMT in Israel to help an injured woman, told investigators hundreds of people had chanted for Scott to stop the music and that the chants could be heard "from everywhere."

"He stated staff members in the area gave thumbs-up and did not care," according to the police report.

Richard Rickeada, a retired Houston police officer who was working for a private security company at the festival, told investigators that from 8 a.m. the day of the concert, things were "pretty much in chaos," according to a police summary of his interview. His concerns and questions about whether the concert should be held were "met with a lot of shrugged shoulders," he said.

About 23 minutes into the concert, cameraman Gregory Hoffman radioed into the show's production trailer to warn that "people were dying." Hoffman was operating a large crane that held a television camera before it was overrun with concertgoers who needed medical help, police said.

The report's release also came the same day that Scott released his new album, "Utopia," his first album in five years and his first major release since 10 people died at his 2021 Astroworld music festival.

Variety



This image released by Disney Enterprises shows Owen Wilson as Father Kent in a scene from 'Haunted Mansion.' (AP)

Film

Miyazaki's 'The Boy and the Heron' to open Toronto Fest

'Haunted Mansion' spins a tale of grief

By Lindsey Bahr

LaKeith Stanfield is disarmingly good as a grief-stricken astrophysicist barely scraping by in New Orleans, and increasingly jaded about the spirit-crazed tourists and mythologies of the city he calls home.

Unfortunately, though, this character and performance is housed in "Haunted Mansion," Disney's second attempt in 20 years to make a fun movie out of one of its beloved theme park rides. This version, directed by Justin Simien ("Dear White People") and written by Katie Dippold ("The Heat" and that iconic Babadook tweet) is worlds better than the Eddie Murphy disaster, but it's not really fun, spooky or engaging enough to make much of an impression beyond the moment.

It's too bad because the movie has some great writing, ideas and production design, as well as a cast including Rosario Dawson, Owen Wilson, Danny DeVito, Tiffany Haddish and Jamie Lee Curtis, who seem game to go big in that way that actors are only really allowed to in movies aimed at a younger audience. Wilson, as a priest who recruits Stanfield to come to the haunted house to investigate, spins every line into gold. It's perfect comedic relief, which Haddish, oddly, does not get enough of. Playing a psychic, she's a bit more subdued than usual, maybe playing against her character's elaborate turbans (costume designer Jeffrey Kurland and his team went all out, in the best way, for this stylish lot).

The main problem is that "Haunted Mansion" strains to make coherent sense out of the disparate parts of the ride - the paintings, the seance table, the dance hall, Madame Leota - while also trying to tell a sincere story about grief and catharsis. Wasn't the song about grim grinning ghosts coming out to socialize? This has more in common with the sadistic "Bird Box Barcelona" than I thought possible for a Disney movie, but at least someone had the good sense to cast an effortlessly menacing presence like Jared Leto as the bad ghost.

Still, this house has too many rooms and options for one movie - not to mention for a single mom (Dawson) looking to make a fresh start with her snappily dressed son by starting a bed and breakfast. I do wonder, haun-

tings aside, what her business plan was for this massive estate.

"Haunted Mansion" gets off to a needlessly confusing start, jumping around timelines and introducing its ensemble without much context, including Stanfield's Ben as a ghost skeptic and, separately, Dawson's Gabbie and her son Travis (Chase Dillon), as they move into the house in the middle of the night. This sequence is perfectly eerie and funny as Travis starts to explore the strange house, immediately noticing creepy oddities. Gabbie tries to reassure him until she catches her own glimpse of a wandering knight and they book it for the exit.

The haunted mansion catch is that once you enter the house, a ghost attaches itself to you - just like in the Doom Buggies in the ride - and haunts you until you come back. There is a lot of explanation but also somehow not enough as it's still a little unclear how they get from A to B. This movie gets tangled up in its own mythology and labyrinth of logic.

Horror

"Haunted Mansion" also attempts to employ modern horror flourishes that one might see in an R-rated Blumhouse movie but for the under-13 set. It's a strange trend in kids movies to try to do the same thing you'd do in an adult movie but tamed down. This was recently a problem in the "Paw Patrol" movie, of all things, which seems to be partly homage to the later "Fast & Furious" films. Perhaps this is welcome in a horror context for kids itching to watch the more grown-up fare. But did we need to up the scare factor for kids in this way? Regular old ghost stories and a childlike imagination have been doing that heavy lifting for as long as there have been kids in the world. They don't need "Insidious"-lite terror.

And then there's this whole death thing, which in a movie about a haunted mansion makes sense, but "Haunted Mansion" perhaps takes it, and the kitchen sink computer graphics, a little too far.

The gold standard for these ride-based movies is still the first "Pirates of the Caribbean," which they have not been able to replicate. But it's interesting to have

"Haunted Mansion" come on the heels of something like the "Barbie" movie - an auteur-driven, best-case scenario born out of a product. "Haunted Mansion" is by no means a terrible movie, or even an unpleasant watch, but it's just missing the magic that makes the trip to the theaters (or Disney World) worth it.

"Haunted Mansion," a Walt Disney Co. release in theaters Friday, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for "scary action, some thematic elements." Running time: 122 minutes. Two stars out of four.

Also:

**NEW YORK:** "The Boy and the Heron," the first film in a decade by Japanese anime master Hayao Miyazaki, will open the 48th Toronto International Film Festival, organizers announced Thursday.

The long-awaited "The Boy and the Heron" opened earlier this month in Japan under the title "How Do You Live?" Miyazaki, the 82-year-old co-founder of Studio Ghibli and the maker of films including "Spirited Away" and "My Neighbor Totoro," came out of retirement to make his 12th feature.

"The Boy and the Heron," about a boy named Mahito whose mother is killed in the WWII fire bombings of Tokyo, was released without any trailer or marketing promotions in Japan as a way, Miyazaki has said, to make seeing the film more of a discovery.

But "The Boy and the Heron" will get a big platform to make its North American premiere when it kicks off TIFF on Sept. 7 at the Roy Thomson Hall.

"We are honored to open the 48th Toronto International Film Festival with the work of one of cinema's greatest artists," Cameron Bailey, TIFF chief executive CEO, said in a statement. "Already acclaimed as a masterpiece in Japan, Hayao Miyazaki's new film begins as a simple story of loss and love and rises to a staggering work of imagination. I look forward to our audience discovering its mysteries for themselves, but I can promise a singular, transformative experience."

No release date has yet been announced but GKIDS will distribute "The Boy and the Heron" later this year in North American theaters. The Toronto International Film Festival runs Sept. 7-17. (AP)

Features

ARABO TIMES

SUNDAY, JULY 30, 2023

**WEST CHESTER, Pa:** "Jack..." star Bam Margera must stand trial on charges that he punched his brother during an altercation at their home near Philadelphia, a judge ruled Thursday while ordering him to get a drug and alcohol screening to remain free on bail.

Margera, 43, has pleaded not guilty to the misdemeanor charges, which include simple assault and making terroristic threats. He has been free on \$50,000 bail and said Thursday that he has been in drug and alcohol treatment this year and living with former Los Angeles Lakers star Lamar Odom.

"I'm not trying to get him in trouble here. I just want him to get the help because I feel like this is our last chance," Margera's brother, Jess Margera, said in testifying about what he called two decades of troubling behavior by his brother, which he said escalated during a "frightening and unpredictable" two-week visit home in April.

He said that Bam — upset on a Sunday morning after seeing a text that suggested he needed mental health treatment - struck him in the nose and ear and ruptured his eardrum. Jess Margera's girlfriend called police after Bam kicked in her bedroom door, he said.

"I don't know what we're doing here," lawyer Michael van der Veen said. "This is a disagreement between two brothers on a Sunday morning over coffee."

He argued that the brothers often perform such antics for the cameras. The Chester County magistrate rejected the argument, noting that no cameras were rolling at the time.

Prosecutors agreed to drop two of four counts of terroristic threats stemming from allegations that Bam Margera threatened to shoot various family members and left his brother a threatening note. Neither the brother nor prosecutors suggested that he had access to a gun.

By the end of the hearing - which was delayed for several hours by Bam Margera's delayed flight from California - both sides seemed most interested

in ensuring that he remains in treatment.

"We want to make sure you're safe, secure and alive," said Judge Albert Iacocca, who asked what had motivated him to go to treatment this year.

"To see my son Phoenix, who's 5," Bam Margera said. (AP)



Margera



Van der Veen

**LEBANON, Pa:** An enormous Lebanon bologna sandwich billed as one of the world's largest has been unveiled at a central Pennsylvania fair.

The 150-foot-long (45.7-meters-long) sandwich was created Tuesday night at the Lebanon Area Fair by a large crew of volunteers known as the "Bologna Security." Lebanon bologna is

known for its distinct smoked and tangy flavor.

Every footlong "bite" was sponsored at \$100 per foot. The money was donated to Lebanon County Christian Ministries and their efforts to help people dealing with food insecurity in the Lebanon Valley.

Pennlive reports that Bologna Security used 600 slices

of provolone cheese and 1,200 slices of half-sweet and original Seltzer's Lebanon Bologna to create 900 sandwiches, or six sandwiches per foot. Fairgoers had a chance to enjoy the sandwich for free Tuesday night.

Lebanon is 72 miles (about 116 kilometers) northwest of Philadelphia. (AP)

## People &amp; Places

## Television

## 'Greenlight' reboot

## Rae offers women a chance to shine

LOS ANGELES, July 29, (AP): From Issa Rae's perspective, there's plenty of talented female filmmakers willing to work. However, she knows most haven't been afforded the same support as their male counterparts.

Now, Rae feels compelled to create a supportive platform for aspiring women directors through the reboot series "Project Greenlight: A New Generation," which premiered this month on Max. She brought back the Ben Affleck and Matt Damon series that debuted in 2001 on HBO about unproven filmmakers directing a feature-length movie. It was canceled 14 years later after a controversial fourth season, which included a heated discussion between Damon and producer Effie Brown over diversity.



Rae

Gina Prince-Bythewood.

Rae witnessed Greta Gerwig direct the big budget "Barbie" film, which had 2023's biggest opening. Gerwig shattered the first weekend records for a film directed by a woman. The "Insecure" creator appeared as President Barbie in the movie starring Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling.

"I saw it even while promoting 'Barbie,'" Rae said. "I'm working with a director who's one of six to get a \$100-million budget. Six women. It's an industry-wide issue where there are limitations for the opportunities that women get. I think this series shines a light on a very small area that needs improvement."

## Highlight

Rae said the idea to revive the series was originally presented to her by Montrel McKay, who is featured in show and serves as the president of development & production at her Hoorae Media production company. After the company approached Max with the idea to highlight first-time female directors, she said the streaming service was "enthusiastic" in what she calls the easiest greenlight from them.

Rae and company filtered through 10 finalists before selecting Meko Winbush, a writer-director who mostly had experience making trailers and short films. The 10-episode series pulls back the curtain on the entire filmmaking process that shows the challenges each team faces while guiding Winbush - who is a Black woman - into making a successful film project.

Prince-Bythewood said it was important for the series to specifically highlight female directors, who weren't hardly featured - if at all - in the original series.

"I used to love the show. I used to watch every season. And there was such a normalcy to the winners always being 'white men.' I don't even remember a person of color even being in the running. I don't remember a woman," she said. "I didn't even question it back then, which is crazy. Being a part of it now, this reboot is way more reflective of what the industry is and needs to be."

Throughout the process, Winbush was under constant pressure and struggled at times to execute her vision. She had less than 20 days to direct the science fiction thriller called "Gray Matter."

The cameras rolled from pre-production along with casting through principal photography and post-production.

"Women aren't given a chance to direct genre movies," said Rae, who initially had some reservations about selecting Winbush. "In hindsight, it's ambitious to try to make a genre movie in 18 days with a very limited budget. But I give props to Meko for doing just that. This is a hard experience to do with a camera in your face. She did it and handled it with grace and was enthusiastic about the process."

Prince-Bythewood sees herself in Winbush, who has become her mentee of sorts. As a fellow introvert, she tried to instill more confidence in Winbush's stature as a leader.

"I thought about myself and given the situation, I could empathize with what she was going through," said Prince-Bythewood, who made her directorial debut with "Love & Basketball" and known for other films such as "The Secret Life of Bees" and "The Old Guard." The director said she was determined to help Winbush learn the importance of communication, swagger and inspiring the crew.

"The confidence in her abilities was always there. My thing was she kept calling herself a first-time director," she said. "I told her you can't think of yourself like that, because then everybody else is going to think about you like that as if that's a negative thing, like you don't know what you're doing as opposed to you being a director making your first film. ... You're on the frontline."

Regardless of how Winbush's film panned out, Rae said the process was very beneficial. She has hopes for a second season to introduce more female directors, including some of color.

"If we get another opportunity, we kind of want to start smaller, make sure the script is in shape," Rae said. "We want to give an opportunity to another director out there who needs a support system. Gina, Kumail and I lament the fact that our time was sucked by respective projects. We want to operate as even better mentors to the next hopeful and be more hands on with the project throughout."

## Also:

**NEW YORK:** Marla Gibbs has waited a long time to tell her life story.

The Emmy-nominated actor known for her roles on "The Jeffersons" and "227" among others has a deal with Amistad, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers dedicated to Black stories, for a memoir coming out in fall 2024. Gibbs, 92, is calling the book "It's Never Too Late," in which she traces her rise from Chicago's South Side to long-term success in Hollywood.

"My hope is that my memoir will serve as an inspiration to those that continue to show me love and support," Gibbs said in a statement Wednesday. "I believe no matter the challenges one faces, it is never too late to turn your life around or make a difference. I am grateful and I am ready to reveal the challenges I overcame as a way of service to those who wish to transform their tests into testimonies."

Gibbs' other credits include the films "The Visit" and "Meteor Man" and a recurring role on the daytime soap opera "Days of Our Lives."



Taylor Swift performs at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, Calif. Friday, July 28. (AP)

## Obituaries

## One of Hollywood's finest screenwriters

## Oscar-winning writer Goldman dies

NEW YORK, July 29, (AP): Bo Goldman, who penned the Oscar-winning scripts to "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" and "Melvin and Howard" and whose textured, empathy-rich screenplays made him one of Hollywood's finest writers, has died. He was 90.

Goldman died Tuesday in Heliendale, Calif., his son-in-law, the director Todd Field, said. No details on the cause of death were given.

It wasn't until Goldman was in his 40s, after years of struggle as a playwright, that he found success in Hollywood. In 1975, he adapted Ken Kesey's "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" for his first film credit. The film, directed by Miloš Forman and starring Jack Nicholson as a patient in a psychiatric ward, won best picture at the Oscars and best adapted screenplay for Goldman and Lawrence Hauben.

Five years later, Goldman won again for Jonathan Demme's "Melvin and Howard," based on a luckless Utah gas station owner named Melvin Dummar who claims to be a beneficiary of Howard Hughes after the billionaire's death.

Those screenplays and more - the family drama "Shoot the Moon"; "The Rose," with Bette Midler; "Scent of a Woman," with Al Pacino - made Goldman a widely considered master of screenwriting along with contemporaries like Billy Wilder and Paddy Chayefsky. Goldman said he thought of himself as a dramatist who happened to write screenplays. "I'm a screenplaywright," he said.

## Yearning

"If there is a train of thought that runs through my work, it is a yearning, a longing to make the people real and capture their lives on the screen," Goldman told The Washington Post in 1982. "I think there is nothing more fulfilling in the world than to see your view of life realized in art. For me, film is unique; it has a peculiar quality for recreating life. I find life so wonderful, that to try to capture it in art is like trying to catch starlight."

Robert Spencer Goldman was born on Sept. 10, 1932, in New York, the son of an enormously wealthy businessman, Julian Goldman. His father's clothing chain at one point had nationwide locations. He produced Broadway shows. Franklin Roosevelt was his attorney. But the Wall Street crash of 1929 wiped him out. At his death, he retained only one store. As a young adult, Goldman learned that his father had had another family and never wed his mother.

"My father was a ghetto kid who went from rags to riches, then lost everything, and having committed my life to mimic him in nothing, I am convinced I will equal him in this one respect: his ending, a downward spiral into two dingy rooms in a residential hotel and bankruptcy," Goldman wrote in a 1981 essay in The

NEW YORK, July 29, (AP): Randy Meisner, a founding member of the Eagles who added high harmonies to such favorites as "Take It Easy" and "The Best of My Love" and stepped out front for the waltz-time ballad "Take It to the Limit," has died, the band said Thursday.

Meisner died Wednesday night in Los Angeles of complications from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, the Eagles said in a statement. He was 77.

The bassist had endured numerous afflictions in recent years and personal tragedy in 2016 when his wife, Lana Rae Meisner, accidentally shot herself and died. Meanwhile, Randy Meisner had been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and had severe issues with alcohol, according to court records and comments made during a 2015 hearing in which a judge ordered Meisner to receive constant medical care.

Called "the sweetest man in the music business" by former bandmate Don Felder, the baby-faced Meisner joined Don Henley, Glenn Frey and Bernie Leadon in the early 1970s to form a quintessential Los Angeles band and one of the most popular acts in history.

"Randy was an integral part of the Eagles and instrumental in the early success of the band," the Eagles' statement said. "His vocal range was astonishing, as is evi-

dent on his signature ballad, "Take It to the Limit." The band said funeral plans were pending.

Evolving from country rock to hard rock, the Eagles turned out a run of hit singles and albums over the next decade, starting with "Take It Easy" and continuing with "Desperado," "Hotel California" and "Life In The Fast Lane" among others. Although chastised by many critics as slick and superficial, the Eagles released two of the most popular albums of all time, "Hotel California" and "Their Greatest Hits (1971-1975)," which with sales at 38 million the Recording Industry Association of America ranked with Michael Jackson's "Thriller" as the No. 1 seller.

Led by singer-songwriters Henley and Frey, the Eagles were initially branded as "mellow" and "easy listening." But by their third album, the 1974 release "On the Border," they had added a rock guitarist, Felder, and were turning away from country and bluegrass.

Leadon, an old-fashioned bluegrass picker, was unhappy with the new sound and left after the 1975 album "One of These Nights." (He was replaced by another rock guitarist, Joe Walsh.) Meisner stayed on through the 1976 release of "Hotel California," the band's most acclaimed record, but was gone soon after. His departure, ironically, was touched off by the song he cowrote and was best known for, "Take It to the Limit."

New York Times.

Attending Princeton, Goldman wrote for the Princeton Triangle Club, a theater troupe. He dropped the second "b" in Bob after a college paper accidentally left it off. He liked Bo and kept the name.

After serving three years in the Pacific during World War II, Goldman's first play, "First Impressions," was produced when he was 25. (Goldman was a lyricist.) It starred Farley Granger and Polly Bergen, but reviews were poor and it was judged a flop. Goldman then toiled for years trying to get his Civil War musical, "Hurrah, Boys, Hurrah," mounted.

In that time, Goldman worked intermittently in television, but the years were painfully lean. Poverty, he wrote, "lurks for me in the ring of every telephone call, at each mail delivery." In 1954, Goldman had married Mabel Rathbun Ashforth, and they had six children together.

"There's a line in 'Melvin and Howard,' where Mary says of Melvin, 'He

can't make any money and it makes him feel bad.'" Goldman later recounted, "I couldn't support my family and I felt lousy about it."

Things changed after Goldman wrote his first screenplay, "Shoot the Moon," about a mother of four whose husband has an affair with a younger woman. Producers throughout Hollywood turned him down, but Forman read it and hired Goldman to rewrite "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest."

"He said, 'What would you do with this script?'" Goldman recalled to the Writers Guild years later. "The first thing I remember saying is that McMurphy (Nicholson) should come in and kiss the admitting officers."

The film's massive success - it also won Oscars for Forman, Nicholson and Louise Fletcher - was the breakthrough Goldman had long awaited, though he considered it a qualified victory. "Even then I hung my head," Goldman recounted in 1981. "After all, I had adapted somebody else's work; was it really mine?"

email message seeking comment.

Bowman and 18 others were indicted last month by a Chatham County grand jury. Bowman was charged with four counts, including being a manager of an illegal street gang known as "Rollin' 60's."

His other charges include conspiring with others to distribute marijuana and to buy pills of the opioid hydrocodone. (AP)



This image released by Max shows promotional art for 'Project Greenlight: A New Generation.' (AP)

## Variety

**LOS ANGELES:** The rapper G Herbo pleaded guilty Friday to his role in a scheme that used stolen credit card information to pay for a lavish lifestyle including private jets, exotic car rentals, a luxury vacation rental and even expensive designer puppies.

Under a deal with prosecutors, the 27-year-old Chicago rapper, whose real name is **Herbert Wright III**, entered a guilty plea in federal court in Springfield, Massachusetts, to conspiracy to commit wire fraud and making false statements. In exchange, prosecutors dismissed several counts of aggravated identity theft.

He also agreed to forfeit nearly \$140,000, the amount he benefited from what prosecutors have said was a \$1.5 million scheme that involved several other people.

"Mr. Wright used stolen account information as his very own unlimited funding source, using victims' payment cards to finance an extravagant lifestyle and advance his career," acting U.S. Attorney **Joshua Levy** said in a statement.

Sentencing is scheduled for Nov. 7, and he faces a maximum of 25 years in prison. A voicemail seeking comment was left with his attorney.

From at least March 2017 until November 2018, G Herbo and his promoter, **Antonio Strong**, used text messages, social media messages and emails to share account information taken from dark websites, authorities said.

On one occasion, the stolen account information was used to pay for a chartered jet to fly the rapper and members of his entourage from Chicago to Austin, Texas, authorities said. On another, a stolen account was used to pay nearly \$15,000 for Wright and seven others to stay several days in a six-bedroom Jamaican villa. (AP)

**SAVANNAH, Ga:** A Georgia judge ruled Thursday that rapper **Quando Rondo** can no longer drive and must undergo drug testing if he wants to stay out of jail while awaiting trial on gang and drug charges.

The 24-year-old rapper, whose given name is **Tyquan Terrel Bowman**, appeared in a Savannah courtroom as prosecutors unsuccessfully asked the judge to revoke the \$100,000 bail the rapper posted following his indictment last month.

Bowman crashed a car July 19, just a few weeks after bonding out of jail. Prosecutors said emergency responders at the scene of the crash administered Narcan, a drug used to treat opioid overdoses, to Bowman because he showed symptoms of an overdose.

Bowman had been ordered to refrain from using drugs as a condition of his bail.

Chatham County Superior Court

Judge **Tammy Stokes** said that Bowman can remain free before his trial as long as he follows the additional restrictions she imposed Thursday, news outlets reported.

"You are a young man with a career in front of you," Stokes told Bowman. "All sorts of opportunities. But the bottom line is that it's all on you."

Bowman's attorney, **Kimberly Copeland**, did not immediately respond to an



G Herbo



Quando Rondo

Health

Warming blamed

Rare, deadly fungus becoming common

SEATTLE, July 29, (AP) — In 2016, hospitals in New York state identified a rare and dangerous fungal infection never before found in the United States. Research laboratories quickly mobilized to review historical specimens and found the fungus had been present in the country since at least 2013.

In the years since, New York City has emerged as ground zero for *Candida auris* infections. And until 2021, the state recorded the most confirmed cases in the country year after year, even as the illness has spread to other places, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data analyzed by The Associated Press.

*Candida auris* is a globally emerging public health threat that can cause severe illness, including bloodstream, wound and respiratory infections. Its mortality rate has been estimated at 30% to 60%, and it's a particular risk in healthcare settings for people already with serious medical problems.



Casadevall

Last year, the most cases were found in Nevada and California, but the fungus was identified clinically in patients in 29 states. New York state remains a major hotspot.

A prominent theory for the sudden explosion of *Candida auris*, which was not found in humans anywhere until 2009, is climate change.

Humans and other mammals have warmer body temperatures than most fungal pathogens can tolerate, so have historically been protected from most infections. However, rising temperatures can allow fungi to develop tolerance to warmer environments, and over time humans may lose resistance. Some researchers think this is what is already happening with *Candida auris*.

The pathogen emerged spontaneously 14 years ago on three continents, in Venezuela, India, and South Africa. Fungal disease expert Arturo Casadevall, a microbiologist, immunologist and professor at Johns Hopkins University, said this was puzzling, because the climates in these places are quite different.

Protection

"We have tremendous protection against environmental fungi because of our temperature. However, if the world is getting warmer and the fungi begin to adapt to higher temperatures as well, some ... are going to reach what I call the temperature barrier," Casadevall said, referring to the way mammals' warm body temperatures historically protected them.

When *Candida auris* was first spreading, said Meghan Marie Lyman, a CDC medical epidemiologist for the mycotic diseases branch, the cases were linked to people who had traveled to the US from other places. Now, most cases are acquired locally - generally spreading among patients in healthcare settings.

In the US, there were 2,377 confirmed clinical cases diagnosed last year - an increase of over 1,200% since 2017. But *Candida auris* is becoming a global problem. In Europe, a survey last year found case numbers nearly doubled from 2020 to 2021.

"The number of cases has increased, but also the geographic distribution has increased," Lyman said. She noted that while screenings and surveillance have improved, the skyrocketing case numbers do reflect a true increase.

In March, a CDC press release noted the seriousness of the problem, citing the pathogen's resistance to traditional antifungal treatments and the alarming rate of its spread. Public health agencies are focused primarily on strategies to urgently mitigate transmission in healthcare settings.

"It's kind of an active fire they're trying to put out," Lyman said.

Dr. Luis Ostrosky, a professor of infectious diseases at McGovern Medical School at UTHealth Houston, thinks *Candida auris* is "kind of our nightmare scenario."

"It's a potentially multi-drug resistant pathogen with the ability to spread very efficiently in healthcare settings," he said. "We've never had a pathogen like this in the fungal infection area."

It is nearly always resistant to the most common class of antifungal medication, and is sometimes also resistant to another medication primarily used for severe catheter fungal infections in hospitals.

"I've encountered cases where I'm sitting down with the family and telling them we have nothing that works for this infection your loved one has," Ostrosky said.

Ostrosky has treated about 10 patients with the fungal infection but has consulted on many more. He said he has seen it spread through an entire ICU in two weeks.

Researchers, academics, and public health groups are discussing and investigating theories that explain the emergence of *Candida auris*. Ostrosky said that climate change is the most widely accepted one.

The CDC's Lyman said it's possible the fungus was always among the microorganisms that live in the human body, but because it wasn't causing infection, no one investigated until it recently started causing health problems. She also said there are reports of the fungus in the natural environment - including soil and wetlands - but environmental sampling has been limited, and it's unclear whether those discoveries are downstream effects from humans.

"There are also a lot of questions about there being increased contact with humans and intrusion of humans into nature, and there have been a lot of changes in the environment, and the use of fungi in agriculture," she said. "These things may have allowed *Candida auris* to escape into a new environment or broaden its niche."

Threat

Wherever and however it originated, the fungus poses a significant threat to human health, researchers say. Immunocompromised patients in hospitals are most at risk, but so are people in long-term care centers and nursing homes, which generally have less access to diagnostics and infection control experts.

*Candida auris* is not only challenging to treat, but also difficult to diagnose. It is quite rare and many clinicians are not aware it exists.

Common symptoms of infection include sepsis, fever, and low blood pressure, which all can have many causes. The fungus is diagnosed with a blood test. Blood is placed in a nutrient-rich medium to allow any infectious organism to grow and become more detectable.

But Ostrosky notes this misses about half the cases. "Our gold standard is a little bit better than flipping a coin," he said, adding there is a newer technology that improves bloodstream detection but it's expensive and not widely available in hospitals.

Beyond the increase in cases, popular culture has helped increase awareness of fungal infections. A popular HBO series, "The Last of Us," is a drama about the survivors of a fungal outbreak. A fungal infection that can transform humans into zombies is a work of fiction, but addressing climate change, which is altering the kinds of diseases seriously threatening human health, is a real world challenge.

"I think the way to think about how global warming is putting selection pressure on microbes is to think about how many more really hot days we are experiencing," said Casadevall of Johns Hopkins. "Each day at (100 degrees Fahrenheit, or 37.7 degrees Celsius) provides a selection event for all microbes affected - and the more days when high temperatures are experienced, the greater probability that some will adapt and survive."

"We've been flying under the radar for decades in mycology because fungal infections didn't used to be frequently seen," said Ostrosky of UTHealth Houston.



President Joe Biden speaks in the East Room of the White House in Washington, July 25. The Biden administration has announced the first cancer-focused initiative under its advanced health research agency. It's aiming to help doctors more easily distinguish between cancerous cells and healthy tissue during surgery and improve patient outcomes. (AP)

Health

Program part of Biden's 'cancer moonshot' effort

US launches advanced research project

WASHINGTON, July 29, (AP) — President Joe Biden's administration on Thursday announced the first cancer-focused initiative under its advanced health research agency, aiming to help doctors more easily distinguish between cancerous cells and healthy tissue during surgery and improve outcomes for patients.

The administration's Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health, or ARPA-H, is launching a Precision Surgical Interventions program, seeking ideas from the public and private sectors to explore how to dramatically improve cancer outcomes in the coming decades by developing better surgical interventions to treat the disease.

ARPA-H is modeled after the military-focused DARPA, which spawned the internet and GPS. The administration hopes the new investment will yield tools that will help surgeons avoid healthy nerves and blood vessels, while ensuring they can remove all cancerous cells.

ARPA-H, along with the administration's "cancer moonshot," is a key part of Biden's "unity agenda" announced during his 2022 State of the Union address to bring Washington together on a bipartisan basis to combat cancer, improve veterans' health and make mental health more accessible.

In a statement Thursday announcing the initiative, Biden called it a "major milestone in the fight to end cancer as we know it."

"Harnessing the power of innovation is essential to achieving our ambitious goal of turning more cancers from death sentences to treatable diseases and - in time - cutting the cancer death rate in half," Biden said. "As we've seen throughout our history, from developing vaccines to sequencing the genome, when the US government invests in innovation, we can achieve breakthroughs that would otherwise be impossible, and save lives on a vast scale."

The initiative could markedly improve cancer treatments and make scientific breakthroughs that have as yet unknown applications, said Arati Prabhakar, the director of the White House Office of Science and Technology.

"What's true is that many cancer treatments still start with surgery," she told The Associated Press in an interview. "So being really smart and attacking and developing new technology to make that first step better could really revolutionize how

we are able to treat cancer for so many Americans."

Prabhakar, a former director of DARPA, said most federal research dollars are designed to go to university or government labs, while ARPA-H programs will search more broadly.

"They are just dead focused on those goals, and whoever it takes to get there is who they'll be trying to make sure they bring to the table," she said. "What you're looking for is the quality of the ideas and then the ability to really be bold and fearless and experimenting and then start prototyping in the real world."

The agency is hosting an event in Chicago in September for interested researchers with the aim of quickly identifying and approving projects.

Prabhakar acknowledged that the ARPA-H model entails risks, but she said that even in failure most projects have significant payoffs.

Mission

"The mission is to reach for things that aren't that obvious or feasible today - and to do that, you have to take risks," she said. "The process allows you to explore things that could have a bigger impact if they do work and very often what I have seen is that the overall program succeeds even though some of the individual pieces don't succeed."

The Department of Veterans Affairs on Thursday is also announcing that veterans exposed to toxic burn pits during their service will be able to access breast cancer risk assessments and mammograms regardless of their age or if they are enrolled in VA healthcare. And on Tuesday, the department announced that it would study the relationship between deployed servicemembers' toxic exposures and additional cancers.

ARPA-H has also placed an open call for other research objectives, said Danielle Carnival, the director of the White House cancer moonshot, calling the agency's work a "central pillar" of the administration's plans to meet its goals of reducing mortality and improving outcomes from cancer.

"I would expect some really great ideas and new projects to come out of that call," she said.

White House deputy chief of staff Bruce Reed said the ARPA-H announcement helps meet Biden's efforts to show "that government can still work, both sides can come to-

gether, and we can get things done." "Mental health, cancer, veterans, our efforts on fentanyl, are all priorities that affect everyone without regard to party," Reed said.

Also:

**WASHINGTON:** President Joe Biden on Tuesday announced that his administration is moving forward with new rules meant to push insurance companies to increase their coverage of mental health treatments.

The new regulations, which still need to go through a public comment period, would require insurers to study whether their customers have equal access to medical and mental health benefits and to take remedial action, if necessary. The Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act requires that insurers provide the same level of coverage for both mental and physical health care - though the administration and advocates argue insurers' policies restrict patient access.

"I don't know what the difference between breaking your arm and having a mental breakdown is - it's health," Biden said in an East Room event highlighting the announcement. "We must fulfill the promise of true mental health parity for all Americans now."

The rules, if finalized, would force insurers to study patient outcomes to ensure mental health and physical health benefits are administered equally, taking into account their provider network and reimbursement rates and whether prior authorization is required for care.

The Democratic president's administration said it's aiming to address issues such as insurers enabling nutritional counseling for diabetes patients but making it more difficult for those with eating disorders or not having enough mental health providers in their provider networks, forcing subscribers to pay higher, out-of-pocket fees for needed help.

"Folks, it shouldn't be this way," Biden said. "It doesn't need to be this way."

By measuring outcomes, the White House said, it will force insurers to make modifications to come into compliance with the law.

Biden made tackling the nation's mental health crisis a part of his "unity agenda" - issues he believed could win bipartisan support in Congress - during his 2022 State of the Union address.



Ground beef is displayed for sale, April 1, 2017, at a market in Washington. Federal health officials said Tuesday, July 25, that ground beef contaminated with salmonella has sickened at least 16 people, including six hospitalized, in four Northeastern states. (AP)



Dagher



Addie

Discovery

**'Plans to use offshore wind':** Maine will procure at least 3,000 megawatts of electricity from offshore wind turbines by 2040 under a bill signed Thursday by Democratic Gov Janet Mills, enough to power about half of the state's electricity load.

Incentives to ensure wind power developers steer clear of lucrative lobster fishing grounds are included in the law, which puts Maine on a path to catch up with other states that already have offshore wind projects. The law sets a timeline for requests for offshore proposals, as well as standards for port development and construction jobs.

Unlike other projects in the region, the Gulf of Maine wind turbines would showcase floating platform technology because the water is too deep for turbines to be anchored to the ocean floor. State officials hope companies will utilize technology from the University of Maine, which has been pioneering precast floating turbines and has tested prototypes off the coast.

"Offshore wind, done responsibly, offers Maine the opportunity to secure abundant clean energy, stable energy prices, good-paying jobs and a healthier environment for future generations," Mills said in a statement.

The timeline calls for the federal lease sales to be completed next year and for the state to release requests for proposals to operate the offshore wind turbines in early 2026.

"The clear message to the clean energy industry is that Maine is ready to lead, come work with us," said Habib Dagher, director of the University of Maine's Advanced Structures and Composites Center. (AP)

**3 humpbacks jump in unison:** A New Hampshire man celebrating his birthday on the ocean with his three daughters captured video of something so rare that even marine scientists are jealous - three humpback whales leaping from the water in near perfect unison.

"It was such an uplifting thing to see. Just incredible," Robert Addie said.

The Portsmouth man, now a home remodeler, spent decades on the water as a commercial fisherman in Massachusetts and Alaska. In that time, he has seen thousands of whales.

But he never witnessed anything like Monday's whale encounter on a tuna fishing trip off Cape Cod. The excursion with his daughters was for his 59th birthday, as well as to celebrate his safe return from a humanitarian aid trip to Ukraine where he came under heavy artillery fire.

He'd been trying to film some humpback whales about 300 yards (275 meters) from their boat and was having no luck, until he got what he called a "whale bal-

let." "A triple breach is unheard of and a synchronized triple breach is even rarer," he said. "It's once in a lifetime. Just very fortunate. I feel God shined down on me to allow me to capture that."

To add to the thrill, seconds after the three whales breached and twisted together,

er, a juvenile whale did the same thing. Whale experts have told him the aerial maneuvers may have been an attempt to remove parasites or aid digestion.

Addie has another theory: "I have a feeling that maybe they were teaching or training" the younger whale.

Those same experts also know how

rare the spectacle was. (AP)

**Nero's Theater ruins found:** Rome's next luxury hotel has some very good bones: Archaeologists said Wednesday that the ruins of Nero's Theater, an imperial theater referred to in ancient Roman texts but never found, have been discovered under the garden of a future Four Seasons Hotel steps from the Vatican.

Archaeologists have excavated deep under the walled garden of the Palazzo della Rovere since 2020 as part of planned renovations on the frescoed Renaissance building. The palazzo, which takes up a city block along the broad Via della Conciliazione leading to St Peter's Square.

The governor general of the Order of the Holy Sepulcher, Leonardo Visconti di Modrone, confirmed during a news conference announcing the archaeological discovery that the incoming hotel chain was the Four Seasons. News reports have said the hotel is expected to be open in time for the Vatican's 2025 Jubilee, when an estimated 30 million people and pilgrims are expected to flock to Rome. (AP)

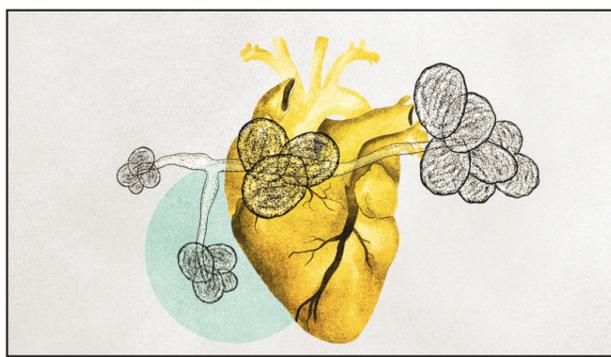


Illustration about the rise of a dangerous fungus called *Candida auris*. (AP)

# Reds move half-game back in NL Central

Ohtani hits MLB-leading 39th homer; Blue Jays beat Angels

**TORONTO, July 29, (AP):** Shohei Ohtani hit his major league-leading 39th home run for the Angels before leaving the game with leg cramps, as the Toronto Blue Jays slugged three solo homers and rallied to beat Los Angeles 4-1 on Friday night.

Ohtani, who homered on the first pitch he faced Friday, went deep in three straight at-bats over two games. He was replaced by pinch-hitter Michael Stefanic when his at-bat came up with the bases loaded in the ninth inning. Angels manager Phil Nevin said after the game Ohtani left due to cramps. A day earlier, Ohtani left the second game of a doubleheader at Detroit because of cramps.

Stefanic struck out looking as Toronto ended the Angels' four-game winning streak.

Matt Chapman, Danny Jansen and Whit Merrifield homered for the Blue Jays, who are 24-11 when they hit two or more home runs.

Kevin Gausman (8-5) allowed one run and five hits in six-plus innings to win for the first time since June 21 at Miami. Gausman walked three and struck out nine, increasing his AL-leading total to 171.

## BASEBALL

Lucas Giolito (6-7) allowed three runs and six hits in 5 1/3 innings in his first start for the Angels since being acquired from the White Sox. He walked one and struck out five.

### Reds 6, Dodgers 5

In Los Angeles, Jake Freley hit a two-run homer, Spencer Steer added a solo shot, and Cincinnati won the series opener with Los Angeles.

The Reds moved with a half-game of first-place Milwaukee in the NL Central.

Brandon Williamson (3-2) allowed two runs and eight hits in 5 2/3 innings. The right-hander struck out two and walked four. Alexis Diaz earned his 31st save.

The Dodgers scored three runs in the seventh to pull within a run, and had the potential tying run on second in the eighth before Mookie Betts grounded out to end the threat.

Los Angeles rookie Bobby Miller (6-2) gave up three runs and six hits in five innings. The right-hander struck out six and didn't walk anyone.

### Mets 5, Nationals 1

In New York, Pete Alonso homered twice to become the second player in Mets history with four 30-homer seasons, leading New York over Washington.

The Mets won their second straight a little less than 24 hours after sending closer David Robertson to Miami for two rookie-ball prospects.

Alonso joined Mike Piazza as the only players with four 30-homer seasons for the Mets.

Max Scherzer (9-4) allowed six hits and struck out seven in seven solid innings. Scherzer carried a shutout into the seventh, when Luis Garcia hit a leadoff homer.

MacKenzie Gore (6-8) gave up three runs in five innings.

### Orioles 1, Yankees 0

In Baltimore, Anthony Santander homered off Tommy Kahnle in the ninth inning to give Baltimore a victory over New York, spoiling Aaron Judge's return for the Yankees.

Judge walked three times in his first game back from a toe injury.

Orioles rookie Grayson Rodriguez pitched 6 1/3 scoreless innings, going toe to toe with New York's Gerrit Cole, who went seven. Félix Bautista (6-1) struck out two in a scoreless ninth. Kahnle (1-1) allowed Santander's one-out drive that went well beyond the fence in right-center field.

The Orioles remained 1 1/2 games ahead of Tampa Bay atop the AL East, and they now lead the last-place Yankees by nine.

### Marlins 6, Tigers 5

In Miami, Jon Berti's second hit of the game was a go-ahead RBI single in the eighth inning, helping Miami beat Detroit.

Luis Arraez doubled and had two singles to raise his major league-leading batting average to .380, and Bryan De La Cruz homered and doubled and drove in three runs for the Marlins.

Marlins reliever J.T. Chargois (2-0) earned the win. Tigers reliever Jason Foley (2-3) took the loss.

Andy Ibanez, Nick Maton and Spencer Torkelson drove in runs for Detroit.

Tigers' star slugger Miguel Cabrera went 0 for 3 and was hit by a pitch. Cabrera, who will retire at the end of the season, spent the first



New Zealand's players pose with the Bledisloe Cup after defeating Australia during their rugby union test match in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)



New Zealand's Mark Tealea, bottom, is tackled by Australia's Mark Nawaqanitawase during their Bledisloe Cup rugby union test match in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

five seasons of his career with the Marlins. The club honored Cabrera with a video tribute and gifts before the game.

### White Sox 3, Guardians 0

In Chicago, Luis Robert Jr. and Jake Burger homered, Touki Toussaint pitched five innings for his first win and Chicago snapped a six-game losing streak with a win over Cleveland.

Chicago's victory came on the tail end of a day in which it dealt pitchers Lance Lynn, Joe Kelly and Kendall Graveman, continuing a deadline selling spree.

Toussaint (1-3) allowed three hits, walked one and struck out four. Gregory Santos earned his second save.

Xzavion Curry (3-1) took the loss and Josh Naylor had a double and two singles, accounting for half the Guardians' six hits.

### Phillies 2, Pirates 1

In Pittsburgh, Kyle Schwarber hit a two-run home run and reached base in all five plate appearances. Zack Wheeler struck out 11 in 6 2/3 innings, and Philadelphia beat Pittsburgh.

Schwarber's blast, his 27th of the season, came off All-Star Mitch Keller in the third inning and carried into the Phillies' bullpen in center field. Brandon Marsh walked to lead off the inning before Schwarber unloaded with one out. Bryson Stott had two hits for Philadelphia.

Wheeler (8-5) gave up one run and three hits while walking one after being winless in his previous three starts. He was removed from the game following a 42-minute rain delay in the seventh inning. Craig Kimbrel earned his 17th save. Keller (9-7) lasted 5 2/3 innings and allowed two runs and six hits with eight strikeouts and three walks. Ji Man Choi hit a run-scoring double in the fourth to draw the Pirates to 2-1.

### Braves 10, Brewers 7

In Atlanta, Ozzie Albies singled in the go-ahead run in the fifth inning, Austin Riley and Matt Olson hit back-to-back homers in a four-run seventh and the major league-leading Atlanta Braves snapped a two-game skid.

Marcell Ozuna also went deep for Atlanta, hitting his 19th homer.

Raisel Iglesias worked a perfect ninth for his 19th save in 21 chances.

Abraham Toro hit a three-run homer for Milwaukee (57-47), which began the night with a 1 1/2-game lead in the NL Central.

Adrian Houser (3-3) took the loss after allowing eight hits and six runs in four innings. Collin McHugh (4-1) gave up one hit in 1 1/3 innings.

### Rays 4, Astros 3

In Houston, Brandon Lowe hit a three-run homer early and José Siri doubled and scored the tiebreaking run in the ninth inning for Tampa Bay.

The game was tied entering the ninth when Siri doubled to left field off Ryan Pressly (3-3) and moved to third on a sacrifice fly by Chris-

## Japan hold off Tonga in Pacific Nations Cup before facing unbeaten Fiji

# NZ rout 'young' Wallabies to retain Rugby Championship, Bledisloe Cup

MELBOURNE, Australia, July 29, (AP) — New Zealand locked away the Bledisloe Cup and Rugby Championship trophy for another year, extending a strong start to the World Cup season with a 38-7 win over Australia on Saturday.

The All Blacks finished with a perfect 3-0 record in the shortened Championship and, by winning the first leg of the two-leg Bledisloe series, extended their hold on the trans-Tasman trophy to 21 years.

They were expected to win at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. After a 41-12 win over Argentina and 35-20 win over world champion South Africa, the All Blacks came into the match massive favorites against the winless Wallabies.

But there still was a frisson of doubt. Coach Eddie Jones selected and talked up an exceptionally young Wallabies team and the prospect of a big upset briefly raised its head when they seized an early lead.

By halftime, New Zealand was ahead 19-7 with tries by Shannon Frizell, Codie Taylor and Will Jordan and the specter of unexpected defeat had effectively been laid.

Though they were under pressure early in the second half, New Zealand scored three tries while Australia was reduced to 14 men by a yellow card, and that made a close match one-sided. A yellow card in the first half also was expensive for Australia.

The Wallabies also lost inspirational captain Allan Alaalatoa to injury and that was crushing.

New Zealand was strong at set-pieces but the Wallabies will take enormous encouragement from their start and competitive performance at breakdowns. The All Blacks made rapid and decisive beginnings against Argentina and South Africa and while they scored first on Saturday after only three minutes, Australia responded quickly and denied them similar early dominance.

New Zealand's discipline was nowhere near as tight as it was in the other Championship matches and it was heavily penalized at breakdowns by veteran English referee Wayne Barnes, a further measure of Australia's competitiveness in that area.

The first half was much closer than the scoreline indicated. When the Australian forwards had quick phase ball and could run, they drove back the All Blacks and flyhalf Carter Gordon in his debut test managed the attack well. The All Blacks felt back often on the comfort of their set-piece.

Back-rower Shannon Frizell scored the All Blacks' opening try from a lineout at which Wallabies scrum-half Tate McDermott was collared and driven back over his own line.

Australia quickly replied with a try to Rob Valetini, who crashed into the defense near the posts. The play continued and Marika Koroibete went close in the corner before replays showed Valetini scored for a 7-5 lead. Koroibete was shown a yellow card for a deliberate knock on midway through the half.

Hooker Codie Taylor scored from a lineout drive to

tian Bethancourt. The Rays took a 4-3 lead when Siri scored on a sacrifice fly by Yandy Diaz.

Colin Poche (8-3) pitched a scoreless eighth for the win. Pete Fairbanks picked up his 13th save as Tampa Bay won for just the third time in 11 games.

Houston's Cristian Javier yielded three hits and three runs with eight strikeouts in six innings to remain winless since June 3.

### Cubs 3, Cardinals 2

In St. Louis, Patrick Wisdom homered and Trey Mancini had a tiebreaking RBI single to lead Chicago past St. Louis for its ninth win in 10 games.

Drew Smyly (8-7) allowed just two hits in 4 1/3 effective innings in relief as the Cubs won their seventh straight game.

Reliever Adbert Alzolay got the last four outs for his 12th save in 13 opportunities. He retired pinch-hitter Alec Burleson on a fly ball to deep center with a runner on third to end the game as Mike Tauchman reached over the fence to take away a potential game-winning home run.

Lars Nootbaar homered twice for St. Louis, which has lost three of five.

Jordan Montgomery (6-9) took the loss, allowing three runs and five hits over six innings.

### Royals 8, Twins 5, 10 innings

In Kansas City, Bobby Witt Jr.'s grand slam in the 10th inning gave Kansas City a win over Minnesota.

Witt finished 4 for 5 with six RBIs, falling a triple short of the cy-

win back the lead for New Zealand in the 34th minute. Fast hands and feet made a try for winger Will Jordan just before the break.

Jones unleashed his bench early and ran into trouble when prop Taniela Tupou was shown a yellow card in the 58th for head contact. New Zealand had been stuck on defense for most of the second half until that point and was able at last to break out.

Almost immediately, it was able to score again through winger Caleb Clark, who had just taken the field as a replacement. After a lineout and incursion into the Wallabies' 22, Jordan stood in a tackle and offloaded to wing Mark Tealea to score.

Again, only a minute later, center Rieko Ioane finished the best try-scoring movement of the match. Fly-half Richie Mo'unga started things inside their 22. Lock Scott Barrett pushed off a defender and passed to set in motion a movement which continued with slick interpassing down the left touch. Inside the Australia 22, the All Blacks went across the field and Tealea baffled his marker and sent over Ioane.

The teams meet again in Dunedin, New Zealand, next weekend.

## RUGBY

A late Kotaro Matsushima try-saving tackle highlighted a big defensive effort by Japan to hold off Tonga 21-16 at Hanazono Rugby Stadium and retain a slim chance of winning the Pacific Nations Cup.

Tonga dominated possession and territory and forced Japan to make more than twice as many tackles. But Japan outscored Tonga three tries to two and led for the last 50 minutes. The scoreline remained close in part due to Japan missing four goalkicks out of six.

Following its first win in more than a year, Japan hosts unbeaten title favorite Fiji in Tokyo next weekend in the third and last round of the cup.

Winger Jone Naikabula's try and set-up for lock Amato Fakatava propped up Japan's 13-5 lead at halftime. Captain Sonatane Takulua dotted down for Tonga, then William Havili's penalties put them within two points.

A try by wing Semisi Masirewa extended Japan's lead but Tonga closed in again after hooker Samiuela Moli's try from a lineout.

Replacement flyhalf Rikiya Matsuda's penalty then gave Japan some breathing room.

Earlier, Fiji handled defending champion Samoa 33-19 in Apia to start the Pacific Nations Cup with two wins. Fiji was up 30-5 by halftime. Hooker Tevita Ikanivere scored two tries around one by debutant center Iosefo Masi for 17-0 after 17 minutes. Flyhalf Caleb Muntz slotted five of seven goalkicks. In a rainy second half, Samoa rallied with tries by winger Tumua Manu and captain Fritz Lee but Fiji held on.

### Athletics 8, Rockies 5

In Denver, Zack Gelof and Ramon Laureano homered, JP Sears won for the second time this season and Oakland snapped a three-game skid.

Shea Langeliers had a double, a triple and scored twice, Laureano had two hits and scored twice and Tony Kemp had two doubles as the major league-worst A's pounded out 14 hits. They were 3-13 in their previous 16 games.

Sears (2-7) gave up four hits, including a homer to Randal Grichuk, struck out five and walked one while breaking a four-game losing streak.

Colorado left-hander Kyle Freeland (4-11) gave up nine hits and five runs, three earned, in his first start since suffering a right shoulder



Seattle Mariners centerfielder Julio Rodriguez chases down a fly ball against the Arizona Diamondbacks in the third inning during a baseball game in Phoenix. (AP)

## MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, July 29, (AP) — Results and standings from the MLB games on Friday.

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago W. Sox	3	0	.612	0
Baltimore	1	0	.577	0
Toronto	4	1	.545	1
Tampa Bay	4	1	.545	1
Kansas City	8	3	.524	3
Oakland	8	5	.500	5
San Diego	7	1	.476	1
Boston	3	2	.429	2
Seattle	5	2	.417	2
Philadelphia	2	1	.333	1
NY Mets	5	1	.333	1
Atlanta	10	7	.333	7
Chicago Cubs	3	2	.333	2
Cincinnati	6	5	.333	5

American League

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Baltimore	63	40	.612	—
Tampa Bay	63	43	.594	1-1/2
Toronto	58	46	.558	5-1/2
Boston	56	47	.544	7
New York	54	49	.524	9

Central Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	54	51	.514	—
Cleveland	52	52	.500	1-1/2
Detroit	46	58	.442	7-1/2
Chicago	42	63	.400	12
Kansas City	30	75	.286	24

West Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Texas	60	44	.577	—
Houston	58	46	.558	2
Los Angeles	54	50	.519	6
Seattle	53	50	.515	6-1/2
Oakland	29	76	.276	31-1/2

National League

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	65	36	.644	—
Philadelphia	56	47	.544	10
Miami	56	48	.538	10-1/2
New York	49	54	.476	17
Washington	43	61	.413	23-1/2

Central Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	57	47	.548	—
Cincinnati	57	48	.543	-1/2
Chicago	52	51	.505	4-1/2
St. Louis	46	59	.438	11-1/2
Pittsburgh	45	58	.437	11-1/2

West Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	58	44	.569	—
San Francisco	56	48	.538	3
Arizona	55	49	.529	4
San Diego	50	54	.481	9
Colorado	40	63	.388	18-1/2

injury when he dove for a popup in San Francisco on July 9. He struck out three and hit a batter.

### Mariners 5, Diamondbacks 2

In Phoenix, Cal Raleigh and Tom Murphy hit back-to-back, two-run doubles in a four-run first, Logan Gilbert threw 6 1/3 strong innings and Seattle beat skidding Arizona.

The Mariners have won three straight and are 8-6 since the All-Star break. The Diamondbacks continued their extended slide, falling to 6-15 in July.

Seattle jumped all over D-backs starter Tommy Henry (5-4) in the first, scoring four runs on four hits, including three doubles.

Gilbert (9-5) gave up two runs on nine hits, striking out five and walking none. Paul Sewald worked the ninth for his career-high 21st save.

### Red Sox 3, Giants 2

In San Francisco, Triston Casas homered and hit an RBI double to back Kutter Crawford, and Boston ran its win streak to five games with a win over San Francisco.

Crawford (5-5) duelled with Giants ace Logan Webb (8-9), striking out seven with one walk, while allowing one run on three hits over 5 2/3 innings. Kenley Jansen earned his 23rd save. Michael Conforto had an RBI single in the sixth and Joc Pederson homered in the bottom of the eighth for San Francisco.

### Padres 7, Rangers 1

In San Diego, Joe Musgrove pitched six strong innings and Fernando Tatis Jr. homered as San Diego beat AL West-leading Texas.

Musgrove (10-3) was facing the Rangers for the first time since throwing the first no-hitter in Padres history, in just his second start with his hometown team, on April 9, 2021, at Texas. Musgrove won for the ninth time in 10 decisions by holding Texas to four hits while striking out five and walking two.

Tatis homered to right-center off Dane Dunning (8-4) with one out in the fifth, his 18th, and added an RBI single during the four-run sixth.

The Padres also got RBIs from two of their other stars, Juan Soto and Manny Machado. Gary Sanchez added an RBI double in the sixth.

## Piastrì settles for second

## F1 leader Verstappen wins rain-hit Belgian GP sprint race

SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS, Belgium, July 29. (AP): Two-time reigning Formula One champion Max Verstappen won the rain-hit sprint race at the Belgian Grand Prix on Saturday to extend his huge lead over Red Bull teammate Sergio Perez to 118 points.

It was Verstappen's ninth straight win including the two sprint races he has won this season. He collected eight points for the victory and will look to extend his overall lead further in Sunday's main race as he continues his march to a third straight world title.

"That was not bad," Verstappen said with casual understatement.

He finished a comfortable 6.7 seconds ahead of McLaren driver Oscar Piastri and 10.7 clear of Alpine's Pierre Gasly.

"I'm getting more and more comfortable with the car, which is much better than it was at the start of the

year," said the 22-year-old Piastri. "It's been amazing for me."

Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton crossed the line in fourth but dropped down to seventh after being given a five-second time penalty for causing a collision when trying to overtake Perez, who scored no points after retiring near the end.

## MOTOR RACING

Hamilton's penalty moved Ferrari's Carlos Sainz Jr. into fourth spot ahead of his teammate Charles Leclerc, with McLaren's Lando Norris sixth and Mercedes driver George Russell in eighth behind his teammate Hamilton.

This was the third of six scheduled sprint races this season, with Perez winning in Azerbaijan and Verstappen winning in Austria and here. The



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands, (right), and McLaren driver Oscar Piastri of Australia steer their cars during the sprint race ahead of the Formula One Grand Prix at the Spa-Francorchamps racetrack in Spa, Belgium. (AP)

top eight drivers all score points from eight down to one.

The sprint race was delayed by more than one hour due to heavy rain,

getting underway with a rolling start procedure after several laps behind a safety car, in order to clear more water off the track for the sprint, which lasted 11 laps.

"I think the rolling start was the smart thing to do," Verstappen said. "(But) I think we could have raced a little earlier, maybe two laps earlier."

It was a welcome result for Gasly, who crashed out of the Hungarian GP last weekend.

Earlier, Verstappen edged out Piastri by just .011 seconds to take the sprint pole.

The shortened qualifying format - known as the "sprint shootout" - was delayed by 35 minutes because of wet and rainy conditions, with air blowers used to clear water from the track.

Piastri shot to the top of the leaderboard on his last run, only for Verstappen to typically find extra pace.

Aston Martin's Lance Stroll pushed too hard in the final seconds of Q2, the second part of qualifying, and slid off into the barriers, mangling his right tire and bringing out a red flag. His teammate Fernando Alonso was on his out lap when the crash happened and couldn't set a time, meaning he also failed to make it into Q3.

Heavy rain had also impacted Friday's running at the 7-kilometer (4.3-mile) Spa-Francorchamps circuit, which is nestled in a forest amid the Ardennes countryside and is often impacted by gloomy weather.

Verstappen also set the fastest time in qualifying for Sunday's main race, but Leclerc will start from pole because of Verstappen's five-place grid penalty for a gearbox change. He begins Sunday's race from sixth, but that will not bother Verstappen considering he won here last year from 14th.

## Ledecky passes Michael for most individual worlds golds

## Sjoestrom breaks own world record

FUKUOKA, Japan, July 29, (AP): Katie Ledecky added to her legacy as the greatest female swimmer in history when she won the 800-meter freestyle on Saturday at the World Aquatics Championships, establishing two more notable records with the triumph.

The victory by the 26-year-old Ledecky made her the first swimmer ever to win the same event six times at the world championships and also marked her 16th individual world title, breaking a tie with Michael Phelps for the most individual golds ever at the worlds.

Ledecky, who had the 30 top times ever in the 800 entering the race, led all the way, dominating her competitors and winning in a time of 8 minutes, 8.87 seconds.

## SWIMMING

The gold in the 800 was Ledecky's second individual gold of these championships following her win in the 1,500 free on Tuesday. She also took silver in the 400 free here.

Li Bingjie of China claimed the silver in 8:13.31, with Ariarne Titmus of Australia took the bronze in 8:13.59.

Kaylee McKeown of Australia made some history of her own with her gold in the women's 200 backstroke. McKeown's victory gave her a sweep of all three backstroke events here, after her earlier wins in the 50 and 100. She became the first swimmer ever to sweep all three backstrokes at the worlds.

McKeown took the lead at the final turn and steamed home in 2:03.85. She joined Leon Marchand of France and Qin Haiyang of China as swimmers who swept all three events in the same discipline at these worlds.

Regan Smith of the United States picked up the silver in 2:04.94, while Peng Xuwei of China got the bronze in 2:06.74.

Sarah Sjoestrom of Sweden continued her dominance with gold in the women's 50-meter butterfly. The 29-year-old won in 24.77 and has now won the event five consecutive times at the worlds.

The win brought Sjoestrom's total number of individual medals at worlds to 20, equaling Phelps' mark.

Zhang Yufei of China, who took gold in the 100 fly here, claimed the silver in 25.05, while American Gretchen Walsh got the bronze in 25.46.

Fan favorite Rikako Ikee of Japan finished seventh (25.78), but was greeted warmly by the home crowd.

The 23-year-old Ikee won six gold medals at the 2018 Asian Games, but was diagnosed with leukemia in February of 2019. Her comeback continues to resonate with both the Japanese public and her fellow competitors.

Cameron McEvoy of Australia led all the way to capture the gold in the men's 50-meter free in 21.06. American Jack Alexy



Maxime Grousset of France celebrates after winning the men's 100m butterfly final at the World Swimming Championships in Fukuoka, Japan. (AP)



Gold medalist Sarah Sjoestrom of Sweden celebrates during the medal ceremony for the women's 50m butterfly final at the World Swimming Championships in Fukuoka, Japan. (AP)

collected his second silver of the worlds in 21.57 to go with his silver in the 100 free. Benjamin Proud of Britain, last year's world champion, took the bronze in 21.58.

Maxime Grousset of France won gold in the men's 100 fly in 50.14. The 24-year-old took the early lead and held on for the victory.

Josh Liendo of Canada earned the silver in 50.34, while American Dare Rose made the podium with the bronze (50.46).

Ruta Meilutyte of Lithuania equaled the world record of 29.30 in her semifinal in the women's 50 breaststroke.

Australia won gold in the 4x100 mixed freestyle relay in a world-record time of 3:18.83. The U.S. took the silver in 3:20.82, with Britain getting the bronze in 3:21.68.

## Kharlan penalized for not shaking hands with Russian opponent

## IOC assures Ukraine fencer of Paris Games spot after DQ

GENEVA, July 29, (AP): The IOC assured Ukrainian fencer Olga Kharlan that she will have a place at the Paris Olympics next year after she was disqualified from a key ranking event for refusing to shake hands with a Russian she had beaten.

In a letter to Kharlan, International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach said it would make a "unique exception" by allocating her an extra place to ensure she competes in Paris.

"It is admirable how you are managing this incredibly difficult situation," wrote Bach, who like Kharlan is a former Olympic champion in a fencing team event.

Each Olympic sport has a strict quota for athletes within the IOC-imposed 10,500 overall total at the Summer Games in Paris.

A protected entry for the 32-year-old Kharlan, a four-time Olympic medalist, has now been found after controversy over her disqualification at the world championships on Thursday marred the event at Milan, Italy.

The incident between Kharlan and her Russian opponent - Anna Smirnova, who was competing as an approved neutral athlete - also cast doubt on the IOC's hopes for athletes from the two countries to compete against each other without incident.

## OLYMPICS

Kharlan comfortably beat Smirnova 15-7 in a first-round contest then refused a handshake, and instead pointed her sabre toward the Russian. Touching blades was used as an alternative to handshakes at fencing competitions during the coronavirus pandemic.

Smirnova stood facing Kharlan and did not raise her sabre. Kharlan then turned and left the piste and the Russian refused to leave for more than 50 minutes. Smirnova sat on a chair on the piste in an apparent protest over the handshake.

Kharlan was later disqualified by the International Fencing Federation (FIE) which denied her the chance to

## Sabally records 1st triple-double in Wings' history

ARLINGTON, Texas, July 29, (AP): Satou Sabally had 14 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists for the first triple-double in Dallas franchise history and the Wings beat the short-handed Washington Mystics 90-62 Friday night.

Arike Ogunbowale and Teaira McCowan each scored 18 points for Dallas (14-10) and Natasha Howard added 14 points, nine rebounds, two steals and two blocks. Awak Kuier scored 12 points on 6-of-8 shooting and Maddy Siegrist scored 10.

## Storm 83, Sky74

In Chicago, Ezi Magbegor had 17 points, nine rebounds and five assists. Gabby Williams added scored 17 points and Seattle snapped a franchise-record 10-game losing streak.

## Lynx 88, Liberty 83

In New York, Kayla McBride shot 11 for 14 from the

field and finished with 26 points. Diamond Miller scored 22 points and Minnesota beat New York in the second of back-to-back games for the teams.

Dorka Juhász scored 13 points on 6-of-10 shooting and grabbed 10 rebounds for the Lynx (12-13), who have won three of their last four games and eight of their last 12 after an 0-6 start.

## BASKETBALL

New York (18-6), playing its fourth game in six days, was led by Sabrina Ionescu, who had 31 points, seven rebounds and seven assists. Breanna Stewart scored 23 points. Betnijah Laney added 11 points and Jonquel Jones grabbed 11 rebounds to go with nine points.

earn more ranking points that feed into Olympic qualification. The IOC said Thursday that sports governing bodies should show "sensitivity" on issues

involving Ukrainians and neutral athletes from Russia - an apparent suggestion that the FIE made an error.

One day later, Bach wrote to Khar-

lan acknowledging a "roller coaster of emotions and feelings" she must have.

The FIE changed course Friday by saying it would allow Kharlan to compete for Ukraine in the upcoming team sabre event, but still defended the decision to punish her. Kharlan had faced a suspension from the rest of the world championships and from other events.

Echoing the IOC, the FIE interim president Emmanuel Katsiadakis said the ruling "sends a message of sensitivity and understanding to our members and all sports federations, as the world faces tremendous challenges." The FIE published a comment attributed to Kharlan saying she was "thankful for this decision" and wanted to return to competition.

However, the FIE statement made no mention of allowing Ukrainians to avoid handshakes with Russian opponents in future - which could mean more disputes ahead of the Olympics - and the federation insisted it was right to punish Kharlan.

"The FIE stands fully behind the penalty, which, after a thorough review, is in complete accordance and compliance with its official rules and associated penalties," it said.



Katie Ledecky of the U.S. competes during the women's 800m freestyle final at the World Swimming Championships in Fukuoka, Japan. (AP)



French fans react ahead of the Women's World Cup Group F soccer match between France and Brazil in Brisbane, Australia. (AP)

# Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>

## Sweden seal place in knockout rounds

France revive campaign as Jamaica edge Panama for first ever WWC win

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, July 29, (AP): After leaving it to the last minute against South Africa, Sweden left nothing to chance Saturday in a 5-0 win over Italy which sealed its place in the knockout rounds of the Women's World Cup.

Sweden relied on Amanda Ilestedt's 90th-minute winner to salvage a 2-1 win from a sub-par performance in its opener against South Africa.

Ilestedt was Sweden's first scorer Saturday, this time in the 39th, and her glancing header from a corner sparked a flood of four Swedish goals in 11 minutes on either side of halftime. Her second goal came in the 50th and was a

### SOCCER

mirror image of the first. Rebecka Blomqvist finished it off in stoppage time with Sweden's fifth goal.

The Swedish attack again looked hesitant in the first 20 minutes. Italy appeared more composed over the ball in that period and more threatening with Sofia Cantore particularly dangerous on the right. Cantore had the first shot on goal in the opening minute, finding the keeper at the near post, and Italy had five shots on goal before Sweden had its first.

But as the first half progressed, Sweden began to look more composed, more organized and then more ruthless. The crowd of just over 29,000 appeared to sense the change.

AC Milan midfielder Kosovare Asllani began to get behind the defense and while at first she didn't find teammates forward to meet her crosses, her freedom marked a turning point in the match. Italy was forced to soak up more and more pressure until, at last, the dam broke.

Joanna Andersson curled the ball in from the right in the 39th and Ilestedt rose highest at the near post to glance the ball on a narrow angle into the net.

Fridolina Rolfo looked certain to score in the 43rd, one-on-one with Francesca Durante, but the goalkeeper threw herself toward Rolfo's feet and snuffed out the threat.

The reprieve was short-lived and Rolfo had to wait only moments for her second goal of the tournament. Another corner and this time the delivery eluded Durante and found Rolfo on the far post who headed home.

Rolfo turned deliverer in the first minute of stoppage time. Sent clear by a neat back-heel she passed low and beyond Durante, finding Stina Blackstenius, who tapped in. Arsenal's Blackstenius couldn't score against South Africa but she was pivotal to the Swedish attack Saturday; her goal was her 29th for the national team.

Sweden led 3-0 at halftime, and the scoring continued after the break. On a corner in the 50th, Ilestedt was on station at the near post to head home.

Sweden coach Peter Gerhardsson had reason to be concerned about his team's attacking performance against South Africa in which his team trailed until 25 minutes from the end. His confidence that goals eventually would flow was rewarded Saturday.

The clinical nature of Sweden's attack was highlighted by the fact possession was almost evenly shared. But Sweden had 14 shots on target, Italy four and the Italians will be haunted by Sweden's seven corners, all of which represented an immediate danger.

Ilestedt was player of the match and in every sense a towering figure in attack. Blackstenius, Rolfo and Asllani also were back in form and there was every sign Saturday the third-ranked Swedes are peaking at the right time.

Italy heads back to the drawing board with the first order of business to address its defense from set pieces.

### France 2, Brazil 1

In Brisbane, Eugénie Le Sommer and Wendie Renard revived France's Women's World Cup ambitions with a goal



Sweden's Amanda Ilestedt, Italy's Barbara Bonansea and Italy's goalkeeper Francesca Durante fight for the ball during the Women's World Cup Group G soccer match between the Sweden and Italy in Wellington, New Zealand. (AP)



Jamaica's Allyson Swaby, (top), celebrates with teammates after scoring the opening goal during the Women's World Cup Group F soccer match between Panama and Jamaica in Perth, Australia. (AP)

each in a 2-1 win over Brazil to give Les Bleues the lead in Group F.

After missing with a diving header in the 13th minute, Le Sommer scored her 90th international goal to extend her French record four minutes later with an emphatic header that gave Brazilian goalkeeper Leticia little chance.

Debinha equalized for Brazil as the hour approached and the game opened up as both teams pressed for a winner, the Brazilians desperate to end an 11-match winless streak against France.

But it was the set piece where French captain Renard clinched it, capitalizing on some poor defense. Renard, who had been in doubt for the match with a calf injury she picked up in the lackluster 0-0 draw against Jamaica, was perfectly placed for a back-post header as the towering defender drifted to the edge of the box to meet a corner with a powerful header in the 83rd.

Hervé Renard has reassembled the French squad since taking over as coach, recalling veterans including Le Sommer and restoring the confidence of others like 33-year-old Renard.

After criticism of France's opening performance for its lack of adventure

### World Cup Standings

BRISBANE, July 29, (AP): Women's World Cup standings on Saturday.

Group A						
P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Switzerland	2	1	1	2	0	4
New Zealand	2	1	0	1	2	3
Philippines	2	1	0	1	2	3
Norway	2	0	1	0	1	1
Group B						
P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Nigeria	2	1	1	0	3	2
Canada	2	1	1	0	2	1
Australia	2	1	0	1	3	3
e-Ireland	2	0	0	2	1	0
Group C						
P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
q-Spain	2	2	0	0	8	0
q-Japan	2	2	0	0	7	0
e-Costa Rica	2	0	0	2	0	0
e-Zambia	2	0	0	2	0	0
Group D						
P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
q-England	2	2	0	0	2	0
Denmark	2	1	0	1	1	3
China	2	1	0	1	1	3
e-Haiti	2	0	0	2	0	0
Group E						
P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
United States	2	1	1	0	4	1
Netherlands	2	1	1	0	2	1
Portugal	2	1	0	1	2	3
e-Vietnam	2	0	0	2	0	0
Group F						
P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
France	2	1	1	0	2	1
Jamaica	2	1	1	0	1	0
Brazil	2	1	0	1	5	2
e-Panama	2	0	0	2	0	0
Group G						
P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
q-Sweden	2	2	0	0	7	1
Italy	2	1	0	1	1	3
South Africa	2	0	1	1	3	1
Argentina	2	0	1	1	2	3
Group H						
P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Germany	1	1	0	0	6	0
Colombia	1	1	0	0	2	0
South Korea	1	0	1	0	2	0
Morocco	1	0	1	0	0	0

and flair, his veterans clicked when it counted against Brazil.

Brazil had opened with a thumping

## Australia's Kerr available for must-win game against Canada

BRISBANE, Australia, July 29, (AP): Sam Kerr is ready to go, and so the much-needed reinforcements appear to be arriving just in time for co-host Australia ahead of its must-win Women's World Cup match against Canada.

Kerr and Mary Fowler missed Australia's upset 3-2 loss to Nigeria but are available for Monday's make-or-break Group B game against the Olympic champions.

"I'm going to be there," Kerr said Saturday. "I'm going to be ready."

Kerr trained in soccer boots while participating in her first practice session since going down with a calf injury on the eve of the July 20 tournament opener. She hasn't played a minute yet

at a World Cup on home soil. The 29-year-old Kerr scheduled a news conference at the Matildas' camp in Brisbane, seemingly to assure Australian supporters that she's on track.

"I would love to tell you guys everything. It's going to be down to the wire," she said. "I'm definitely going to be available, but how we decide to use that is not to be given to the opposition."

Asked again if she would definitely be fit to play, Kerr responded "yes."

"I'm feeling good. I was out on the pitch today," she said, "as good as I can be."

Kerr hurt her left calf in a practice

session ahead of Australia's opening 1-0 win over Ireland, but it didn't become public knowledge until an hour before kickoff when her name was missing from the team sheet for the starting lineup. The almost 76,000-strong crowd at Stadium Australia had been buzzing until the news

### SOCCER

went around that Kerr would be missing the game.

Her injury status has been a daily topic of news in Australia, where she's been the face of the promotional cam-

paign. So her availability for the Canada game is a genuine boost. The Matildas captain is Australia's all-time leading international scorer with 63 goals in 121 career appearances.

"Mentally, it's massive, Matildas defender Ellie Carpenter said. "It brings so much to our team and obviously also a lot to the opposition knowing that we have Sam available for this game."

Carpenter confirmed that Fowler also practiced on the pitch Saturday and will be available to take on Canada after recovering from a concussion she sustained at practice two days before the 3-2 loss to Nigeria.



France's Maelle Lakrar competes for the ball with Brazil's Geysa (right), during the Women's World Cup Group F soccer match between France and Brazil in Brisbane, Australia. (AP)

We regret the decision: Ferrero

## UEFA 'removes' Juve from European competition and fines Chelsea in financial rule-breaking cases

GENEVA, July 29, (AP): Juventus was removed from European competition next season and Chelsea was fined \$11 million in separate UEFA rulings over financial rules breaches.

The expulsion of Juventus from the third-tier Europa Conference League was expected because of a false accounting case that already saw the two-time European champion deducted 10 points in Serie A. That penalty dropped Juventus out of Champions League qualification places.

Juventus' spot in the Europa Conference League should go to Fiorentina in the playoffs round starting on Aug. 24.

UEFA said Friday that Juventus also must also pay a fine of 10 million euros (\$11 million) for breaking Financial Fair Play (FFP) rules. A further 10 million euros can be deducted if the club fails to comply with UEFA financial monitoring rules in future seasons.

Juventus regretted the ruling but said it wouldn't appeal. "We regret the decision of the UEFA Club Financial Control Body," Juventus president Gianluca Ferrero said in a statement on the club's website. "We do not share the interpretation that has been given of our defense and we remain firmly convinced of the legitimacy of our actions and the validity of our arguments."

"However, we have decided not to appeal this judgment. Despite this painful decision, we can now face the new season by focusing on the field and not on the courts."

In a separate case, Chelsea will also pay a settlement of 10 million euros to UEFA for incorrect financial information submitted between 2012 and 2019 when the club was owned by Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich.

Chelsea's current American-led ownership group reported "potentially incomplete financial reporting under the club's previous ownership" in May last year, UEFA said.

Chelsea, which won the Champions League in 2012 and

2021, did not qualify for the next editions of European competitions.

"In accordance with the club's ownership group's core principles of full compliance and transparency with its regulators, we are grateful that this case has been concluded by proactive disclosure of information to UEFA and a settlement that fully resolves the reported matters," Chelsea said in a statement. "Chelsea greatly values its relationship with UEFA and looks forward to building on that relationship in the years to come." UEFA had opened an investigation against Juventus in December for probable breaches of FFP rules after prosecutors in Italy unsealed their case against the storied club.

### SOCCER

Juventus was ultimately docked 10 points in Serie A by Italian authorities which dropped the club from potentially finishing in the top four and earning a place in the next Champions League to finish seventh - enough only for the third-tier Conference League. AC Milan got into the Champions League instead.

The false accounting allegations pushed UEFA club finance investigators to terminate a settlement agreed with the club last year and impose fresh sanctions, the European soccer body said.

The chaotic 2022-23 season for Juventus also saw it lose long-standing club officials who resigned, including president Andrea Agnelli and vice president Pavel Nedved, a former playing great. Juventus also lost two years of European football from 2006 to 2008 in fallout from the Calciopoli corruption scandal.

4-0 win over Panama, with Ary Borges scoring three goals and providing the back-heel assist for one of the goals of the tournament.

### Jamaica 1, Panama 0

In Perth, Defender Allyson Swaby scored in the 56th minute and Jamaica hung on to edge Panama 1-0 for its

first-ever win at the Women's World Cup.

Swaby, who grew up in West Hartford, Conn., and played for Boston College, knocked in a header off Trudi Carter's corner kick to clinch the win that moved the Jamaicans into a surprising share of top spot in Group F with France.