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DIRECTIVES FOR BEDOUN ISSUE ... LIVING CONDITIONS FOR CITIZENS

iPhone's 'end call' button may move

NEW YORK, Aug 10, (AP): Hanging up that phone call? The location of Apple's red end-call button is set to slightly move with upcoming iOS 17 updates to the phone app, so be wary of your thumb's muscle memory.

As iPhone users know, the "End" button currently sits prominently away from other call options, in a center position towards the bottom of the screen. But with iOS 17, which officially launches this fall, the red icon will move the right - and other features will move down to join it.

While a iOS 17 preview guide from Apple showed this new setup in June, renewed attention has increased as some explore beta versions of the software upgrade. Images from iOS 17 beta versions shared by multiple news outlets this week show the small - but potentially frustrating - change.

Beyond the end button, there are additional changes to the placement of other call features seen on past iOS versions. The "Mute" and "Speaker" buttons, for example, have swapped - as have the "FaceTime" and "Keyboard" options. And it appears the feature allowing you to search for contacts has merged with the add call option.

The changes have already received reactions on social media, where some predict having some muscle memory errors - noting it could take some time to adjust.

It's unclear if the call functions will change further before iOS 17 officially rolls out. The Associated Press reached out to Apple for comment Wednesday.

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As Apple notes on its website, the company's beta program allows some Apple users to test out software before it's released. Feedback from participants helps Apple identify issues and improve software programs before they're commercially released.



Mourners carry the body of Amir Ahmed Khalifa, 27, during his funeral in the West Bank refugee camp of al-Ein, Nablus, Thursday, Aug. 10, 2023. The Palestinian Health Ministry said Thursday that Israeli troops killed Khalifa in the West Bank town of Zawata, north of the city Nablus. The Israeli military said a gunman opened fire at soldiers operating in the Nablus area and they shot back. (AP)

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait Meteorological Department declared on Thursday that the country would be sprayed with some light rain over the weekend amid proceeding high heat and humidity.

high heat and humidity.
Forecaster Yasser Al-Bloushi said in a statement to KUNA the country would continue to be affected by the seasonal Indian depression, along with unstable hot and humid air blows.

Today's heat will range between 44 and 46 degrees and will drop at night to the 32-34 degrees level.

On Friday, the maximum level of the temperature would be between 46 and 48 degrees during day time and 32 and 34 degrees at night. He also reported some scattered drizzles the same day.

On Saturday, Al-Bloushi said the temperature would at the 46-48 degrees level and fall to 32-35 degrees at night. (KUNA)

BEIRUT: Lebanese Defense Minister Maurice Sleem on Thursday survived an assassination attempt as his car came under gunfire in Jisr Al-Basha neighborhood, east of Beirut, the minister's media office said.

"The minister is fine, but the rear windshield of his car was hit by bullets," the office said in a press release. Meanwhile, Interior Minister Bassam

Meanwhile, Interior Minister Bassam Al-Mawlawi said security and military intelligence agencies would conduct investigations into the incident. (KUNA)

NEW DELHI: Indian lawmakers Wednesday approved a data protection legislation that "seeks to better regulate big tech firms and penalize companies for data breaches" as several groups expressed concern over citizens' privacy rights.

The legislation will limit cross-border transfer of data and provide a framework for setting up a data protection authority to ensure compliance from tech companies, Information Technology and Telecom Minister **Ashwini Vaishnaw** said.

several opposition lawmakers and digital experts say the legislation would allow the government and its agencies to access user data from companies and personal data of individuals without their consent as well as collect private data in a country where digital freedoms have been shrinking since Prime Minister Narendra Modi took office in 2014 (AP)

Reconsider job appointments

Promote those who are eligible and benefit from their job experience by empowering them, instead of referring them for retirement

Eliminate the documentary cycle and disguised unemployment in some ministries and State institutions

Wasta' is the basis of corruption in the government sector and it must be eradicated to stop 'parachute' appointments

Comprehensive evaluation of major projects and determine reasons for their delayed completion and poor construction of roads and bridges

Remove obstacles to e-government and strict procedures to prevent employees from sneaking out during working hours

Kuwait bans movies Barbie, 'Talk to Me'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 10, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Ministry of Information's committee on cinematic censorship decided on Wednesday to ban the screening in Kuwait of "Barbie" and "Talk to Me" films.

The decision stemmed from keenness on protection of public ethics and social traditions, Undersecretary of the Ministry for Press and Publication Lafy Al-Subei'e said.

"The Committee noted that both movies promulgate ideas and beliefs that are alien to the Kuwaiti society and public order," Al-Subei'e, also head of the Committee, disclosed. "While deciding on any foreign movie, the committee usu-

ally orders censoring of the scenes that run counter to public ethics.

"But a film carries alien concepts, message or unacceptable behavior, the committee decides to bar the stuff in question as a whole," he explained, adding that this rule applies to all foreign cinema production.

Tourists flee

Massive 'blazes' on Maui kill at least 36

WAILUKU, Hawaii, Aug 10, (AP): Thousands of people raced to escape homes in Maui as blazes swept across the Hawaiian island, destroying parts of a centuries-old town and killing at least 36 people in the deadliest U.S. wildfire in recent years.

The fire took the island by surprise, leaving behind burnedout cars on once busy streets and smoking piles of rubble where historic buildings had stood in Lahaina, which dates to the 1700s and has long been a favorite destination of tourists. Crews battled blazes in several places on the island Wednesday, and the flames forced some adults and children to flee into the ocean.

At least 36 people have died, according to a statement from Maui County late Wednesday that said no other details were available. Officials said earlier that 271 structures were damaged or destroyed and dozens of people injured. It is the deadliest fire since the 2018 Camp Fire in California, which killed at least 85 people and virtually razed the town of Paradise.

Officials warned that the death toll in Hawaii could rise, with the fires still burning and teams spreading out to search charred areas.

Harrowing escape

Lahaina residents Kamuela Kawaakoa and Iiulia Yasso described a harrowing escape under smoke-filled skies Tuesday afternoon. The couple and their 6-year-old son got back to their apartment after a quick dash to the supermarket for water, and only had time to grab a change of clothes and run as the bushes around them caught fire.

"We barely made it out," Kawaakoa said at an evacuation shelter on Wednesday, still unsure if anything was left of their apartment.

As the family fled, a senior center across the road erupted in flames. They called 911, but didn't know if the people got out. As they drove away, downed utility poles and others fleeing in cars slowed their progress. "It was so hard to sit there and just watch my town burn to ashes and not be able to do anything," Kawaakoa, 34, said.

As the fires rage, tourists were advised to stay away, and about 11,000 visitors flew out of Maui on Wednesday, with at least another 1,500 expected to leave Thursday, according to Ed Sniffen, state transportation director. Officials prepared the Hawaii Convention Center in Honolulu to take in the thousands who have been displaced.

Maui County Mayor Richard Bissen Jr. said the island had "been tested like never before in our lifetime."

"We are grieving with each other during this inconsolable time," he said in a recorded statement. "In the days ahead, we will be stronger as a 'kaiaulu,' or community, as we rebuild with resilience and aloha."

Documentary cycle obstruction to projects

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 10: As the features of the prospective development transformation map led by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah continue

to unfold, reliable sources confirmed that "the political leadership has taken advantage of the parliamentary recess to evaluate the past events."

Sources said the leadership focused on the accomplishments in the first session of the National Assembly to prevent crises and introduce laws that are necessary for national development.

Sources confirmed that the topmost priorities of the leadership for the next stage include the thorough review of appointments and major projects; accountability for those who delayed projects and poorly implemented some of these projects, especially the roads and bridges; and the demands of the people.

Sources also disclosed that "explicit directives have been given to the Council of Ministers to develop work procedures in ministries, particularly the elimination of the long

documentary cycle which impedes the completion of transactions."

Sources emphasized that the leadership gives great importance to the 'e-government' project in a bid to better serve the public. They pointed out that several obstacles still prevent the comprehensive digital transformation for the people to complete transactions in any of the State agencies on time; in addition to overcoming bureaucracy and the absence of some employees.

Sources added the tedious documentary cycle has been an obstruc-

sources added the tedious documentary cycle has been an obstruction to projects; thereby, increasing their cost. Sources revealed this paved way for manipulation of the law and exorbitant cost of projects under the pretext of 'change orders'. Sources stated that His Highness is working hard to eradicate such irregularities in the next stage to stop the wastage of public money.

to stop the wastage of public money.

According to sources, "some major projects were either stalled or delayed. The leadership is determined to reconsider these projects, including the university city in Shadadiyah and the new airport. Decision-makers stated that these projects were not completed within

the specified time and their cost was much higher than the actual value. Most of these projects were not implemented properly, especially the roads and bridges. This is a major scandal due to suspicions that everyone knows well."

Sources also affirmed that the leadership will not hesitate in holding accountable the seniors before the juniors in order to ensure good performance, indicating the country's image abroad is tarnished due to the misappropriation of public money and corruption in various fields, which

the leadership does not accept.

Sources hinted that the leadership will reconsider all job appointments, especially in the last 10 years. They stressed that the era of 'parachute' appointments is over, and there are clear criteria for selecting employees in

ministries and other government institutions.

Sources stated that the leadership takes into account the criteria for promotion and benefiting from the expertise of all parties. "It is inconceivable that someone who has spent 20 years in an institution is not promoted, especially in the field where he has vast experience. Instead, he is referred for retirement, whereas someone replaces him because the latter has 'wasta' — a lawmaker sheikh or another influential person," sources added.

Sources went on to say that it is now necessary to unify the employment package as the leadership has realized that privileges granted to employees in some sectors are better than those in other sectors. Sources added this led to the prevalence of disguised unemployment in some institutions and this has negatively affected productivity.

Sources revealed the leadership noticed that the productivity of employees does not exceed an hour per day, which hinders transactions and achievement. Therefore, a strict directive has been issued to prevent employees from sneaking out during working hours, sources said.

Sources reaffirmed that "instructions were issued to the government to prepare proposals and draft laws; which will help complete its program and reform steps, especially since the relationship between the Assembly and the government has been compatible with the general political atmosphere in the country. Cooperation between the two authorities is expected to continue."

Continued on Page 5





This combination of satellite images provided by Maxar Technologies shows an overview of Banyan Court in Lahaina on Maui, Hawaii, on June 25, 2023, top, and an overview of the same area on Wednesday, Aug. 9, following a wildfire that tore through the heart of the Hawaiian island. Thousands of people raced to escape homes in Maui as blazes swept across the Hawaiian island, destroying parts of a centuries-old town and killing at least 36 people in the

deadliest U.S. wildfire in recent years. The fire took the island by surprise, leaving behind burned-out cars on once busy streets and smoking piles of rubble where historic buildings had stood in Lahaina, which dates to the 1700s and has long been a favorite destination of tourists. Crews battled blazes in several places on the island Wednesday, and the flames forced some adults and children to flee into the ocean. (AP)





West African migrants buried in unmarked graves on coast of Senegal. (AP)

Beach graves hold untold number of migrants

Baba ... are you there?

The small mounds of sand that dot the beach in northern Senegal ■ blend into the terrain. But thick rope juts out from beneath the piles. Pieces of black plastic bags are scattered nearby, and green netting is strewn on top.

That's how residents in the small fishing town of Saint-Louis say they know where the bodies lie.

These unmarked beach graves hold untold numbers of West African migrants who are increasingly attempting the treacherous journey across parts of the Atlantic to Europe, Senegalese authorities, residents along the coast and survivors of failed boat trips told The Associated Press.

Bodies wash ashore or are found by fishermen at sea, then are buried by authorities with no clarity as to whether the deaths are documented or investigated as required by Senegalese and international law, according to lawyers and human rights experts. Most of the families of those buried will never know what happened to their

The route from West Africa to Spain is one of the world's most dangerous, yet the number of migrants leaving from Senegal on rickety wooden boats has surged over the past year. That means more missing people and deaths - relatives, activists and officials have reported hundreds over the past month, though exact figures are difficult to verify.

The increases come amid European Union pressure for North and West African countries to stop migrant crossings. Like most nations in the region, Senegal releases little information about the crossings, the migrants who attempt the trip or those who die trying

But according to the International Organization for Migration, at least 2,300 migrants left Senegal trying to reach Spain's Canary Islands in the first six months of the year, doubling the number from the same period in 2022. A Spanish official, speaking on condition of anonymity because the figures weren't authorized for release, told AP that about 1,100 arrived in the Canaries.

It's unclear what happened to the 1,000-plus people who didn't make it to Spain. They may have died at sea, been rescued from capsized boats or be held by authorities. Through June, Senegal detained 725 migrants, said interior ministry spokesman Maham Ka, though officials wouldn't say whether the nine vessels involved had left

Authorities in Saint-Louis admitted to AP that bodies are sometimes buried on the beach. They said it happens only when approved by the local prosecutor - and usually the bodies are severely decomposed.

"Why take it to the morgue since no one can recognize it?" said Amadou Fall, fire brigade commander for three northern Senegal re-

The prosecutor in Saint-Louis wouldn't respond to questions about approval of burials or say whether investigations were opened into the deaths. AP phoned and texted Senegal's justice ministry, responsible for investigating deaths, but received no response.

For families, the silence can be agonizing. Mouhamed Niang's 19- and 24-year-old nephews went missing a month ago. He filed missing-person reports, he said, but got no updates from authorities. Friends alerted him when boats were recovered or bodies washed ashore. He'd make the three-hour bus trip from Mbour north to Saint-Louis to check with officials or visit the morgue.

He told AP he knows about the bodies on the beach. His worst fear:

that the young men were among them.

"They are human beings," Niang, 51, said. "They should be buried where human beings are buried.'

If the journey goes smoothly, reaching Spain takes about eight days from Saint-Louis on pirogues - long, colorful wooden boats. Saint-Louis, bordering Mauritania, is a key hub for departures. There, the beach is now marked in parts with remnants of the black plastic resembling body bags from the morgue and the knotted rope that appears to secure what lies beneath the sand.

In recent years, the Canary Islands have again become a main gateway for those trying to reach Europe. Previously, most boats traveled from Morocco, Western Sahara and Mauritania, with fewer from Senegal. This year, that changed. The Spanish official who spoke to AP said numbers from Mauritania plummeted last year following pressure by local authorities with on-the-ground Spanish support. When one route is cut off, migrants tend to look for alternatives, even if they're longer and more dangerous.

Senegal has long been regarded as a beacon of democratic stability in a region riddled with coups and insecurity, but tension is mounting, with at least 23 killed last month during protests between opposition supporters and police. Some cite political strife for surging migration; others note that most who leave are young Senegalese

men who say poverty and a lack of jobs drive them.

"There's no freedom in Senegal," said Papa, 29, who made it to the Canaries this month after a boat journey during which the engine failed, food ran out and fights erupted.

He said he's seeking asylum in Spain because of Senegal's political problems. He described police shooting at people like him who took to the streets to oppose President Macky Sall. He and others among the hundreds of Senegalese who made it to the Canaries in recent weeks blamed unemployment, a struggling economy and rising food prices on Sall's administration.

"The salaries are not good, rice is too expensive. You need a lot of money to eat," said Papa, who has two wives and children to feed in Senegal. Wearing a bracelet with the name of opposition leader Ousmane Sonko, Papa gave only his first name, citing fears about

Since 2006, Spain has worked with Senegal to crack down on migrant boats. That year, Canaries arrivals first peaked, with 30,000plus people - many of them Senegalese. Today, Spain's national police and civil guard are deployed in Senegal to assist local authorities. Senegal also received more than \$190 million from the EU's Emergency Trust Fund for Africa for programs aimed at addressing the root causes of migration.

But residents here say little has improved.

From May to July, about 30 boats left Saint-Louis for Europe and about 10 sank, said El Hadji Dousse Fall, of the Organization for the Fight Against Clandestine Immigration, which tries to prevent youths from crossing the sea and teaches them about legal migration pathways. Still, many have already made up their minds.

"They have a saying," Fall said, speaking partly in the local Wolof language. "Barca or Barsakh" - Barcelona or die.

Senegalese officials won't give data on how many people are unaccounted for trying to cross that stretch of the Atlantic. Sometimes, they refute reports of missing people - this month, Spanish rights group Walking Borders rang the alarm that 300 Senegalese were missing, and the government called the statements unfounded.

The beach burials have happened for years but skyrocketed for 2023, with about 300 bodies in the first seven months, compared with just over 100 for all of 2022, according to a local official who works closely with authorities and insisted on anonymity for fear of reprisal.

Locals say the government tries to hide the scale of the problem because it tarnishes Senegal's reputation.

"It's a sign of failure that undermines the government's public policy record," said Alioune Tine, founder of West African think tank Afrikajom Center.

During a visit to Saint-Louis. AP spoke with two survivors of attempted trips. The men departed within days of each other, from Mbour in early July. Both boats got lost and capsized at the mouth of the Saint-Louis river, where waves swell and conditions can turn volatile. One survivor saw another boat capsize minutes after his.

The men said that of about 420 people aboard the three vessels, roughly 60 were rescued.

Ibnou Diagne, 35, said the boat capsized days into the trip. He watched a piece of broken boat wood ram into the stomach of a teenage passenger, stabbing him before he fell into the sea.

But what haunts him most are memories of his longtime friend Abdourahmane, who drowned. "Everyday when I sleep, it's Abdourahmane's image and face that emerge in front of me," he said.

The other survivor said he fled after the rescue - he was taken for questioning but got out of the car and hid. On condition of anonymity for fear of being detained again, he described waking at 4 a.m. to his boat being launched in the air upon hitting a giant wave.

Thrown into the water but able to swim, he anchored himself to a smaller nearby vessel and waited for rescue. Two friends who boarded with him drowned. Days later, he called their mothers to tell them their sons were dead. Without him, he said, the families would have no idea what happened to the men.

Senegal has agreed to several international accords, including The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and The Global Compact on Migration, to ensure the investigation of disappearances and arbitrary deaths, identify the dead, and inform families.

Even if a body has decomposed, the obligation remains to do everything possible to identify the person and seek support if resources are lacking, said Judith Sunderland, of Human Rights Watch.

"It's completely unacceptable for state authorities to bury people without investigating the causes of their deaths or attempting to identify them," she said.

Boubacar Tiane Balde, chief of the anti-smuggling regional branch in Saint-Louis, said stemming the tide of migration is challenging, with new cases daily. And smugglers, paid by migrants to get across the border, are embedded in the community.

"The biggest difficulty is first to have clear information," Balde said. "Not everyone is willing to collaborate."

Some say officials aren't serious about cracking down. Many boats bribe authorities on the water, sometimes paying \$1,700 to get through, said a smuggler who insisted on anonymity over fears for his safety. To stay undetected, he uses smaller boats to shuttle passengers so it appears they're just fishing, he said, and for safety, he's cut the number of passengers allowed to 80 from 140.

Such measures come as little comfort to those with missing relatives.

During Niang's fourth visit to Saint-Louis to look for his nephews, he was called to the morgue. But the men weren't there. Later, authorities reached out to their mother, Niang's sister. They wanted her and her husband to make a photo identification. Based on a ring and his long hair, they knew the body was their son.

They still don't know the fate of his brother. They aren't alone in

their grief, but that brings little solace. "Every day I see people looking for relatives lost at sea," Niang said. "Some of them conduct funerals without the bodies."

The family will travel to Saint-Louis, then bring the body home. They'll hold one funeral, with prayers for both brothers. (AP)

editor's choice



Loca

Expected weather for the next chance for scattered light rain.

By Day: Very hot partly cloudy and humid specially over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind with speeds of 08-40 km/h with a

By Night: Hot to rather hot and humid specially over coastal areas with light to moderate southeasterly wind to light variable wind with speeds of 06-30 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

Weather

Max Exp Min Rec

Rai daily.

Kuwait City 31 30 33 32 33 31 28 Kuwait Airport Abdaly Jahra Salmiyah Ahmadi Nuwaisib Wafra

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

Block on food leads to price hike: Russian embassy

'Western economic policies, US, Europe sanctions cause of food crisis'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 10: The Russian Embassy in Kuwait confirmed yesterday that the true reasons behind the global food crisis lie in Western economic policies and the madness of American and European sanctions, which prevent Russian food from reaching markets to meet the needs of African, Arab, and other countries, thus leading to price hikes.

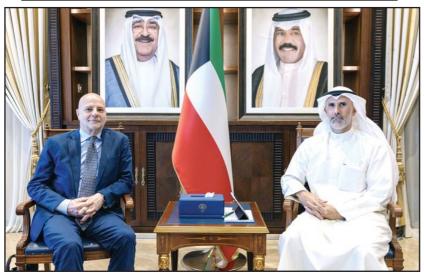
The Embassy stated in a statement received by 'Al-Seyassah' that some Western capitals and their representatives abroad are promoting contradictory and misleading narratives and comments regarding the objectives and outcomes of the consultations recently held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

It added that among this flood of narratives, what caught attention is the mention that the participants in the meeting are closer to the Ukrainian vision of peace represented by what is known as the Ukrainian President Zelensky's plan, or his formulation of a peace plan with 10 points.

It pointed out an attempt to provide an alternative explanation for the stances and approaches of countries with weight and influence in the global system, such as China, India, Brazil, and South Africa, all members of BRICS. These countries pursue balanced and constructive policies and make purely sovereign decisions. It stressed that no diplomatic representative has the right to publicly express their evaluation of other countries' policies.

The Embassy mentioned that the Jeddah meeting, hosted by Saudi Arabia, saw the participation of countries that do not agree with the Ukrainian solution to the crisis, in line with the Western Ukrainian approach represented by Zelensky's formula. It indicated that the best evidence for this is the absence of what it described as this "illusory empty plan" as a basis for serious consultation to find realistic solu-

It said that the majority of countries, including Arab, African, and Asian countries, want to contribute to finding solid and realistic solutions, and they reject the role of spectators assigned to them by the Western group. This is especially in light of the Western group's use of Ukrainian authorities as a tool in geo-political games aimed at maintaining Western dominance and preventing the transformation of the global system from unipolarity to multipolarity, under the pretext of the alleged "destruction of global balance.'



KUNA photo

The Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister meets with the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to Iraq.

Deputy FM meets UNAMI official

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah held talks with Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretarydeneral for Iraq Claudio Cordon

The meeting was held on Monday during a visit to Kuwait by Cordone, the deputy special representative for the political affairs and electoral assistance of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a press release on

Wednesday. Sheikh Jarrah Jaber and Cordone discussed ways of cooperation between Kuwait and the UNAMI, according to the

In another development, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah presided over on Wednesday a meeting by the committee on the borders to discuss the issues on the agenda of the committee.

Other Voices

Walid Al-Tabtabaei's tweets

By Ahmad alsarraf

hurchill said: People die once, but the politician dies many times! This saying did not apply to anyone more than Churchill himself, who knew the ups and downs in politics, success and failure in it as no other British politician

knew him. But politics also has its origins and morals, and the prudent and honest commitment of a politician to his principles and ideals, with a space



alsarraf

in which to move, makes him always acceptable and respected.

I have lived with the first generation of national parliamentarians for several decades, and I have never seen from them what we are seeing these days from the majority of our politicians, who change color and change sides from one to another, without shame, modesty, or even indifference!

Former MP Walid Al-Tabtabaei tweeted this:

Everyone knows in what era my membership, the membership of Jama'an al-Harbash and Badr al-Dahoum, were disqualified, and in what era we were subjected to imprisonment, displacement and injustice, and in what era we were denied election and candidacy, and in what era the abuser's law was originally promulgated. Some think that the people's memory is like the memory of a

fish, no, we don't forget!

We do not disagree with Brother Walid in what he mentioned, but were he and others so innocent, and did they not commit a mistake or violated the laws? Or that everything that happened to them was unfair from A to Z? Did Al-Tabtabaei forget his fiery sermons, his violent threats, and his warnings to the authorities?

We leave the answer to those who have a neutral thought and a correct mind.

Yes, everyone knows that many things happened in the previous era, and this is from the nature of things. Those who take charge of human affairs are also human beings, and they make mistakes. We would like to remind the former deputy, Al-Tabtabaei, that the case he is talking about, which prompted him to leave the country, for fear of the prison sentence that was issued against him, was issued by the courts of the covenant owner himself, who issued a special pardon for him, which enabled him to return to the homeland, to participate in the condolences of his mother!

Al-Tabtabaei, upon his return to the country, also had the "honor" of meeting the Crown Prince, kissing his nose and cheeks, exaggerating his thanks and repeated it several times, bearing in mind that he was not forced to show all that exaggerated kindness and love, and forget them, and recently, through tweets, directs all that criticism and accusation, after his death!

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

Foreign schools open Aug 27

Station

Preparations complete to receive students



The Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah during his meeting with the Head of the National Office for Human Rights Jassem Al-Mubariki.

FM meets Rights Diwan head

Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Wednesday head of the National Diwan for Human Rights Jassem Al-Mubariki and members of

The meeting focused on finding

means to bolster the role of the Diwan in terms of protecting human rights and promoting the respect of public and private freedoms according to Kuwait's constitution and international conventions endorsed by the State of Kuwait. (KUNA)

Kuwait Amir congratulates Ecuador

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 10, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Thursday a congratulatory cable to the president of Ecuador Republic, Guillermo Lasso, on his country's national

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished the President good health and wellness, and his people further progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber AlSabah on Thursday sent a cable to the President of Ecuador Republic, Guillermo Lasso, expressing congratulations on his country's national day. His Highness the Crown Prince wished the president lasting good health and well-

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable to the president of Ecuador Republic, Guillermo Lasso, expressing congratulations on his country's national day.

Mercury to decrease gradually

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 10: Dhirar Al-Ali, station observer at the Meteorologic.al Department, expected that the country would witness an increase in relative humidity over the weekend, with the onset of high temperatures, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Al-Ali stated, starting Thursday evening, humidity is expected to be in the range of 90% in the coastal areas, and it will continue for several days, while the heat will gradually weaken, due to the

southeast winds, coming from the sea, and thus temperatures may reach from 45 to 48 degrees Cel-

He stressed the need for the elderly and children under 13 years not to go out during these days, because of the humidity and high temperature that may cause "suffocation" for some, calling for drinking large amounts of water.

Al-Ali also expects light rain in some areas this month due to the high humidity.

MoC launches plan

Postal sector reforms

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 10: The Ministry of Communications launched a strategy to develop and improve its services by restructuring the postal sector and investing in the telecommunications sector.

The ministry stated in a recent report, of which Al-Qabas obtained a copy, that it had drawn up a plan to develop the telecommunications sector, through contracting with a consulting body, in coordination with the public and private sectors.

The ministry indicated that the tasks will be limited to developing the necessary study for the establishment of a public company concerned with providing telephone and digital communications services, according to the latest methods of service provided, with the development of the transportation infrastruc-

With regard to the restructuring of the postal sector, the ministry indicated that, out of its keenness to develop the postal services and to provide quality postal services, the ministry decided to develop a two-part plan, short-term and long-term, to develop this vital

The ministry stated that the short-term plan to develop the postal sector relied on issuing a public tender for the release, pre-customs clearance, delivery, distribution and transportation of express mail parcels and postal packages and drew the attention to planning to make a quantum leap in the postal services by providing delivery service for postal shipments to the addressee after clearance and customs release for a nominal amount for the delivery service.

The ministry indicated that the long-term plan is to establish a postal company under the name "Kuwait Post Company", wholly owned by the state on a commercial basis, as it will replace the postal sector, thus helping in the complete transformation and comprehensive development of government postal work, leading to the development and improvement of services.

'Pay legal comp'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 10: A group of officers who hold university degrees in law have appealed to the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled, to pay them legal compensation, given that the departments in which they work are not of a legal nature and the inability of the ministry to hire them in departments of the same nature, reports Al-Rai

munity schools, due to the departure of many families who were not allowed to return in light of the decision to suspend enrollment, which prevented many expatriate workers from bringing their families. The academic year in American, British and bilingual

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 10: Foreign schools

and community based schools of Indians,

Pakistanis and Filipinos have complet-

ed their preparations for the start of the

2023/2024 academic year. They will gradu-

ally open their doors to their students start-

ing from Sunday, August 27. Work for their

educational and administrative bodies will

officially resume on August 23, reports Al-

According to educational sources, these schools have no problems starting school, as they have a sufficient

number of educational bodies, bus drivers and clean-

ers. During the summer months, they completed all

the preparation work, including maintaining school fa-

cilities, establishing additional classrooms, and carrying

out some painting and renovation works. They affirmed

The only problem that these schools suffer from is the

suspension of family visa issuance, as the migration of fam-

ilies have left schools with less number of students. There

are only 9,000 male and female students in five Indian

schools, which is a small number in large school buildings,

Decrease It has led to a decrease in student densities in some com-

divided into the three educational stages.

their readiness to receive their students to the fullest.

schools will begin gradually from Sunday for the educational and administrative bodies. On the other hand, students start on August 27 and 28 for all educational levels. There are four new foreign schools that may enter ser-

vice at the beginning of the new academic year. Administrative licenses were granted about a year ago, and the General Administration for Private Education will determine the number of students in the classes depending on the current student densities. The Planning Department in the administration will count the number of students enrolled in each school.

The sources indicated that foreign schools had finished receiving textbooks from the embassies of their countries, and they are ready in their stores for handing over to students on the first day of the academic year.

They affirmed that the registration processes in foreign schools and community schools, whether for old or new students, took place according to the tuition fees applied in the last year.

The sources stressed that there are no increases in the current year in any of the educational stages, adding that registration also took place according to the conditions and procedures that are accepted annually, the most important which is the non-registration of any student who d have a valid residency.

Pakistan envoy, PAM DG discuss workers' issues

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 10: The Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) Marzouq Al-Otaibi affirmed the authority's primary role in providing legal protection for expatriate workers and ensuring the existence of an appropriate work environment that guarantees all workers their rights, including Pakistani workers in

various sectors, reports Al-Jarida Daily. He said this during his meeting with the Pakistani Ambassador to Kuwait Malik Farooq, and his accompanying delegation to discuss issues related to Pakistani workers, and work on solving the problems facing them, with the cooperation of all concerned parties.

Al-Otaibi highlighted that the labor market in Kuwait attracts workers with the specializations it needs, indicating that the authority is exerting unremitting and continuous efforts to develop the process of recruiting skilled workers to serve the developmen-

tal and economic interests of Kuwait. He praised the very old and distinguished historical relations between the two countries at the highest levels, and affirmed his keenness to maintain and continue this good relationship.

In turn, Ambassador Farouk expressed his appreciation and gratitude to Kuwait particularly to PAM for its efforts in solving Pakistani manpower issues in Kuwait, affirming their constant endeavor to develop relations between the two countries in the interest of all parties.



Ministry of Health aims to reduce prices of new set of medications

MoH instructs meeting needs of medical center's staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 10, (KUNA): Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi Wednesday stressed the necessity of following up the medical centers in the southern areas and meeting needs of their staff and

This came in a news statement issued by the Ministry during an inspecting visit paid the minister to Al-Adhan Hospital to reassure about action, and repaid response and care provided to patients. During the visit, the minister met with heads of technical and administrative departments, in the presence of head of Ahmadi health directorate and hospital, it added.

During the meeting, the conferees discussed cooperation and coordination between the Ministry's sectors, the medical and administrative sections of the hospital and the directorate, in addition to challenges and obstacles facing them, and the solutions.

The minister lauded efforts of health cadres in offering services, in line with the best standards, according to the statement.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health is currently "conducting a study aimed at reducing the prices of a new set of medications." It is expected that "these price adjustments will be announced before the conclusion of this year, pending the completion and approval of the study," reports Al-Rai daily quoting informed sources.

These sources highlight that this reduction is part

of an ongoing process that began in 2014, where the ministry started implementing price reductions on drugs. This initiative coincided with the Gulf price unification project. The ministry commenced the publication of lists featuring reduced drug prices starting in March 2015. Since then, the reduction in drug prices has been a continuous effort, encompassing a total of 4.513 medications so far.

These sources also indicate that the Drug Pricing Department within the Drug and Food Control Sector, as well as the Ministerial Committee for the Pricing of Medicines and Nutritional Supplements (established by Ministerial Resolution No. 117 of 2018), are the two responsible bodies overseeing drug pricing.



ARAB TIMES, FRIDAY-SATURDAY, AUGUST 11-12, 2023

The Minister of Health's meeting with a number of the ministry's leaders



The Minister of Health inspects Al-Adan Hospital.

Oil Minister underlines developing human capital, adopting int'l safety mechanisms

Al-Barrak lauds oil sector's considerable efforts

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 10, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil, State Minister for **Economic Affairs and Investment, and Acting Finance** Minister Dr. Saad Al-Barak underlined Wednesday necessity of developing human capital and adopting the best international mechanisms in health, safety and environment to ensure staff safety.

Al-Barak, also Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Board

Chairman, stated in a press statement while visiting Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), where he, along with oil officials, inspected the work of the corporation and its subsidiaries and the challenges facing the sector.

Commitments

Moreover, the Minister stressed the importance of ensuring oil facilities and guaranteeing oil sector commitments, whether locally or internationally, according to the KPC statement.

Al-Barak extended his thanks and appreciation to all those working in the oil sector for their considerable efforts in the past year and the exceptional revenues they have achieved.

Kuwait Red Crescent initiative aims to instill selflessness in youngsters

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 10, (KUNA): Kuwait's Red Crescent Society (KRCS) wrapped up an initiative that allowed some 100 children the chance to embrace virtues such as altruism and philanthropy, its deputy chief Anwar Al-Hasawi said on Wednesday.

These endeavors, such as a recently-concluded children's club, give particpants an opportunity to "familiarize" themselves with basic humanitarian principles, besides serving as an incentive for them to volunteer towards such causes, he underlined.

He went on to highlight the significance of such activities that KRCS routinely organizes, with the aim of boosting "social awareness" among youngsters, saying these endeavors leave an indelible mark not only on the participants themselves but society as a whole.

Oil Minister Dr. Saad Al-Barrak during his visit to the headquarters of the Kuwait Oil Company and his meeting with leaders of the Kuwaiti oil sector



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EPA seeks to create healthy environment

Gov't to regulate grazing activity

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 10: The Deputy Director General Public Environment Authority for Technical Affairs, Dr. Abdullah Al-Zaidan, confirmed that the authority is working in coordination with the concerned authorities to "activate the pastoral system for hima (protected lands) in force in many Arab countries," explaining that "this system is based on defining areas, and the use of lands in a governed and sustainable manner for grazing, as studies have shown that these lands can double their production and vegetation cover if they are converted to pastoral lands, reports Al-Rai

daily.
Al-Zaidan told the daily that "this system guarantees organizing the grazing process and benefiting from pastures through land management and preservation, overcoming overgrazing, enriching the vegetation cover in coordination with the concerned authorities to achieve this concept, combating desertification to meet the goals of sustainable development, and applying the law protecting the environment and creating a safe and healthy environment and a healthy society.

Efforts

He pointed out that "the authority is doubling the efforts to combat desertification and increase the green area," noting at the same time that "there is a noticeable deterioration due to wrong human practices that cause soil deterioration and seasonal fungal plants."

He stressed that "what is happening to the soil in Kuwait in terms of erosion and overgrazing increases the phenomenon of desertification and dust volatilization, due to the lack of natural buffers of green patches in open and desert areas and around urban areas in the country.'

With regard to the measures taken by the authority to confront this problem, Al-Zaidan indicated that "these measures are related to the implementation of the global goals of sustainable development within the UN goals, one of whose clauses is concerned with sustainable development and related to the need to work to take urgent measures to address climate change and its effects.

He revealed that the



A photo of Kuwait's marine biodiversity.

Voluntary efforts

Marine biodiversity in Kuwait increases

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 10: The efforts exerted by the Environment Public Authority (EPA) and the Kuwait Diving Team, along with the voluntary efforts of citizens in protecting the environment, have succeeded in increasing the biodiversity in the country, reports Al-Qabas Daily. In this regard, the Deputy Director General for Techni-

cal Affairs Dr. Abdullah Al-Zaidan announced the redoubling of efforts to reduce the erosion affecting the coasts and causing damage to the facilities and properties in the coastal environment. He revealed that the coasts of Jahra and Sulaibikhat

areas overlooking the bay have transformed into a green oasis of mangroves that were planted as part of several previous campaigns carried out with the cooperation of the UAE embassy and a number of volunteers.

Significant role

Al-Zaidan indicated that the mangroves that were planted four years ago in the coastal area within the Jahra Reserve exceed two meters, adding that this type of tree is characterized by aerial roots and has a wide and significant role in mitigating carbon dioxide emissions and adapting to its effects.

He affirmed that Kuwait has succeeded in this project, and there is further expansion to transform the arable coasts into green oases to mitigate the harmful effects of climate change

It is worth highlighting that the Kuwait Dive Team last week discovered in the damaged part of the artificial island opposite the Fahaheel coast in South Kuwait an environmental diversity in the marine environment of the angelfish at a depth of more than 30 meters.

Head of the team Walid Al-Fadhel revealed that the damaged artificial island, which was part of the operations to liberate the country from the Iraqi invasion in 1990, has now turned into an incubator for rare fish.

Public Authority for the Environment, in cooperation with the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and the Kuwaiti Camel Association, is "improving the quality of pastures and enrich and preserve the vegetation cover through the best methods and practices" where the law will be applied to violators and the gradation of the violation.

He stressed that "the authority is making efforts to create a healthy environment

and interact with the requirements of members of society, and no success can be achieved except through cooperation and integration between all concerned parties, whether public or private or the civil sector, to set the general framework for the application of the Hima system in the State of Kuwait, and to determine the best area to apply the pastoral system to preserve the country's ecosystems and prevent further deterioration.

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

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KUNA photo

Interior Minister in a group photo while addressing the 13th batch of the female cadets of the Women Police Academy.

'Enforce law equally': Interior Minister

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Thursday urged a new batch of graduated women police officers to enforce law "equally on everybody"

body."
The minister, addressing the 13th batch of the female cadets of the Women Police Academy, called on them to fulfill their duties and serve the homeland devoutly.

erve the homeland devoutly.

According to a statement by the

Ministry of Interior, Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled relayed to the 226 freshly graduated officers greetings from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Moreover, the minister of interior urged the graduated officers to honor their vow as a solid doctrine and work method while carrying out security missions. He also

advised them to spare no effort for serving the homeland and the citizens.

Security of the homeland and the nationals is a grand responsibility that must be preserved, he said.

The graduation ceremony was attended by the Interior Undersecretary Lieutenant General Anwar Al-Abrjas, the assistant undersecretary for education and training, Major General Badr Al-Baloul and other chiefs. (KUNA)

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A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Need to encourage experts in energy, trade and int'l politics'

"THE African continent has gained growing significance on the global stage, marked by numerous projects funded by entities like the Kuwaiti Fund for Development and Gulf funds," columnist Dr. Nada Suleiman Al-Mutawa wrote for Al-Jarida daily.

Al-Mutawa wrote for Al-Jarida daily.

"This prompts us to encourage experts in energy, trade, and international politics to delve into the present circumstances and envision potential trajectories. Such efforts could pave the way for a Gulf-centered ap-

proach that avoids conflicts akin to those surrounding the Chinese Belt and Road initiative.

"Could our Gulf nations eventually propose an initiative comparable to the Chinese endeavor, one that invigorates economies, energy resources, and trade routes? The success of these strategic ideas and their ability to foster an equitable platform for local and international companies rests on whether they can overcome bureaucratic hurdles.



Dr Al-Mutawa

"Recent news circulating over the past weeks has focused on the African continent, particularly Niger, propelling it into the spotlight. The question emerges: What is Africa's current significance? Various perspectives abound; some attribute this heightened attention to the ongoing struggle for influence among neighboring regional powers.

"Meanwhile, others advocate for a perspective of conflict internationalization, attributing it to global powers. The interplay between the "United States, the Chinese dragon, and Russia" has ignited a multidimensional competition for dominance across the vast confinent.

"Despite the cloud of the Ukrainian crisis obscuring future vision, Russia might harken back to its historical connections with Africa. Simultaneously, China continues to employ soft commercial diplomacy, aiming to invigorate the African continent. It's plausible that the principles of the Chinese "Belt and Road" initiative could expand to find resonance within the developing world's continents.

"The construction of transportation networks – whether maritime or terrestrial – requires meticulous design to foster effective development partnerships. The execution of such designs, however, encounters a dichotomy: Will it harmonize with the mechanisms of global trading companies, or will it clash with their implementation?

"As the African continent's prominence continues to rise, with numerous projects backed by institutions like the Kuwait Fund for Development and various Gulf funds, it becomes imperative to stimulate researchers specializing in energy, trade, and international politics. Their insights into current conditions and potential future scenarios could potentially lead to the emergence of a distinct Gulf-oriented pathway that veers clear of conflicts reminiscent of the Chinese Belt and Road initiative. The conversation continues."

Also:

"The inception of collaboration between the legislative and executive branches has yielded remarkable accomplishments, underscoring the value of achieving even some progress over none at all," columnist **Tariq Bouresli** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"The alignment between the parliament and the government was evident right from the outset of the seventeenth legislative term, marked by the inauguration of its inaugural session. What imbued me with optimism was the extension of the session's duration, culminating in its recent adjournment.

"This indicated a shared sense of satisfaction, impacting matters of urgency within the purview of both authorities. The nod to legislation concerning housing cities, the amendment of the Constitutional Court, the establishment of the Elections Commission, and the inclusion of housewives in the "Afia" insurance scheme showcased their productive collaboration.

"A total of 313 law proposals, 272 recommendations, 514 inquiries, and seven committee reports were presented by deputies during the first session of the seventeenth legislative term. All were processed within a mere fifty days since the term's commencement, showcasing an impressive ability for expedited accomplishment by both the legislative and executive bodies.

bodies.

"The atmosphere of contentment prevailing between the government and the parliament has removed roadblocks obstructing the legislative and implementation machinery. This has injected a measure of positivity into the Kuwaiti society. The parliamentary-governmental agenda is focused on education development, housing system enhancement, urbanization, infrastructure development, and crafting a strategic blueprint for the healthcare sector. Plans to bolster wages and sala-

ries are also in motion.

"However, with the forecasted financial deficit of 6.8 billion by 2024, optimism about the inaugural session prompts us to contemplate how to maintain optimism in the face of impending deficits.

"The government should engage with citizens to unveil and elaborate on strategic plans, cultivating a sense of assurance about the future for upcoming generations. Experts and advisors should strategize alternatives to avert the anticipated deficit, alleviating concerns about a potential economic downturn, particularly within the oil sector, where we have been pioneering and enjoying successive profits.

"Addressing the budget deficit lies within the ambit of both authorities, urging them to stimulate economic development through investments, port operations, and the actualization of Vision 2035, potentially extending to 2040 as suggested by Kuwaiti Finance Minister Saad Al-Barrak. Development goals should not be postponed for decades, and the citizenry should experience the realization of a genuine welfare state.

"Congratulations are in order for the accomplishments of the legislative and executive branches during the inaugural session of the seventeenth legislative term. As we look forward to the second session, the collaboration, alignment, and synergy between the government and the Parliament augur well for the welfare state's role and significance.

significance.

"Maritime transport is considered the most important artery that feeds various countries with their diverse needs — goods and commodities. It is the cheapest way to deliver goods from one country to another. One country does not dispense with another in terms of the supply of commodities it needs like foodstuff, clothing, luxury items and building materials. Ships are the most important among the means of transportation," columnist **Mussa Bahbahani** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

daily.

"Countries pay attention to ports due to their importance in the process of receiving, disembarking, handling and storing goods in safe places. Therefore, countries are keen on equipping their seaports with the latest facilities to serve international trade and maritime transport, because they are important sources of national income. Countries compete in providing these services in their ports to obtain the largest possible income from such sources, especially after the boom in

"They started planning to build a large commercial port to receive large iron ships. Shuwaikh port was chosen, because it was previously located far from the residential area and due to the availability of natural protection for it.

"Work started in 1953 with the establishment of a temporary wooden dock. The construction of Shuwaikh port had three stages. The first stage was in 1956 when a dock was built using stones – 730 meters long and 10 meters deep with seven main anchors.

"The second included the construction of docks – from berth number eight to berth 14. The latest expansion was the construction of other docks – berth number 15 to berth 21, in addition to a special berth for ro-ro vessels and transporting equipment – berth 14A."

"What if America or a European country announces that citizenship will not be granted to a Muslim because of his religious affiliation, regardless of his entitlement and the length of his stay in that country? What if they set legal conditions requiring a male or female citizen to present a certificate from the nearest Church proving his commitment to attend Sunday Mass as a binding condition for exercising his political rights in terms of candidacy and voting in elections, consequently, depriving Muslims of such rights?!" columnist Sami Al-Nisf wrote for Annahar daily.

"Who would shout, object and complain about these unjust decisions if those countries issued the same and more concerning our Islamic countries, and towards our brothers in humanity and in other monotheistic religions? To make matters worse, it happened in a country that was liberated by Christian armies from the brutal invasion of an Islamic army which was blatantly supported by the largest Islamic partisan system.

"It is shameful to deprive Christians in Kuwait of a chance to acquire citizenship, which is a historical mistake that must be corrected as soon as possible. The proposal to link political rights to Islamic legal regulations is equally bad.

"As a reminder, when the West sent their soldiers to liberate our country and stop Saddam's threats to the Gulf states, the extremists suggested withdrawing those allied forces and replacing them with an Islamic army led by Bin Laden ... If that plan had indeed taken place, we would all have been in prison until this day."

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary

Mother's life in jail sentence upheld in daughter's kill case

2 Saudis die in accidents; 31 expats held

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 10: The Court of Cassation upheld the verdict of the Court of Appeal and sentenced a Kuwaiti woman to life in prison for killing her daughter and hiding her remains in the bathroom of their Salmiya apartment for five years until the corpse was fully decomposed, reports Al-Rai daily.

The Public Prosecutor, Anwar Al-Azmi, had earlier requested the court to hand the woman the death penalty for committing the ghastly

The court had slapped three charges against the accused -- deliberately refraining from not taking care of her daughter, withholding her freedom, and violating the sanctity of the dead – all of which she denied, saying when she saw her daughter lying on the ground cold and her face pale yellow, she knew that she was dead, and was afraid to inform anyone even her chil-

In one of the trial sessions, the judge asked if any of her sons were present, and one of them stood up during the trial session and testified that his mother had always informed him that his sister was locked in a room in the apartment and that she prevented her from leaving, and when one day he informed his mother and threatened her that he wants to live in an apartment alone and take his sister with him, his mother informed him that his sister was no longer alive and that her body was in the house.

The son, who was in his 20s, immediately informed the Salmiya Police Station. He said he quarreled with his mother because she killed his sister in 2016 and kept her body in the bathroom of the apartment they live in, in

Indian myna bird poses no threat to Kuwait's environment: Al-Hajji

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 10, (KUNA): Head of Kuwait Environmental Lenses Rashed Al-Hajji said Thursday that Indian myna bird poses no threat to Kuwait environment but rather enriches the country's wildlife.

In a statement to KUNA, Al-Hajji added that myna bird is social and intellectual creature and has the ability to stimulate voices and adjust to any environment saying that the bird has been known in Kuwait for more than 30 years.

Indian myna bird is mostly located in south of Asia and is considered as an intruder to the Arab peninsula but managed to adjust to the harsh environment.

The common myna is readily identified by the brown body, black hooded head and the bare yellow patch behind the eye. The bill and legs are bright yellow. There is a white patch on the outer primaries and the wing lining on the underside is white, Al-Hajji added.

KUNA photo

A couple of Indian myna birds in Kuwait.

The nesting period for the myna bird starts in April and lasts till July in India and they prefer to build their nests on cliff edges and even in suburban build-

Salmiya.

Personnel from the Criminal Evidences Department searched the apartment and found the fully decomposed remains in the bathroom of the apartment following which the man and his other brother were arrested and taken for questioning.

when her vehicle ran out of control and collided with the streetlight pole, reports Al-Rai daily.

The accident happened in the Al-Zour region. A collision and death case

Two Saudi citizens die: A Saudi wom-

an died as a result of a traffic accident

has been registered at the area police station.

Meanwhile, a Saudi citizen died as a

result of a heart attack when his vehicle

collided with another vehicle near the

departures roundabout of the Kuwait International Airport, reports Al-Rai

When the accident occurred, security men and paramedics moved to its location but could not save the man.

The corpse has been referred to Forensics.

31 expats arrested: The Public Morals Protection Department of the Ministry of Interior has arrested 31 persons of different nationalities from Mahboula, Salmiya and Hawalli, for violating public morals, reports Al-Rai daily.

The Public Relations and Security Media Department of the ministry said that they have been referred to the competent authorities to take all necessary legal measures against them.

Reconsider job

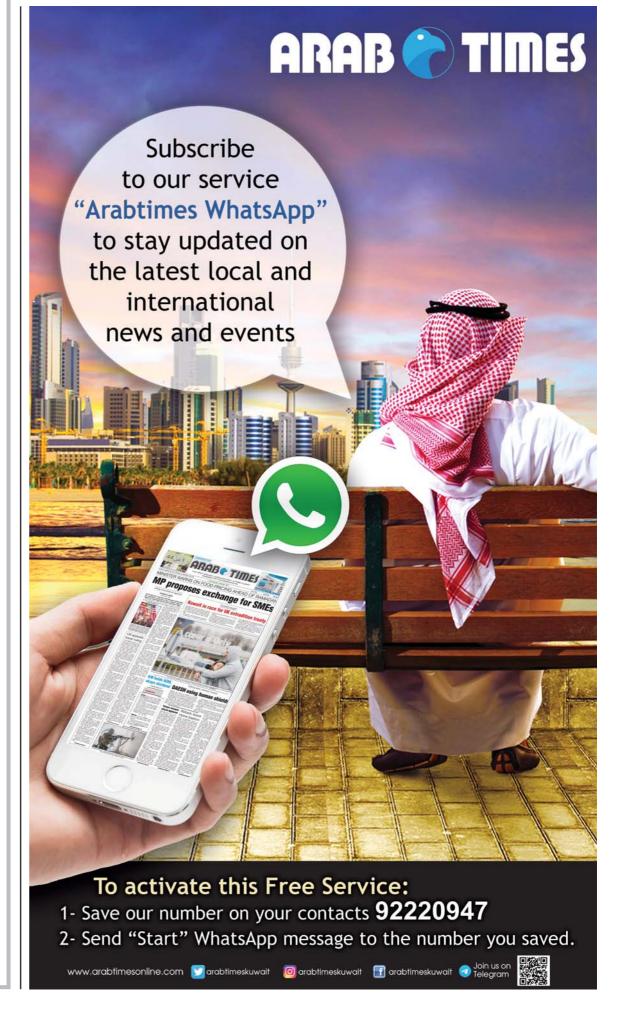
Continued from Page 1

Sources clarified that the upcoming visit of His Highness the Crown Prince to China is not a protocol, it is rather a turning point for putting development plans on the track of implementation

and accomplishment. Sources pointed out the visit entails launching a number of projects that will be discussed with Chinese officials and major companies, as they are fully aware that tourism attractions will not happen in the country which is closed to visitors. Sources said the residency and visit laws will be reviewed, especially since citizens are complaining about this

closure, which negatively affected the local economy.

Sources confirmed: "The leadership's directives also aim to address the Bedoun issue and improve the living conditions of citizens. The government is waiting for the next session of the Assembly to put all these projects and issues on the table for discussion, followed by implementation and solution."



The Conversation

Unusually high temperatures to continue through at least 2025

4 factors driving 2023's extreme heat and climate disasters

By Michael Wysession

Arts & Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis

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

 ${f B}$ etween the record-breaking global heat and extreme downpours, it's hard to ignore that something unusual is going on with the weather in 2023.

People have been quick to blame climate change – and they're right, to a point: Human-caused global warming does play the biggest role. A recent study determined that the weekslong heat wave in Texas and Mexico that started in June 2023 would have been virtually impossible without it.

However, the extremes this year are sharper than anthropogenic global warming alone would be expected to cause. Human activities that release greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere have been increasing temperatures gradually, at an average of 0.2 degrees Fahrenheit (0.1 Celsius) per

Three additional natural factors are also helping drive up global temperatures and fuel disasters this year: El Niño, solar fluctuations and a massive underwater volcanic eruption.

Unfortunately, these factors are combining in a way that is exacerbating global warming. Still worse, we can expect unusually high temperatures to continue through at least 2025, which means even more extreme weather in the near future.

How El Niño is involved

El Niño is a climate phenomenon that occurs every few years when surface water in the tropical Pacific reverses direction and heats up. That warms the atmosphere above, which influences temperatures and weather patterns around the globe.

Essentially, the atmosphere borrows heat out of the Pacific, and global temperatures increase slightly. This happened in 2016, the time of the last strong El Niño. Global temperatures increased by about 0.25 F (0.14 C) on average, making 2016 the warmest year on record. A weak El Niño also occurred in 2019-2020, contributing to 2020 becoming the world's second-warmest year.

El Niño's opposite, La Niña, involves cooler-than-usual Pacific currents flowing westward, absorbing heat out of the atmosphere, which cools the globe. The world just came out of three straight years of La Niña, meaning we're experiencing an even greater temperature swing.

Based on increasing Pacific sea surface temperatures in mid-2023, climate

modeling now suggests a 90% chance that Earth is headed toward its first strong El Niño since 2016.

Combined with the steady human-induced warming, Earth may soon again be breaking its annual temperature records. June 2023 was the hottest in modern record. July saw global records for the hottest days and a large number of regional records, including an incomprehensible heat index of 152 F (67

Solar fluctuations

The Sun may seem to shine at a constant rate, but it is a seething, churning ball of plasma whose radiating energy changes over many different time

The Sun is slowly heating up and in half a billion years will boil away Earth's oceans. On human time scales, however, the Sun's energy output varies only slightly, about 1 part in 1,000, over a repeating 11-year cycle. The peaks of this cycle are too small for us to notice at a daily level, but they affect Earth's climate systems.

Rapid convection within our Sun both generates a strong magnetic field aligned with its spin axis and causes this field to fully flip and reverse every 11 years. This is what causes the 11-year cycle in emitted solar radiation.

Earth's temperature increase during a solar maximum, compared with average solar output, is only about 0.09 F (0.05 C), roughly a third of a large El Niño. The opposite happens during a solar minimum. However, unlike the variable and unpredictable El Niño changes, the 11-year solar cycle is comparatively regular, consistent and predictable.

The last solar cycle hit its minimum in 2020, reducing the effect of the modest 2020 El Niño. The current solar cycle has already surpassed the peak of the relatively weak previous cycle (which was in 2014) and will peak in 2025, with the Sun's energy output increasing until then. A massive volcanic eruption

Volcanic eruptions can also significantly affect global climates. They usually do this by lowering global temperatures when erupted sulfate aerosols shield and block a portion of incoming sunlight – but not always.

In an unusual twist, the largest volcanic eruption of the 21st century so far, the 2022 eruption of Tonga's Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai is having a warming and not cooling effect.

Water vapor is a powerful greenhouse gas, and the eruption may end up warming Earth's surface by about 0.06 F (0.035 C), according to one estimate.

Unlike the cooling sulfate aerosols, which are actually tiny droplets of sulfuric acid that fall out of the atmosphere within one to two years, water vapor is a gas that can stay in the atmosphere for many years. The warming impact of the Tonga volcano is expected to last for at least five years.

Underlying it all: Global warming

All of this comes on top of anthropogenic, or human-caused, global warm-

Humans have raised global average temperatures by about 2 F (1.1 C) since 1900 by releasing large volumes of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. For example, humans have increased the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere by 50%, primarily through combustion of fossil fuels in vehicles and power plants. The warming from greenhouse gases is actually greater than 2 F (1.1 C), but it has been masked by other human factors that have a cooling effect, such as air pollution.

If human impacts were the only factors, each successive year would set a new record as the hottest year ever, but that doesn't happen. The year 2016 was the warmest so far, in large part because of the last large El Niño.

What does this mean for the future?

The next couple of years could be very rough.

If a strong El Niño develops over the next year, combined with the solar maximum and the effects of the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai eruption, Earth's temperatures would likely soar to uncharted highs. According to climate modeling, this would likely mean even more heat waves, forest fires, flash floods and other extreme weather events.

Both weather and climate forecasts have become very reliable in recent years, benefiting from vast amounts of data from Earth-orbiting satellites and enormous supercomputing power for forecasting the flow and interactions of heat and water among the complex components of the ocean, land and atmos-

Unfortunately, climate modeling shows that as temperatures continue to increase, weather events get more extreme.

There is now a greater than 50% chance that Earth's global temperature will reach 2.7 F (1.5 C) above pre-industrial era temperatures by the year 2028, at least temporarily, increasing the risk of triggering climate tipping points with even greater human impacts. Because of the unfortunate timing of several parts of the climate system, it seems the odds are not in our favor. (AP)

60th ENVIRONMENT Youth-Wing IEC Kuwait and Greeanhands Environment Team is Jointly Organizing this Beach Cleaning Event.

A group photo from the beach clean-up drive.



Islamic Education Committee Kuwait Youth Wing official being honored.

Event raises awareness on environment protection

IEC Youth Wing holds beach clean-up drive

By M. Irfan Shafiq

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 10: A beach cleaning, protection and awareness campaign was organized by the Islamic Education Committee Kuwait Youth Wing in collaboration with the Green Hands Environment Team Kuwait for the children of the summer camp, in which the Islamic Education Committee Kuwait Youth Wing Officials and executive members and members of Green Hands Environment Team Kuwait besides a large number of children participated. Farrukh Amir Sial, Community Welfare Attaché (CWA) of the Embassy of Pakistan in Kuwait, specially participated in the campaign and highly appreciated the participation of the children, IEC & Green Hands Team officials.

President of Islamic Education Committee Kuwait; Javed Iqbal and Islamic Education Committee Kuwait Youth Wing Naveed Pasha welcomed all the attendees. They express their views

about the Event and informed the participants about environmental pollution and its expected effects and their rem-



Summer camp children take part in beach clean-up campaign.

edies. He further said that cleanliness is half faith and every responsible person should adopt this matter.

Community Welfare Attaché Farrukh Amir Sial while expressing to the participants said that keeping the environment around us clean is our first duty as a Muslim and Islam also teaches us cleanliness. All the people living in Kuwait represent their country due to which the positive side of Pakistanis living here is being highlighted. We all should keep our surroundings especially our environment clean.

The members of Green Hands Environment Team Kuwait said that in view of environmental pollution, we should always keep the environment around us clean, and in the future, they will work together with Islamic Education Committee Kuwait on more environmentally friendly programs.

Storms shape Earth's climate

Hurricanes push 'heat' deeper into ocean than thought: study

By Noel Gutiérrez Brizuela, University of California, San Diego and Sally Warner, Brandeis University

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

When a hurricane hits land, the destruction can be visible for years or even decades. Less obvious, but also powerful, is the effect hurricanes have on the oceans.

In a recent study, we show through real-time measurements that hurricanes don't just churn water at the surface. They can also push heat deep into the ocean in ways that can lock it up for years and ultimately affect regions far from the storm.

Heat is the key component of this story. It has long been known that hurricanes gain their energy from warm sea surface temperatures. This heat helps moist air near the ocean surface rise like a hot air balloon and form clouds taller than Mount Everest. This is why hurricanes generally form in tropical regions.

What we discovered is that hurricanes ultimately help warm the ocean, too, by enhancing its ability to absorb and store heat. And that can have far-reaching consequences.

When hurricanes mix heat into the ocean, that heat doesn't just resurface in the same place. We showed how underwater waves produced by the storm can push the heat roughly four times deeper than mixing alone, sending it to a depth where the heat is trapped far from the surface. From there, deep sea currents can transport it thousands of miles. A hurricane that travels across the western Pacific Ocean and hits the Philippines could end up supplying warm water that heats up the coast of Ecuador years later.

Changing

For two months in the fall of 2018, we lived aboard the research vessel Thomas G. Thompson to record how the Philippine Sea responded to changing weather patterns. As ocean

scientists, we study turbulent mixing in the ocean and hurricanes and other tropical storms that generate this turbulence.

Skies were clear and winds were calm during the first half of our experiment. But in the second half, three major typhoons - as hurricanes are known in this part of the world stirred up the ocean. That shift allowed us to directly

compare the ocean's motions with and without the influence of the storms. In particular, we were interested in learning how turbulence below the ocean surface was helping transfer heat down into the deep ocean.

We measure ocean turbulence with an instrument called a microstructure profiler, which free-falls nearly 1,000 feet (300 meters) and uses a probe similar to a phonograph needle to measure turbulent motions of the water.

Imagine the tropical ocean before a hurricane passes over it. At the surface is a layer of warm water, warmer than 80 degrees Fahrenheit (27 degrees Celsius), that is heated by the sun and extends roughly 160 feet (50 meters) below the surface. Below it are layers of colder water.

The temperature difference between the layers keeps the waters separated and virtually unable to affect each other. You can think of it like the division between the oil and vinegar in an unshaken bottle of salad dressing.

As a hurricane passes over the tropical ocean, its strong winds help stir the boundaries between the water layers, much like someone shaking the bottle of salad dressing. In the process, cold deep water is mixed up from below and warm surface water is mixed downward. This causes surface temperatures to cool, allowing the ocean to absorb heat more efficiently than usual in the days after a hurricane.

For over two decades, scientists have debated whether the warm waters that are mixed downward by hurricanes could heat ocean currents and thereby shape global climate patterns. At the heart of this question was whether hurricanes could pump heat deep enough so that it stays in the ocean for years.

Measurements

By analyzing subsurface ocean measurements taken before and after three hurricanes, we found that underwater waves transport heat roughly four times deeper into the ocean than direct mixing during the hurricane. These waves, which are generated by the hurricane itself, transport the heat deep enough that it cannot be easily released back into the atmosphere.

Once this heat is picked up by large-scale ocean currents, it can be transported to distant parts of the ocean.

The heat injected by the typhoons we studied in the Philippine Sea may have flowed to the coasts of Ecuador or California, following current patterns that carry water from west to east across the equatorial Pacific.

At this point, the heat may be mixed back up to the surface by a combination of shoaling currents, upwelling and turbulent mixing. Once the heat is close to the surface again, it can warm the local climate and affect ecosystems.

For instance, coral reefs are particularly sensitive to extended periods of heat stress. El Niño events are the typical culprit behind coral bleaching in Ecuador, but the excess heat from the hurricanes that we observed may contribute to stressed reefs and bleached coral far from where the storms appeared.

It is also possible that the excess heat from hurricanes stays within the ocean for decades or more without returning to the surface. This would actually have a mitigating impact on climate change.

As hurricanes redistribute heat from the ocean surface to greater depths, they can help to slow down warming of the Earth's atmosphere by keeping the heat sequestered in the ocean.

Scientists have long thought of hurricanes as extreme events fueled by ocean heat and shaped by the Earth's climate. Our findings, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, add a new dimension to this problem by showing that the interactions go both ways - hurricanes themselves have the ability to heat up the ocean and shape the Earth's climate. (AP)

number of Americans applying for jobless aid rises

The number of Americans applying for jobless benefits jumped last week, but not enough to raise concern about the consistently strong U.S. labor market.

U.S. applications for unemployment benefits rose by 21,000 to 248,000 for the week ending August 5, from 227,000 the week before, the Labor Department reported Thursday. That's the most in five weeks.

The four-week moving average of claims, a less volatile reading, ticked up by 2,750 to 228,250.

JAPAN

SAUDI

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

Applications for jobless aid reached a higher level above 260,000 for a few weeks this spring, causing some concern, but then retreated.

Troubling levels of inflation moved the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates at a breakneck pace for the past year-anda-half: the central bank raised its benchmark rate 11 times to the current 5.4%, a 22-year high.

Part of the Fed's reasoning was to cool the job market and bring down wages, which, in theory, suppresses price growth. Though inflation has come down significantly during that stretch, the job market has remained remarkably strong.

remarkably strong.
Last week, the Labor Department reported that U.S. employers added 187,000 jobs in July, fewer than expected, but still a healthy number. The unemployment rate dipped to 3.5%, close to a half-century low. (AP)



A sign advertising for new drivers adorns the back of a tanker carrying fuel in the southbound lanes of Interstate 25 Tuesday, Aug. 8, 2023, in Loveland, Colo. (AP)

Market Movements

Change Closing pts
- Nikkei +0.84 32,473.65
- Tadawul +1.22 11,424.12

473.65 424.12

 VAE
 DFM

 PAKISTAN
 KSE 100

 PHILIPPINES
 PSEi

 EGYPT
 EGX 30

10-08-2023

Change Closing pts
-0.53 4,048.85
-1.03 47,837.53
-1.24 6,449.66
-0.30 17,710.20



President makes case at a wind farm plant

Biden claims his economic policies are reviving manufacturing

BELEN, N.M., Aug 10, (AP): President Joe Biden declared that his economic policies are reviving U.S. manufacturing as he toured the West to drum up support for his efforts on jobs and inflation in the face of voters' doubts.

"I'm not here to declare victory on the economy. We have a lot more work to do," Biden said at Arcosa Wind Towers, a facility that once made Solo cups and other plastics but is now shifting to manufacturing wind towers. "But we have a plan. And it's turning things around."

Arcosa, the president said, was a "great example" of how the administration's legislative achievements have bolstered jobs and investments in the U.S. The company had to lay off workers in Illinois and Iowa before Biden's Inflation Reduction Act became law last year, but customers placed \$1.1 billion in wind tower orders with the company afterward, according to the White House. The stock has risen more than 20% in the past 12 months.

"Folks - when I think climate, I think jobs," Biden said, referring to cleaner energy production in his remarks at the plant making wind towers.

He pointed to climate-related investments not only at Arcosa but at major corporations such as General Electric, and added: "Every one of these companies has pointed to the clean energy law that we originated and I signed for making these investments."

The claim from Biden and the White House that the administration has bolstered U.S. manufacturing is backed by a rise in construction spending on new factories. But factory hiring has begun to slow in recent months, a sign that the promised boom has yet to fully materialize.

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

"Hundreds of actions coordinated through his entire government are sparking a manufacturing renaissance across the United States," White House climate adviser Ali Zaidi told reporters ahead of Biden's New Mexico speech.

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

The president does have a case to make to the public on employment. As the U.S. economy has healed from the coronavirus pandemic, hiring has surged at factories. Manufacturing jobs have climbed to their highest totals in nearly 15 years. This is the first time since the 1970s that manufacturing employment has fully recovered from a recession, expanding by 789,000 jobs since Biden took office.

But the pace of job growth at manufacturers has slowed over the past year. Factories were adding roughly 500,000 workers annually last summer, a figure that in the government's most recent jobs report fell to 125,000 gains over the past 12 months. Biden administration officials have said there are more factory jobs coming because of its infrastructure spending, investments in computer chip plants and the various incentives in the Inflation Reduction Act.

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

manufacturing is in the works as the sector has been in decline for decades.

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

Adam Ozimek, chief economist at EIG, said jobs can be a flawed way to measure a manufacturing revival. He said better metrics include an increase in factory output, whether the U.S. can shift to renewable energy to blunt climate change and whether the government can achieve its national security goals of having a stronger supply chain. "It's way too early to declare anything like a manufacturing renaissance," Ozimek said. "We are decades into structurally declining manufacturing employment. And it's not at all clear yet whether the positive trends are going to outweigh that continuing headwind."

And Jay Timmons, president and CEO of the National Association of Manufacturers, argued that federal rules were hampering any benefits of the Biden administration's manufacturing policies. "The positive impact of manufacturing investments made during the Biden administration are being undermined by a rising tide of complex and often unbalanced federal regulations," he said on the social media platform formerly known as Twitter.

The Inflation Reduction Act has been the centerpiece of Biden's climate agenda. However, he's been under pressure from some activists and progressives to declare a national climate emergency, something he was asked about in an interview with the Weather Channel while visiting the Grand Canyon in Arizona on Tuesday.

Biden said he's already done that "practically speaking," citing the legislative steps and executive action that he's taken.

"It is the existential threat to humanity," he said.



A home under construction is shown on Sunday, Aug. 6, 2023 in Sudbury, Mass. Inflation in the United States rose in July after 12 straight months of declines, boosted by costlier housing. (AP)

Underlying measures remain mild

US inflation rises for the 1st time in a year to 3.2 pct rate

WASHINGTON, Aug 10, (AP): Inflation in the United States edged up in July after 12 straight months of declines. But excluding volatile food and energy costs, so-called core inflation matched the smallest monthly rise in nearly two years, a sign that the Federal Reserve's interest rate hikes continue to slow price increases.

The inflation figure the government reported Thursday showed that overall consumer prices increased 3.2% from a year earlier. That was up from a 3% annual rise in June, which was the lowest rate in more than two years. The latest figure remained far below last year's peak of 9.1%, though still above the Federal

Reserve's 2% inflation target.

The Fed, economists and investors, though, pay particular attention to core inflation figures for signs of where inflationary pressures might be headed. From June to July, core inflation remained a tame 0.2%.

"Core prices are moving in the right direction," said Rubeela Farooqi, chief U.S. economist for High Frequency Economics. "That will be welcome news to (the Fed's) policymakers."

Thursday's price data will be among the key barometers the Fed will weigh in deciding whether to continue raising interest rates. In its drive to tame inflation, the Fed has raised its benchmark rate 11 times since March 2022 to a 22-year high.

since March 2022 to a 22-year high.

Overall prices, measures on a month-to-month basis, rose 0.2% in July, and 90% of it reflected higher housing costs. Excluding shelter, Paul Ashworth of Capital Economics calculated that core prices actually fell 0.1% from June to July.

Food prices, which have pressured Americans' budgets for months, rose a mild 0.2% from June to July. Over the past 12 months, food is still up 4.9%.

Used vehicle prices fell for a second straight month, dipping 1.3% from June. They remain 5.6% costlier, on average, than a year ago.

Economists say that in the Fed's fight to conquer inflation, the easy progress has likely already been achieved. Gasoline prices, for example, though liable to bounce around from month to month, have already plunged from a peak national average of more than \$5 a gallon, which was reached in June of last year after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Much of the inflationary surge that began in 2021 was caused by clogged

supply chains: Ports, factories and freight yards were overwhelmed by the explosive economic rebound from the pandemic recession of 2020. The result was delays, parts shortages and higher prices. But supply-chain backlogs have eased in the past year, sharply reducing upward pressure on goods prices. Prices of long-lasting manufactured goods actually dipped in June.

Now the Fed faces a daunting

Now, the Fed faces a daunting problem: persistent inflationary pressures in service businesses - restaurants, hotels, entertainment venues and the like - where wages represent a substantial share of costs. Worker shortages have led many of these services companies to sharply raise pay.

Last week, for example, the Labor Department reported that average hourly wages rose 4.4% in July from a year earlier, more than expected. To cover their higher labor costs, companies have typically raised their prices, thereby fooling in lation.

thereby fueling inflation.

Another factor working against continued declines in year-over-year inflation rates is that prices soared in the first half of last year before slowing in the second half. So any price increase in July would have the effect of boosting the year-over-year inflation rate.

Still, economists caution against reading too much into one month of numbers. Many of them expect inflation to continue trending lower.

Despite chronic concerns about higher labor costs, one closely watched measure of wages and salaries - the Labor Department's employment cost index - grew more slowly from April through June. Excluding government jobs, employee pay rose 1%, less than the 1.2% increase in the first three months of 2023. Compared with a year earlier, wages and salaries grew 4.6%, down from a year-over-year increase of 5.1% in the first quarter.

Fed officials will have plenty of data to absorb before deciding whether to continue raising rates. Thursday's report is the first of two CPI numbers the policymakers will see before their next meeting Sept. 19-20. In addition, their favored inflation gauge, called the personal income expenditures price index, comes out on Aug. 31. And the August jobs report will be released Sept. 1.

Many economists and market analysts think the Fed's most recent rate hike in July will prove to be its last: More than 90% of traders now expect no Fed hike next month, according to the CME Group's FedWatch Tool.

WS 'rises' with hopes that inflation will keep cooling

Asian shares mixed as mkts brace for US inflation report

NEW YORK, Aug 10, (AP): Stocks are rising Thursday as Wall Street lets out a bit of an exhale following the latest update on inflation across the U.S.

The S&P 500 was 0.6% higher in midday trading and on track for just its second winning day in the last eight. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 231 points, or 0.7%, at 35,455, as of 11:40 a.m. Eastern time, and the Nasdaq composite was 0.7% higher.

Thursday's highly anticipated report showed U.S. consumers paid prices that were 3.2% higher in July than a year earlier. That's a touch milder than the 3.3% inflation rate economists expected to see and down sharply from last summer's peak above 9%. Beneath the surface, underlying trends for inflation were also within expectations.

The readings bolstered hopes among investors that the Federal Reserve's campaign to grind down inflation is progressing and that maybe it could even be done hiking interest rates. High rates undercut inflation by slowing the entire economy and hurting investment prices, which raise the risk of a recession.

Such hopes helped the S&P 500 rally a big 19.5% through the first seven months of the year, though critics say Wall Street latched too quickly and forcefully onto a belief that inflation is continuing to cool, the economy will avoid a recession and the Fed has already hiked rates for the final time this cycle.

The Fed has said it will make upcoming decisions on rates based on what data reports say, particularly those on inflation and the job market. Its main rate is already at its highest level in more than two decades.

Thursday's report likely gives the Fed a reason to hold rates steady at its next meeting in September, before it gets more economic data in the runup to the following meeting that ends Nov. 1, according to Gargi Chaudhuri, head



A person walks in front of an electronic stock board showing Japan's Nikkei 225 index at a securities firm Thursday, Aug. 10, 2023, in Tokyo. Asian benchmarks mostly fell Thursday after shares declined on Wall Street and investors braced for a highly anticipated report on U.S. inflation. (AP)

of iShares Investment Strategy, Americas

cas.

"Separating the signal from the noise, most of the components of inflation are heading in the right direction," said Brian Jacobsen, chief economist at Annex Wealth Management. He said if the trends continue, it will be tough to justify another hike to interest rates.

Another report on inflation is looming on Friday, which will show how bad inflation was in July at the wholesale level. Then, more reports on inflation and one more on overall hiring for August will arrive before the Fed's next meeting that ends Sept. 20.

Treasury yields held relatively steady in the bond market after a report showed slightly more workers applied for unemployment benefits last week than expected. The number remains low compared with history, signaling the job market remains remarkably resilient despite much higher interest rates.

Fed officials would likely welcome some softening of the job market, which they would see as removing upward pressure on inflation.

The weekly data on unemployment

The weekly data on unemployment

claims, though, have given head fakes in the past about the trajectory of the job market, said Mike Loewengart, head of model portfolio construction at Morgan Stanley Global Investment Office. That could mean the cuts to interest rates that investors really desire may be further off than hoped.

"The Fed may leave interest rates unchanged next month, but they're not about to start cutting them," Loewengert raid

Hikes to interest rates also take a notoriously long time to take effect, and the Fed's past increases are likely still making their way through the system. If the last bit to get inflation down to the Fed's target of 2% is as tough as some economists expect, that could make things dicier than a swiftly rising stock market would seem to suggest.

stock market would seem to suggest.

Big U.S. companies, meanwhile, continue to report mostly better profits for the spring than analysts expected. That's usually the case, and analysts had particularly low expectations coming into this reporting season. Higher costs for workers and other expenses are broadly eating into profit margins.

The Walt Disney Co. rose 3.2% after saying it would raise prices for some

of its streaming services in hopes of boosting profitability. The entertainment giant reported stronger profit for the spring than analysts expected but weaker revenue.

Capri Holdings, which owns the Michael Kors, Versace and Jimmy Choo brands, soared 56.3% as Big Fashion continues to consolidate.

Tapestry, the company behind luxury handbag and accessories retailer Coach, said it was buying the company for roughly \$8.5 billion. The deal would put it in better position to take on big European rivals, such as LVMH. Tapestry fell 13.4%.

In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year Treasury held steady at 4.01%. It helps set rates for mortgages and

other important loans.

The two-year Treasury yield, which moves more on expectations for the Fed, slipped to 4.77% from 4.80% late Wednesday.

Asi

Asian benchmarks mostly fell Thursday after shares declined on Wall Street and investors braced for a highly anticipated United States inflation report.

Inflation in China also remains a huge concern. "A slowdown in consumer spending and high-interest rates remain issues for the global economy," and Tang

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 added 0.8% to finish at 32,473.65. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 added 0.3% to 7,357.40. South Korea's Kospi lost 0.3% to 2,596.62. Hong Kong's Hang Seng slipped 0.2% to 19,208.28, while the Shanghai Composite rose 0.3% to 3,253.08.

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In energy trading, benchmark U.S. crude added 26 cents to \$84.66 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, rose 24 cents to \$87.79 a barrel.

Currencies

In currency trading, the U.S. dollar edged up to 143.99 Japanese yen from 143.67 yen. The euro cost \$1.0995, inching down from \$1.0979.

Markaz achieves profit for Q2-'23 of KD 1.9 mln and a loss for H1-2023 of KD 1.3 million

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 10: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" (KSE: Markaz, Reuters: MARKZ.KW, Bloomberg: MARKAZ: KK) reported its financial results for H1-2023 ended 30 June 2023 with Total Revenues of KD 7.15 million, a net decline of 38% when compared to KD 9.88 million in H1-2022. The decline is primarily attributable to a loss from financial assets at the fair value of KD 1.59 million as compared to a gain of KD 1.83 million in H1-2022. Markaz reported a Net Profit attributable to shareholders of KD 1.9 million for O2-2023, and a Net Loss attributable to shareholders of KD 1.31 million for H1-2023. Mr. Diraar Yusuf Alghanim, the Chairman stated: "The outlook for the world economy appears challenged due to persistent inflation, rising interest rates, and continued geopolitical uncertainties. However, the global growth downturn in 2023 is expected to be less severe than originally anticipated, with a projected growth rate of 2.3%, up from the earlier forecast of 1.9% in January (According to UN DESA report issued on June 1, 2023). This is primarily due to improved household expenditure in the United States and the European Union and China's economic recovery. Despite this relatively better outlook, con-

cerns remain around risk-adjusted investment returns, the servicing of corporate debt, and the escalating impact of climate change. Looking ahead, the world economy is expected to gain momentum, expanding by 2.5% in 2024 (according to the aforementioned report), with inflationary pressures gradually easing.

Markaz Asset Management Fees were KD 3.61 million, a decrease of 37.1% compared to H1-2022, while Investment Banking and Advisory fees increased by 19.0%, reaching KD 0.31 million.

During H1- 2023, Markaz launched real estate mezzanine debt investment products. In addition, Markaz sub-

stantially sold the residential projects in the UAE. The Net Rental Income for H1-2023 was KD 1.68 million, compared to KD 1.85 million for the same period in the previous year. As of June 30, 2023, Markaz's Assets Under Management (AUM) increased to KD 1,173 million, compared to June 30, 2022.

Despite prevailing economic uncertainties we maintain an antimistic

Despite prevailing economic uncertainties, we maintain an optimistic outlook due to the resilience of our well-diversified portfolio, sustained favorable performance across our investment products, and a robust risk management culture. We remain committed to delivering value to all our stakeholders."

INVESTMENT STRATEGY & RESEARCH

KANCO INVEST

Natural Gas Market Update ----- August 2023

Natural gas prices remain bearish due to rise in inventories

Natural gas prices continued to decline since the start of the year and during Q2-2023 months despite warnings and fears that a cold winter and geopolitical tensions may cause natural gas prices to surge again. The monthly World Bank Natural Gas Index dropped 66.4% for 1H-2023 underlining the commodity's weaker global sentiment. Moreover, falling natural gas demand due to fears of global economic slowdown has put downward pressure on natural gas prices in the first half of 2023. Natural gas prices have declined from the steep and volatile price fluctuations of the past year due to the repercussions of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The conflict has sparked global energy realignment as a result of sanctions levied upon Russian energy exports as well as European countries look ing for alternate energy supply sources outside from Russia. But as the Russia-Ukraine conflict dragged on and new natural gas supplies mainly from the US reached Europe gas prices stabilized.

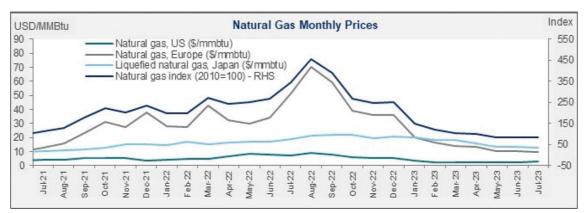
According to the World Bank, US natural gas prices for July-2023 decreased by 64.8 y-o-y to reach USD 2.55/MMBtu. Similarly, European natural gas prices for July-2023 declined by 81.4% y-o-y averaging the month at USD 9.55/MMBtu, while average monthly Japanese LNG price for July-2023 witnessed 33.8% y-o-y drop at USD 12.49/MMBtu.

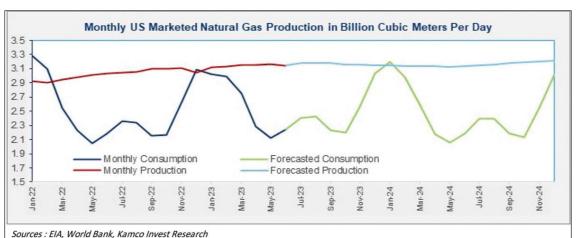
In terms of gas consumption, global natural gas consumption moved towards a slow rebalanc ing during the 2022/2023 heating season as a result of the supply shock triggered by the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Higher natural gas prices prompted a switch from the usage of natural gas back to coal in the power sectors of many areas in Europe and South Asia. This switch back to coal further depressed natural gas consumption putting downward pressure on gas prices.

Comparatively, US gas consumption increased by a marg inal 0.6% y-o-y during the winter season of 2022/2023 lDecember–February) mainly driven by the steep drop in temperatures during December. The steep drop in winter temperatures triggered a dramatic rise in natural gas consumption as commercial and res ident ial heating demand surged putting upward pressure on prices. However, this demand surge was reversed by m ild temperatures in the first quarter of 2023.

Global natural gas production which remained flat during 2022 is expected to witness a marginal growth from 4033 bcm in 2022 to 4037 bcm in 2023 according to the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF), led by the US, Africa, and the Middle East. Total natural gas production from North America is forecast to increase from 1215 bcm in 2022 to 1279 bcm in 2023 while natural gas production from Middle Eastern countries is projected to rise from 685 bcm to 702 bcm in 2023. Comparatively, gas production from the CIS countries is poised to decline 2.2% y-o-y to reach 814 bcm in 2023 mainly affected by the decline of Russian pipeline natural gas to Europe.

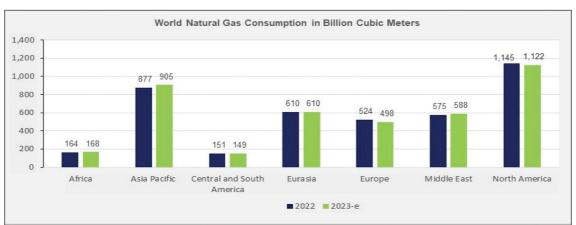
As natural gas demand in Europe and the US waned, China's natural gas consumption has increased since the start of 2023. China's natural gas consumption increased 5% y-o-y to 162 bcm from January to May 2023 according to GECF. China's natural gas consumption growth was underpinned by Chinese economy's recovery from stringent lockdowns during 2022 and the rise in natural gas consumption in the power sector as a result of decreased hydroelectric accessibility. The growth in China's natural gas consumption prompted an increase in China's natural gas pipeline imports. China's average monthly pipeline natural gas for the first five months of 2023 were 5.1 bcm as compared to 5.0 bcm in 2022. Similarly, China's LNG imports accelerated during the first half of 2023 reaching their highest mark during June-2023 6.2 Mt as compared to 4.4 Mt. Overall, the Asia Pacific regions LNG imports witnessed significant expansion during the first half of the year recording 2.3% growth

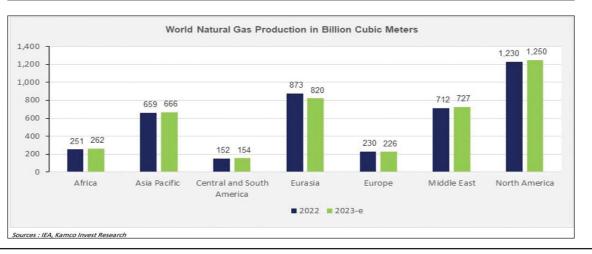




	2021	2022	2023-е	2024-е
Marketed Production	94.57	98.13	102.35	102.40
Consumption	83.90	88.53	89.02	87.81
LNG Exports	9.76	10.59	12.04	13.31
Henry Hub Spot Prices (\$/thousand cubic feet)	3.91	6.42	2.62	3.29







to 129.38 Mt of natural gas.

According to the IEA, natural gas consumption in the advanced economies of Europe witnessed the steepest drop ever recorded during the heating season of 2022/2023 and declined by approximately 55 bcm y-o-y. IEA explained the new OECD Europe gas demand decline projection to be driven by lower gas burn in the power sector. So far for the first half of 2023, European gas demand dropped 10% or 30 bcm. Moreover, according to the GECF, natural gas consumption in the European Union dropped 12% y-oy in June-2023 to reach 18 bcm. The decline in the bloc's gas consumption was primarily due to an increase in solar energy and wind power output which decelerated the use of natural gas for electricity generation. Natural gas consumption in Germany, the largest natural gas importer in the EU, fell 8% y-o-y for 1H-2023 to reach 41 bcm. The decline in Germany's gas consumption during the first half of the year was mainly attributed to favorable weather conditions and the efficient use of renewable energy sources. According to GECF, renewable energy sources including solar, wind and biomass comprised 55% of German's power mix generation during June-2023. In terms of sectoral natural gas consumption, Germany's Industrial sector recorded the thirteenth consecutive monthly decline of 8% y-o-y during June-2023. Similarly, Germany's Residential/Commercial sector witnessed 19% y-o-y gas consumption decline during June-2023 mainly due to the strict adherence to the EU regulations advocating for voluntary 15% reduction in in gas consumption.

In its latest short-term energy outlook, the US EIA forecasted that US natural gas consumption in 2023 would reach 0.6% lower than the amount of consumption in 2022 at 89.02 bcf/d (2.52 bcm/d) reflecting expected consumption decline in the industrial sector.

Comparatively, the IEA has cut its European natural gas demand for 2023 projecting a 7% drop to 489 bcm down from the previous 5% fall forecast. The EIA also estimates that US natural gas marketed production to reach 102.35 bcf/d (2.9 bcm/d) in 2023 witnessing an increase of 4.3% from 2022 to 2023. In terms of sectors, the EIA forecasts that the US natural gas share of electricity generation to reach 41% in 2023 as compared to 39% in 2022 and then drop to 37% in 2024. In terms of natural gas prices in the US, the EIA forecasts the Henry Hub natural gas spot price to average at around USD 2.62/ MMBtu during 2023 and then increase to USD 3.29/MMBtu in 2024 due to expected rising demand LNG exports as Freeport LNG export terminal returns to full operations combined with expected rise in natural gas consumption in the Electric Power sector. The EIA forecasts that US natural gas consumption for electric power generation would average 46 Bcf/d (1.3 bcm/d) for the period between July-2023 and August-2023.

In the GCC region, Qatar, which has been the second largest global LNG exporter after the US in June-2023, has concluded the signing of two major long term LNG contract during 2023. Qatar has recently inked an agreement with China to supply 4 million metric tons of LNG per annum for 27 years. The agreement also included China's 5% stake purchase of Qatar's eastern expansion of the North Field LNG project. Furthermore, Qatar's second agreement that it signed during 2023 was a 15 -year contract to supply 2 million metric tons of LNG per year to Bangladesh. It is estimated that Qatar currently has uncontracted LNG capacity of 60 million tons per year. moreover, the Qatari government has indicated that it will sign LNG contracts with several European countries during 2023 as result advanced discussions since 2022. Qatar has boosted its LNG exports so far in 2023 supported by lower maintenance activity even delivering the commissioning cargo for the Suntien Tangshan LNG terminal on June-2023.

Sales raise alarm from nonproliferation experts

Putin profits off global reliance on Russian nuclear fuel

WASHINGTON, Aug 10, (AP): The U.S. and its European allies are importing vast amounts of nuclear fuel and compounds from Russia, providing Moscow with hundreds of millions of dollars in badly needed revenue as it wages war on Ukraine.

The sales, which are legal and unsanctioned, have raised alarms from nonproliferation experts and elected officials who say the imports are helping to bankroll the development of Moscow's nuclear arsenal and are complicating efforts to curtail Russia's war-making abilities. The dependence on Russian nuclear products - used mostly to fuel civilian reactors - leaves the U.S. and its allies open to energy shortages if Russian President Vladimir Putin were to cut off supplies. The challenge is likely to grow more intense as those nations seek to boost production of emissions-free electricity to combat climate change.

"We have to give money to the people who make weapons? That's absurd," said Henry Sokolski, executive director of the Washington-based Nonproliferation Policy Education Center. "If there isn't a clear rule that prevents nuclear power providers from importing fuel from Russia - and it's cheaper to get it from there - why wouldn't they do it?"

Russia sold about \$1.7 billion in nuclear products to firms in the U.S. and Europe, according to trade data and experts. The purchases occurred as the West has leveled stiff sanctions on Moscow over its 2022 invasion of Ukraine, blocking imports of such Russian staples as oil, gas, vodka and caviar.

The West has been reluctant to target Russia's nuclear exports, however, because they play key roles in keeping reactors humming. Russia supplied the U.S. nuclear industry

with about 12% of its uranium last year, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Europe reported getting about 17% of its uranium in 2022 from Russia.

Reliance on nuclear power is expected to grow as nations embrace alternatives to fossil fuels. Nuclear power plants produce no emissions, though experts warn that nuclear energy comes with the risk of reactor meltdowns and the challenge of how to safely store radioactive waste. There are about 60 reactors under construction around the world - 300 more are in the planning stages.

Many of the 30 countries generating nuclear energy in some 440 plants are importing radioactive materials from Russia's state-owned energy corporation Rosatom and its subsidiaries. Rosatom leads the world in uranium enrichment, and is ranked third in uranium production and fuel fabrication, according to its 2022 annual report.

Rosatom, which says it is building 33 new reactors in 10 counties, and its subsidiaries, exported around \$2.2 billion worth of nuclear energy-related goods and materials last year, according to trade data analyzed by the Royal United Service Institute, a London-based think-tank. The institute said that figure is likely much larger because it is difficult to track such exports.

Rosatom's CEO Alexei Likhachyov told the Russian newspaper Izvestia the company's foreign business should total \$200 billion over the next decade. That lucrative civilian business provides critical funds for Rosatom's other major responsibility: designing and producing Russia's atomic

arsenal, experts say.

Ukrainian officials have pleaded with world leaders to sanction Rosatom to cut off one of Moscow's last signifi-

cant funding streams and to punish Putin for launching the invasion. Ukrainian President Volodmyr Zelenskyy again pressed Western leaders to target Rosatom after Russian forces captured the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. Rosatom is running the partially shutdown plant, and the International Atomic Energy Agency has repeatedly warned that a radiation leak at the Russian-occupied facility could be a

"Ukraine does not understand why sanctions have not yet been introduced against Rosatom and its leadership," Zelenskyy said in May, "when representatives of this company continue to occupy Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant and put our general security at risk."

Nuclear energy advocates say the U.S. and some European countries would face difficulty in cutting off imports of Russian nuclear products. The U.S. nuclear energy industry, which largely outsources its fuel, produces about 20% of U.S. electricity.

U.S. electricity.

The value of Russian nuclear fuel and products sent to the U.S. hit \$871 million last year, up from \$689 million in 2021 and \$610 million in 2020, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. In terms of weight, U.S. imports of uranium products from Russia nearly doubled from 6.3 tons in 2020 to 12.5 tons in 2022, according to trade data from ImportGenius.

The reasons for that reliance goes back decades. The U.S. uranium industry took a beating following a 1993 nonproliferation deal that resulted in the importation of inexpensive weapons-grade uranium from Russia, experts say. The downturn accelerated after a worldwide drop in demand for nuclear fuel following the 2011 meltdown of three reactors at Japan's Fukushima Daiichi power plant.

American nuclear plants plants purchased 5% of their uranium from domestic suppliers in 2021, the last year for which official U.S. production data are available, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. The largest source of uranium for such plants was Kazakhstan, which contributed about 35% of the supply. A close Russian ally, Kazakhstan is the world's largest producer of uranium.

The Biden administration says it is trying to revive uranium mining and the production of nuclear fuel, and lawmakers have introduced legislation to speed up the process. This week, however, President Joe Biden announced the formation of a national monument to preserve land around Grand Canyon National Park that would prevent new uranium mining in the region.

"It is critical that we stop funding Russia's state-owned nuclear monopoly, Rosatom," said Sen. John Barrasso, the Wyoming Republican who introduced legislation earlier this year to fund America's nuclear fuel supply chain. "We also need to give America's nuclear fuel suppliers market certainty."

Europe is in a bind largely because it has 19 Russiandesigned reactors in five countries that are fully dependent on Russian nuclear fuel. France also has a long history of relying on Russian-enriched uranium. In a report published in March, Greenpeace, citing the United Nations' Comtrade database, showed that French imports of enriched uranium from Russia increased from 110 tons in 2021 to 312 tons

Europe spent nearly \$828 million (almost euro 750 million) last year on Russian nuclear industry products - including fuel elements, nuclear reactors, and machinery - according to Eurostat, the EU's statistics office.

Egypt tourism revenues hit \$10.7b in '22

Tourism revenues in Egypt reached USD 10.7 billion in the fiscal year 2021-2022 compared to USD 4.9 billion in the FY 2020-2021, marking a 121.1 percent increase, official data showed on Wednesday.

The Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics showed in a statement that 11.7 million tourists from all over the globe visited Egypt in 2022, whereas in 2021 only eight million tourists did. Around 62.6 percent of total for-

eign tourists were European with 7.3 million visitors, Arab visitors on the other hand comprised 26.4 percent of total tourists with 3.1 million visitors, followed by American tourists with 676,000 visitors and around 5.8 percent of total visitors, the remaining 5.3 percent is comprised of various nationalities.

The statement further indicated that number of touristic nights spent in Egypt in 2022 increased by 39.7 percent to 131 million nights from 83.8 million nights in the previous year.

Tourism is one of the leading sources of income, crucial to Egypt's economy. At its peak in 2010, the sector employed about 12% of workforce of Egypt, serving approximately 14.7 million visitors to Egypt, and providing revenues of nearly \$12.5 billion as well as contributing more than 11% of GDP and 14.4% of foreign currency revenues. (Agencies)

UAE airports received 62m passengers in '23 H1

UAE airports received around 62 million passengers during the first half of 2023, an increase of 46 percent compared to 43 percent in 2022, UAE Civil Aviation Authority stated on Wednesday.

The data issued by the authority shows that the country's airports recorded 446,000 flights during the first half of the year, compared to 359,000 flights last year, Emirates News Agency (WAM) reported. Abu Dhabi Airport welcomed

10 million passengers, an increase of 67 percent, with 67,000 flights during the first half of 2023, it added.

Dubai welcomed 8.5 million visitors, up 20 percent, in the first half of 2023, it added.

Sharjah welcomed seven million visitors in the first half of 2023, adding that air cargo reached 70,000 tons and six tons by land and sea.

Ras Al-Khaimah Tourism De-

velopment Authority registered for the first time a record-breaking number between January and June with 600,000 visitors, an increase of 14 percent, compared to last year, it noted.

Airports in the UAE connect the country to key destinations in the world. International travellers have always loved the high-quality infrastructure at UAE airports and rated their experience travelling as excellent. (Agencies)

Other data is fair game

Zoom says it isn't training AI on calls without consent

date to Zoom's terms of service is raising alarm bells on social media, with users claiming it reveals the videoconferencing company is now tapping their online doctor visits and virtual happy hours to train artificial intelligence models.

"Zoom terms of service now require you to allow AI to train on ALL your data - audio, facial recognition, private conversations - unconditionally and irrevocably, with no opt out," read one widely-shared tweet this week that has since been deleted. "Don't try to negotiate with our new overlords.

The company quickly responded with a blog post on Monday stressing that it "will not use audio, video, or chat customer content to train our artificial intelligence models without your consent," and adding a line to the terms to make this clearer.

Online privacy experts say that this policy is now accurately reflected in the document. However, the terms do still allow Zoom to train AI on other data, such as how customers behave - and they question how much choice some meeting participants will have to opt out if, say, their boss decides oth-

Here's a closer look at the facts.

Claim: Zoom's terms of service give the company permission to use all customer data, including private conversations, for training artificial intelligence, with no ability to opt out.

The Facts: That is not accurate, at least now that Zoom has added language to the terms to make its policy clearer, experts say.

The current terms would not allow the company to tap user-generated content like video and chat for AI

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, Aug 10: center3 by stc, a regional data center and data services provider, has announced a strategic collaboration with Oracle to provide hosting and data services for the planned Oracle Cloud Riyadh Region as well as support the expansion of the existing Oracle Cloud Jeddah Region. This will help accelerate the rollout of Oracle Cloud Infrastructure

Saudi Arabia. The planned Oracle Cloud Riyadh Region is part of a US \$1.5 billion investment from Oracle to expand cloud infrastructure capabilities in the King-

(OCI) services to support the increas-

ing cloud computing demands of pri-

vate and public sector organizations in

dom. The Oracle Cloud Riyadh Region will be the sixth Oracle Cloud region operating in the Middle East, joining another planned cloud region to be located in the futuristic city of NEOM. Oracle currently operates four cloud regions in the Middle East and is currently one of the few major cloud providers to offer a cloud region in the Kingdom with the existing Oracle Cloud Jeddah Region.

This collaboration represents a significant milestone for center3, aligning with the company's commitment to the Saudi Arabia's 2030 vision and the digital transformation of the region connecting Asia, Africa, and Europe. The initiative is expected to bring significant economic benefits to Saudi Arabia and the Middle East.

Agreement to help accelerate OCI services rollout in the Kingdom

stc's center3 partners with Oracle to expand cloud services in Saudi Arabia

Fahad A. Alhajeri, CEO of center3, a subsidiary of the stc Group, stated, "This strategic collaboration will allow us to grow our business and support the digital economy of the region. We are confident that this long-term partnership will empower both center3 and Oracle to achieve new heights of suc-

Nick Redshaw, senior vice president, Middle East and Africa, Cloud Tech Oracle, said, "Oracle is driving one of the fastest expansions of cloud services offered by any major cloud vendor in Saudi Arabia to help boost cloud computing capacity in the Kingdom. We

are delivering unmatched innovation in the cloud with comprehensive AI and machine learning capabilities already embedded into our infrastructure and applications for HR, finance, supply chain and sales teams. We are well positioned to deliver powerful generative AI services planned that will help organizations solve today's most complex challenges. These unique capabilities and our collaboration with center3 will further support the growth of the

country's digital economy. As part of stc Group's broader focus on digital enablement, center3 is rapidly establishing itself as a leading player in the regional and global digital ecosystem. With its comprehensive portfolio of data center and data services center3 positions itself as a one-stopshop for digital services in the Middle East, Asia, Europe, and Africa.

OCI's multiple cloud regions in the Middle East are a component of its distributed cloud strategy, which offers multiple deployment options to address differing customer needs in regulatory requirements, data residency, or latency reduction. For example, OCI customers can also address demanding data residency, security and sovereignty requirements by running their applications in a self-contained OCI Dedicated Region where all hosted data remains local and private with a customer-controlled data center.

training without a customer opting in. However, once a meeting host agrees, other participants would have to leave if they don't want to consent. The terms also allow Zoom to use other data, including information about user behavior, without additional permission.

"The face of these terms of service does now assure the user that Zoom is not going to use their customer content for the purpose of training artificial intelligence models without their consent," John Davisson, director of litigation and senior counsel at the Electronic Privacy Information Center, told The Associated Press.

At issue is language Zoom added to its terms in March. The document differentiates between two types of data: "service generated data," such as what features customers use and what part of the world they are in, and "customer content," which is the data created by users themselves, such as audio or chat

The terms state that service-generated data can be used for "machine learning or artificial intelligence (including the purposes of training and tuning algorithms and models." Zoom's blog post says the company considers such data "to be our data," and experts confirm this language would allow the company to use this data for AI training without obtaining additional consent.

Separately, the terms say that customer content may also be used "for the purpose" of machine learning or AI. After this was highlighted on social media this week, the company clarified in its post that this refers to new generative AI features that users must agree to, which create things like automated meeting summaries for customers. Zoom said in a statement to the AP that in addition to enabling the features for themselves, users must separately consent to sharing this data with the

Experts said that the language in the March update was wide-reaching and could have opened the door for the company to use that data without additional permission if it wanted to.

But Zoom added a more explicit caveat to the terms on Monday, saying: "Notwithstanding the above, Zoom will not use audio, video or chat Customer Content to train our artificial intelligence models without your con-

With this language, Davisson said that using such data to train AI without a user consenting would now constitute a violation of the terms on Zoom's part, opening the company up to litigation.

However, experts said the way this function works could still pose problems for some participants in Zoom calls if the host opts into the generative AI features.

Zoom says that if a meeting organizer decides to use the meeting summary feature, participants are sent a notification alerting them that an AI feature has been enabled and that their data may be shared for AI training. They are prompted to either proceed with the meeting or to leave.

Although this in theory offers all

participants the ability to control how their data is used, it may not be possible for someone to opt out of a meeting or forgo Zoom altogether if they disagree, said Katharine Trendacosta, director of policy and advocacy at the Electronic Frontier Foundation.

"If the administrator consents and it's your boss at your work who requires you to use Zoom, how is that really consent?" she asked.

Davisson has similar concerns.

"That sort of just-in-time acquisition of 'consent,' is not real consent," he said. "And so that's a pretty misleading caveat from them to introduce. It claims to rest on consent, but what it's resting on really is just sort of what the meeting organizer or system administrator has decided to do.

Bid to reduce carbon emissions

Mote kicks off 2nd biomass to 'hydrogen project' in NC

utilities, industries, and transportation providers look to clean hydrogen to reduce carbon emissions, Mote Inc. has received \$1.2 million in grant funding from the US Forest Service, the California Department of Conservation, and the California Department of Forestry (CAL FIRE) to establish its second biomass to hydrogen and carbon sequestration plant in partnership with the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD). As Mote's hydrogen offtake partner for the second facility in Sacramento, SMUD and Mote have been collaborating on the project development. Upon completion, the facility would produce approximately 21,000 metric tons per year (MTPY) of carbon-negative hydrogen for use in thermal power generation and transportation.

The plant would also sequester over 450,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO2) annually, equal to the CO2 emissions of over 100,000 cars each year. The project is supported by forestry stakeholders due to Mote's capacity to create value from large amounts of wood waste. The project can utilize up to 300,000 MTPY of forest residues and wood waste from regional forest management programs, such as those in the Sierra Nevadas. This waste would otherwise be open-air burned, left to decompose, or sent to a landfill.

"On our path toward a sustainable future, SMUD remains dedicated to harnessing the power of our partnerships and cutting-edge technologies to create innovative green energy solutions and opportunities for the entire region," said Lora Anguay, chief zero carbon officer at SMUD. "Through our ambitious 2030 Zero Carbon Plan and visionary leadership, we are driving positive environmental change, cham-

LOS ANGELES, Aug 10: As more pioning large-scale utility decarbonization, and fostering an equitable transition toward a clean energy economy and future that benefits all communi-

> Mote's carbon-negative hydrogen solution is a first-of-a-kind model for removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Similar to its first project near Bakersfield, this second plant will integrate with carbon capture and geological sequestration methods to produce carbon-negative hydrogen. Using gasification and a proprietary integration of proven technology, Mote can process woody waste from farms, forestry, and urban

Storage

The remaining carbon dioxide from the process is captured and permanently placed underground in saline aquifers for ecologically safe storage. The focus on carbon removal and storage sets Mote's technology apart from other clean hydrogen projects, as Mote's product delivers hydrogen with a producer sale price and carbon intensity score significantly lower than its competitors at -150 gCO2/MJ.

"There is a pressing need for durable, large-scale carbon removal and scalable solutions that provide lowcost, clean hydrogen in the ongoing energy transition. Mote's technology does both. Our projects in Sacramento and Bakersfield will be the first commercial-scale projects to utilize sustainably sourced biomass for this purpose," said Joshuah Stolaroff. CEO of Mote.

"Our transformative use of wastes to fight climate change saves money, land, and resources compared to alternative options. With continued support from partner organizations, we will expand to become a major part of the global path to net zero.'

Production to meet demands

Crystal IS produces 1st 4-inch 'aluminum nitrate' substrate

GREEN ISLAND, N.Y., Aug 10: Crystal IS, an Asahi Kasei company, has announced the successful production of a 4-inch (100 mm) diameter single-crystal aluminum nitride (AlN) substrate. This is the first reported aluminum nitride substrate at this size and demonstrates the scalability of Crystal IS processes for growing AlN bulk single-crystals to meet production demands for this semiconductor material.

Aluminum nitride substrates have low defect densities, high UV transparency, and low concentrations of impurities. AlN is attractive for a variety of industries, such as UVC LEDs and power devices, due to its ultrawide bandgap and very high thermal conductivity. The 4-inch substrate produced shows a usable area of over 80% based on current requirements for UVC LEDs.

"We are extremely excited to announce the achievement of a 4-inch bulk aluminum nitride substrate," said Dr. Naohiro Kuze, Executive Fellow at the Research Laboratory of Advanced Science and Technology, Asahi Kasei. "This accomplishment signifies that aluminum nitride is commercially viable for new industries beyond just

China accuses US of trying to block its development

Biden issues 'order' restricting **US investments in Chinese tech**

WASHINGTON, Aug 10, (AP): US President Joe Biden signed an executive order Wednesday to block and regulate high-tech USbased investments going toward China - a move the administration said was targeted but it also reflected an intensifying competition between the world's two biggest powers.

The order covers advanced computer chips, micro electronics, quantum information technologies and artificial intelligence. Senior administration officials said that the effort stemmed from national security goals rather than economic interests, and that the categories it covered were intentionally narrow in scope. The order seeks to blunt China's ability to use US investments in its technology companies to upgrade its military while also preserving broader levels of trade that are vital for both nations' economies.

The Chinese Ministry of Commerce responded in a statement early Thursday that it has "serious concern" about the order and "reserves the right to take

measures. The United States and China appear to be increasingly locked in a geopolitical competition with a conflicting set of values. Biden administration officials have insisted that they have no interest in "decoupling" from China, yet the US also has limited the export of advanced computer chips and kept the expanded tariffs set up by President Donald Trump. And in its response, China accused the US of "using the cover of 'risk reduction' to carry out 'decoupling and chain-breaking." China has engaged in crackdowns on foreign companies.



US President Biden speaks at the Arcosa Wind Towers on Aug 9 in Belen, N.M. Biden is making the case that his policies of financial and tax incentives have revived US manufacturing. Biden signed an executive order Wednesday to block and regulate high-tech US-based investments going toward China. (AP)

Biden has suggested that China's economy is struggling and its global ambitions have been tempered as the US has reenergized its alliances with Japan, South Korea, Australia and the European Union. The administration consulted with allies and industry in shaping the executive order.

"Worry about China, but don't worry about China," Biden told donors at a June fundraising event in California.

The officials previewing the order said that China has exploited US investments to support the development of weapons and modernize its military. The new limits were tailored not to disrupt China's economy, but they would complement the export controls on advanced computer chips from last year that led to pushback by Chinese officials. The Treasury Department, which would monitor the investments, will announce a proposed rulemaking with definitions that would conform to the presidential order and go through a public comment process.

The goals of the order would be to have investors notify the US government about certain types of transactions with China as well as to place prohibitions on some investments. Officials said the order is focused on areas such as private equity, venture capital and joint partnerships in which the investments could possibly give countries of concern such as China additional knowledge and military capabilities.

J. Philip Ludvigson, a lawyer and former Treasury official, said the order was an initial framework that could be expanded over time.

The issue is also a bipartisan priority. In July by a vote of 91-6, the Senate added as an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act requirements to monitor and limit investments in countries of concern, including China.

Yet reaction to Biden's order on Wednesday showed a desire to push harder on China. Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi, D-Ill., said the order was an "essential step forward," but it "cannot be the final step." Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley, a former US ambassador to the United Nations, said Biden should been more aggressive, saying, "we have to stop all US investment in China's critical technology and military companies period."

Targeted

The US Chamber of Commerce said it met a number of times with the White House and federal agencies as the order was being prepared and said its goal during the comment period will be "to ensure the measure is targeted and administrable.

However, foreign business groups say global companies also are shifting investment plans to other economies.

Foreign companies have lost confidence in China following tighter security controls and a lack of action on reform promises. Calls by Xi and other leaders for more economic self-reliance have left investors uneasy about their future in the state-dominated economy.

The Biden Administration is committed to keeping America safe and defending America's national security through appropriately protecting technologies that are critical to the next generation of military innovation.

China accused Washington on Thursday of trying to block its development after Biden stepped up a feud over technology and security by tightening controls on US investments that might help Beijing develop its military.

The Foreign Ministry accused the Biden administration of pursuing 'technology hegemony" and demanded Washington "immediately revoke its erroneous decision." It warned that the latest restrictions in a spreading conflict over Beijing's industrial development would hurt global supply chains.

China expands number of nations for travel by tourists

BEIJING, Aug 10, (AP): China has increased the number of countries that its big-spending tourists can visit by more than 70 following the lifting of its last COVID-19 travel restrictions.

The decision comes as international flights to and from the country gradually return to their pre-pandemic levels.

China implemented strict lockdowns and draconian travel controls within the country and closed its borders almost entirely after the virus was first detected in the central city of Wuhan in late 2019.

Those restrictions began to be lifted late last year, but the government has been hesitant to resume issuing passports and allowing in foreign tourists, as well as giving its citizens the ability to travel abroad

The expanded options for travel began on Thursday.

"The government agencies in charge will provide businesses in the tourism sector with the necessary guidance for the implementation," the Foreign Ministry said. "At this moment, we would like to remind all outbound tourists to be well-prepared before each journey, stay safe and healthy and show civility as they travel, enjoy the trip and have a safe journey home.

Chinese tourists, who generally travel in groups organized by agencies, are known for spending lavishly on hotels, tours, souvenirs and designer brands. Prepandemic, they traveled in larger numbers and spent more as a whole than any other nationality, accounting for \$255 billion in revenue in 2019, according to business

consultancy McKinsey & Company. Thailand, Japan, Australia and EU

countries such as Germany have been among the biggest beneficiaries of the Chinese tourist spending, given the relative ease of obtaining visas and the availability of flights.

Japanese Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihiko Isozaki on Thursday said Japan and China agreed to revitalize exchanges of people between the two countries when their leaders held talks in November.

A Syrian woman leaves a pharmacy after buying medicine in Damascus, Syria, on July 24, 2019. The Syrian government decided to increase prices of drugs by 50%, the head of the pharmacies syndicate in Damascus said on Aug 8, 2023 as the Syrian pound hit new a low in recent days.



Syria to increase drug prices by 50%

The Syrian government decided to increase prices of drugs by 50%, the head of the pharmacies syndicate in Damascus said Tuesday, as the Syrian pound hit new a low in recent days.

Hassan Derwan did not give a reason for the price hike in his interview with the pro-government daily Al-Watan. Earlier this year, prices were raised by between 50% and 80%.

Syrian pharmaceutical companies mainly import raw materials in hard currencies which makes them susceptible

to changes in the price of the Syrian pound. The companies have recently demanded to increase the price of their products to cope with the tumbling

Since Syria's conflict erupted 12 years ago - killing nearly half a million people and displacing about 6.8 million others - the country's currency has lost much of its value and now the vast majority of

Syrians live in poverty.

Back in 2011, a dollar was valued at 47 pounds. Last week, the dollar was valued at about 13,000 pounds on the parallel market while the official rate stood at 9,900. At the start of the year, the dollar was worth about 7,000

The minimum monthly wage in Syria

is 130,000 pounds or about \$12. Syria's economy has been hard hit by the war, Western sanctions, widespread corruption and the historic economic meltdown in neighboring Lebanon that started in October 2019. (AP)

The Conversation

Migraines more common, intense during a woman's reproductive years

Women get far more migraines than men: neurologist

By Danielle Wilhour

University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

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

A migraine is far more than just a headache - it's a debilitating disorder of the nervous system.

People who have migraines experience severe throbbing or pulsating pain, typically on one side of the head. The pain is often accompanied by nausea, vomiting and extreme sensitivity to light or sound. An attack may last for hours or days, and to ease the suffering, some people spend time isolated in dark, quiet rooms.

About 800 million people worldwide get migraine headaches; in the US alone, about 39 million, or approximately 12% of the population, have them regularly.

And most of these people are women. More than three times as many women as compared to men get migraines. For women ages 18 to 49, migraine is the leading cause of disability throughout the world

What's more, research shows that women's migraines are more frequent, more disabling and longer-lasting than men's. Women are more likely than men to seek medical care and prescription drugs for migraines. And women who have migraines tend to have more mental health issues, including anxiety and depression.

As a board-certified neurologist who specializes in headache medicine, I find the gender differences in migraines to be fascinating. And some of the reasons why these differences exist

may surprise you.

Migraines and hormones

There are several factors behind why men and women experience migraine attacks differently. These include hormones, genetics, how certain genes are activated or deactivated - an area of study called epigenetics - and the environment.

All of these factors play a role in shaping the structure, function and adaptability of the brain when it comes to migraines. one, through different mechanisms, play a role in regulating many biological functions. They affect various chemicals in the brain and may contribute to functional and structural differences in specific brain regions that are involved in the development of migraines. Additionally, sex hormones can quickly change the size of blood vessels, which can predispose people to migraine attacks.

During childhood, both boys and girls have an equal chance of experiencing migraines. It's estimated that about 10% of all children will have them at some point. But when girls reach puberty, their likelihood of getting migraines increases.

That's due to the fluctuating levels of sex hormones, primarily estrogen, associated with puberty - although other hormones, including progesterone,

Some girls have their first migraine around the time of their first menstrual cycle. But migraines are often most common and intense during a woman's

Researchers estimate about 50% to 60% of women with migraines experience menstrual migraines. These migraines typically occur in the days leading up to menstruation or during menstruation itself, when the drop in estrogen levels can trigger migraines. Menstrual migraines can be more severe and last longer than migraines at

But women who have migraine with aura, which is a distinct type of migraine, should generally avoid using estrogen containing hormonal contraceptives. The combination can increase the risk of stroke because estrogen can promote the risk of blood clot formation. Birth control options for women with auras include progesterone-only birth control pills, the Depo-Provera

Auras affect about 20% of the people who have migraines. Typically, prior to the migraine, the person most commonly begins to see dark spots and zigzag lines. Less often, about 10% of the time, an inability to speak clearly, or tingling or weakness on one side of the body, also occurs. These symptoms slowly build up, generally last less than an hour before disappearing, and are

commonly followed by head pain. Although these symptoms resemble what happens during a stroke, an aura tends to occur slowly, over minutes while strokes usually happen instanta-

That said, it may be difficult and dangerous for a nonmedical person to try to discern the difference between the two conditions, particularly in the midst of an attack, and determine whether it's migraine with aura or a stroke. If there is any uncertainty as to what's wrong, a call to 911 is most prudent.

Migraines during pregnancy For women who are pregnant, mi-

graines can be particularly debilitating during the first trimester, a time when morning sickness is common, making it difficult to eat, sleep or hydrate. Even worse, missing or skipping any of these things can make migraines more likely.

The good news is that migraines generally tend to lessen in severity and frequency throughout pregnancy. For some women, they disappear, especially as the pregnancy progresses. (AP)

may be involved too.

reproductive and child-bearing years.

other times of the month.

A class of medicines that came out in the 1990's - triptans - are commonly used to treat migraines; certain triptans can be used specifically for menstrual migraines. Another category of medications, called nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, have also been effective at lessening the discomfort and length of menstrual migraines. So can a variety of birth control methods, which help by keeping hormone levels steady.

Migraine with aura

shot, and intrauterine devices.

Heart disease continues to be a lead-

"Open heart surgery is traumatic and an unrealistic treatment option for many - there is significant need for better options for patients to address their heart valve disease. Capstan Medical is creating a new standard of heart valve intervention by bringing a minimally invasive treatment option to patients who need it most," said Nixon. "There is rarely such strong alignment between a group of investors and a leadership team on the value robotics can bring to minimizing patient impact, while enabling ex-

Catheter-based treatment enables

Heart disease leading cause of death in US

Capstan leverages robotics to bring invasive care to heart valve patients

SANTA CRUZ, Calif., Aug 10: Capstan Medical, a developer of minimally invasive technology to address heart valve disease, has announced an oversubscribed \$31.4 million Series B investment led by Eclipse. Additional participating investors include Intuitive Ventures and Puma Venture Capital, a new firm founded by Amit Hazan, a veteran Wall Street medical technology analyst, and Dr. Vipul Patel, a renowned robotic surgeon who has performed more robotic procedures than any other surgeon world-

Since 2020, Capstan Medical has carefully curated a team of heart valve implant experts and seasoned robotics engineers to address the rising need for minimally invasive options for treating heart valve disease. ĈEO Maggie Nixon brings more than 20 years of experience at Intuitive Surgical to the company, and co-founder and CTO Dan Wallace has dedicated his career to creating products that reduce the pain and complications of surgery, having developed solutions at Intuitive Surgical, Hansen Medical, Auris Health, Cephea Valve Technologies and more.

Claiming

ing cause of death in the US, claiming the lives of nearly 700,000 Americans each year. While many cardiovascular treatments have improved and become less invasive, traditional heart valve surgery remains highly invasive and is associated with lengthy recovery times. Given the risks associated with open heart surgeries, many patients delay treatment, unwittingly increasing their health risks as well as the chances they may be too weak later on for open heart surgery.

ceptional outcomes."

heart valve disease to be addressed with a small incision in the groin, without stopping the heart or opening the chest as required in open heart surgery. Firms can provide patients with real relief

MOBE, Override launch program for management of chronic pain

many emergency department and

outpatient visits as patients without

chronic pain, according to data from

Milliman. "Unfortunately, there are

very few solutions adequately ad-

dressing the root issues of chronic

pain. This partnership directly ad-

dresses the problem in a risk-free

way for the payer," said Dr. David

J. Shulkin, former Secretary of the

Aug 10: MOBE and Override has announced an innovative, partnered approach to help people in chronic pain. MOBE is a health outcomes company that uses health care data analytics to inform its high-touch, one-to-one health coaching and medication management model. Override is a chronic pain program leveraging highly specialized pain management coaches and pain education delivered on a proprietary, digital platform. Utilizing MOBE's Health Guide,

pharmacist, and data science capabilities, and the "Override Pain Protocol", the companies are working to significantly improve outcomes for people with chronic pain and offer health plans and employers guaranteed shared savings for reducing total health care costs. Together, they will provide extensive neurosciencebased pain education, holistic support, medication management, and coaching from highly specialized chronic pain management coaches to provide a system of unparalleled support for people in pain. Chronic pain is one of the most

underrecognized drivers of morbidity and health care costs in the system today. Complex chronic pain patients can incur \$20,000-\$40,000 in annual claims and have twice as

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and co-founder of Override. **Capabilities** "Integrating our capabilities with the Override protocol for pain aligns well with the needs of health plans and employers as they move toward value-based care. Partnering with Override, MOBE can provide patients with real relief from painrelated issues, while also providing significant cost savings to targeted

populations – often in the 6-8% range

to health plans and employers,

said Mike Ott, CEO of MOBE.

MOBE was founded in 2014 by health industry veterans who uncovered a way to use deep data science to identify people whose health care needs (and costs) are going up, but whose health concerns are not resolved. MOBE combines this deep data science with digital health and a novel, one-to-one personalized approach-engaging and supporting participants to achieve healthier and

happier lives without any additional cost to the health system, employers, or insurers.

Also:

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico: The Puerto Rico Financial Services Forum (FSF) will bring together process and compliance experts in the inter-national banking and insurance industries on Oct 23rd and 24th, 2023, at the Sheraton Hotel & Casino Convention Center in San Juan. On this third occasion, the Puerto Rico Financial Services Forum (FSF) will feature industry leaders who will share their experience, as well as the latest in topics on compliance, regulations, and opportunities. This event, hosted by the Puerto

Rico International Banks Association (PRIBA) and the Puerto Rico International Insurers Association (PRIIA), will feature over 50 local and international experts, including Alexander S. Adams, Insurance Commissioner of Puerto Rico; Natalia Zequeira, Commissioner of Financial Institutions; Secretary Manuel Cidre, Puerto Rico Department of Economic Development and Commerce; Yeissa Rodríguez, Compliance Head for Advantage International Bank Corp; Heidy Duarte, Risk Advisor at Kaufman Rossin, and Ella Woger, chief executive officer of Invest PR, among others.

This technique speeds recovery from months to weeks and is likely tolerable for even the sickest of patients. Yet, there are no commercially available catheter-based mitral and tricuspid valve replacement options on the market today — less than 2% of the more than 5 million eligible patients are currently receiving treatment - leaving a rapidly growing patient population with few options to treat their valve disease before it is too late.

Along with its Series B investment,

Capstan Medical also announced the appointment of Justin Butler, Partner at Eclipse, to its Board. "The Eclipse team is thrilled to support and work with the Capstan Medical team to solve a massively unmet need in medicine," said Butler. "The team's unique understanding of structural heart intervention and surgical robotics will help millions of people across the globe better recover from heart valve disease and live healthier, longer lives."

In the coming months, Capstan Medical will expand its engineering, clinical development and operations teams to progress the technology through the next stage of development into first human use.

Founded in 2020, Capstan Medical is creating a new standard for minimally invasive, heart valve intervention. The company is developing a suite of next-generation heart valve implants and a first of its kind catheter-based robotic delivery platform.







Fans rejoice as superstar Rajinikanth's latest hits theaters

MUMBAI, India, Aug 10, (AP): Fans of an Indian movie star with a cult following thronged movie theaters and celebrated with dancing and prayers as his latest film hit screens on Thursday.

Hundreds of avid supporters of Rajinikanth, one of India's biggest movie superstars, carried photo cutouts and flower garlands as they made their way to a theater in Mumbai to watch his latest film "Jailer." The first screening began at 6 a.m. local time.

When Rajinikanth appeared on screen, the theater stopped the movie for a minute as fans danced and cheered, rejoicing in his return after a period of two years.

Popular movie stars are treated like gods in India, often worshipped like deities by their fans. Rajinikanth is one of Asia's highest-paid actors, known for his su-

perhero stunts. He enjoys a devoted fan base that cuts across generations and even continents. His films have broken box-office records in India and in countries like Malaysia and the United Kingdom, both of which have large Tamil-speaking populations.

Born Shivaji Rao Gaekwad, the actor today uses only one name. He once worked as a bus conductor for three years before attending acting school. He started in small roles as villains in Tamil cinema and worked his way up, before landing roles in Bollywood, the Hindilanguage film industry based in Mumbai.

Some offices in the southern cities of Chennai and Bengaluru declared Thursday a holiday so his fans could watch the movie.

"Scientists say that time machines are not possible, but Rajinikanth has the power to take us back to childhood," said one fan named Arun, who watched the movie on opening day in Mumbai.

In "Jailer," Rajinikanth plays a prison warden who learns that a criminal gang is trying to rescue its leader from the prison, and he sets out to stop them.

Rajinikanth, 72, has acted in more than 160 movies spanning more than five decades in several Indian languages, including Tamil, Hindi, Telugu, Kannada, Bengali and Malayalam.

TV late-night comedy scribe Greg Iwinski, 38, was still only an aspiring writer when Hollywood writers held their landmark strike in

But as he manned the picket lines Wednesday - the day the current strike hit its 100th day, matching the length of the previous one - he was keenly aware of all the history involved.

"I got a residual check yesterday for a show I worked on, because people went on strike in 1960, before I was even born," he said. "And so knowing that we could be doing that for people 60 years from now is incredibly motivating.'

And yes, said Iwinski, who has written for "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert," "Last Week Tonight with John Oliver," and other shows, 100 days is a long time - but he is prepared to strike as long as it takes.

"Today is our 100th day of striking and we're striking for the same thing we were on Day One, which is a fair contract," he said. "We have the same two pages of proposals and the studios have not yet responded to all those proposals ... so I guess until that happens, we'll still be out here."

Wednesday's milestone comes as the US film and television industries remain paralyzed by dual strikes by its actors and screenwriters. There's no foreseeable end - a negotiating session last week involving Hollywood studios and streamers and the striking writers ended with little progress. Television networks are a month away from starting a new fall season, and broadcasters have already put contingency plans in place for programming that excludes their most popular scripted series.

Hollywood's actors began their strike July 14, creating the first dual strike since 1960. Issues at play for both unions include the use of artificial intelligence and residuals related to streaming.

The Writers Guild of America held special pickets marking the 100th day in both New York and Los Angeles. Outside the Netflix offices on Broadway in Manhattan, the scene had an upbeat feel. A steady stream of protesters - both writers and their actor allies in SAG-AF-TRA - danced, pounded on drums and chanted slogans as they marched around the city block.

Befitting writers, signs were markedly creative: "This Barbie is striking!!!" "Not Kenough." "The only free writing you deserve is this sign." "Writers make people happy (and sad)." And the simple: "No wages, no pages.

Variety



Drake performs in concert as part of the Summer Sixteen Tour at Madison Square Garden on Aug. 5, 2016, in New York. In the five decades since hip-hop emerged out of New York City, it has spread where it first made itself known but it spread out until there's no corner of the world that hasn't been touched by it. Hip-hop has impacted everything: Art, culture, fashion, community, social justice, politics, sports, business. This year is being marked as a 50th anniversary celebration. (AP)



Hip-hop 'connects to what is true'

Hip-hop turns 50, reinventing itself

Angeles SoFi Stadium in a big way by announcing the fourth edition of her re-recording project: "1989 (Taylor's Version.)"

After playing a few tracks from her "1989" era live, the pop star approached the center of the stage with an acoustic guitar in hand and suggested to the audience that she'd been working on something big.
"Instead of telling you about

LOS ANGELES: Taylor Swift

closed the 2023 US leg of her landmark Eras Tour at the Los

it, we'll just show you," she told the crowd as the screen illuminated behind her. "1989 (Taylor's Version) available October 27th!" she cheered.

Across three-and-a-half hours, the pop superstar offered fans a bevy of career-spanning hits that was less of a greatest hits collection, and more of a live celebration of an artist in her veterancy.

Throughout the dozen tracks, it was as if the ground shook with the rapturous sound of 70,000 fans scream-singing along to a popstar's deep cuts. This is Taylor Swift's house filled with fans in light Taylor Swift cosplay (pink dresses for her 2019 album "Lover," black leather and snakeskin prints for 2017's "Reputation," sequins and A-line skirts for 2014's

"1989," and so on.) In a summer stacked with superstar tours celebrating giant new releases - like the larger-than-life experiences of Beyoncé's Renaissance World Tour and Drake's 56-date "It Was All a Blur" tour - Taylor Swift's Eras Tour stands proudly among them. (AP)

NEW YORK: Add **Angelina** Jolie to the growing list of ce-

lebrities lately dipping their toes into producing on Broadway. The Oscar-winning "Girl, Interrupted" actor has become a lead producer on the Broadway-bound new musical "The Outsiders," a show based on S.E. Hinton's novel

coming-of-age crime drama.
"The Outsiders" had its world premiere at La Jolla Playhouse earlier this year. The Broadway cast and dates have not been

and Francis Ford Coppola's 1983

NEW YORK, Aug 10, (AP): Hip-hop was born in the break - that moment when a song's vocals dropped, instruments quieted down and the beat took the stage.

At the hands of the DJs, that break moment became more: a composition in itself. The MCs got in on it, speaking their own clever rhymes. So did the dancers, b-boys and b-girls. Graffiti artists took it to the streets of New York City.

Hip-hop spread around the country and the world. At each step: change, adaptation. Art, culture, fashion, community, social justice, politics, sports, business: Hip-hop has impacted them all.

In hip-hop, "when someone does it, then that's how it's done. When someone does something different, then that's a new way," says Babatunde Akinboboye, a Nigerian-American opera singer and longtime hip-hop fan in Los Angeles, who creates content on social media using both musical styles.

Hip-hop "connects to what is true. And what is true, lasts.

Those looking for a starting point have landed on Aug. 11, 1973, when Clive Campbell, known as DJ Kool Herc around the Bronx, deejayed a party. Campbell had started extending the musical breaks of records and speaking over the beat. It wasn't long before the style could be heard all over the city.

And then in 1979, The Sugarhill Gang put out "Rapper's Delight" and introduced a rap record that would reach as high as 36 on Billboard's Top 100 chart list.

Michael "Wonder Mike" Wright says he knew the song was "going to be big. "I knew it was going to blow up and play all over the world because it was a new genre of music," he tells The Associated Press.

And Guy "Master Gee" O'Brien says, "If you

couldn't sing or you couldn't play an instrument, you could recite poetry and speak your mind. And so it became accessible to the everyman.'

Female voices took their chances, like Roxanne Shante, who became one of the first female MCs to gain a wider audience. Other women have joined her, from Queen Latifah to Lil' Kim to Nicki Minaj to Megan Thee Stallion and more.

Over the years, hip-hop has been used as a medium for just about everything. Mainstream America hasn't

always been ready for it. though. Coming from America's Black communities, that has also meant hip-hop has been a tool to speak out against injustice, like in 1982 when Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five told the world in "The Message," about the stresses of poverty in their city neighborhoods.

Messages

And Public Enemy's "Fight the Power" became an anthem when it was created for filmmaker Spike Lee's 1989 classic "Do the Right Thing," which chronicled racial tension in a Brooklyn neighborhood.

Some in hip-hop pulled no punches but often those messages have been met with fear or disdain in the mainstream. When N.W.A. came "Straight Outta Compton" in 1988 with loud, brash tales of police abuse and gang life, radio stations recoiled.

Hip-hop (mainly that done by Black artists) and law enforcement have had a contentious relationship over the years, each eyeing the other with suspicion. There's been cause for some of it. In some forms of hip-hop the ties between rappers and criminal figures were real, and violence spiraled out, as in high-profile deaths like that of Tupac Shakur in 1996 and The Notorious B.I.G. in 1997. But in a country where Black people are often looked at with suspicion by authority, there have also been plenty of stereotypes about hip-hop and criminal-

As hip-hop spread, a host of voices have used it to speak out, like Bobby Sanchez, a Peruvian American transgender, two-spirit poet and rapper who has released a song in Quechua, the language of the Wari people that her father came from.

'Î think it's very special and cool when artists use it to reflect society because it makes it bigger than just them," Sanchez says. "To me, it's always political, really, no matter what you're talking about, because hiphop, in a way, is a form of resistance.'

When hip-hop first started being absorbed globally, it often mimicked American styles, says P. Khalil Sauc-

ier, who has studied its journey across the Africa continent. These days, homegrown hip-hop can be found everywhere.

"The culture as a whole has kind of really rooted itself because it's been able to now transform itself from simply an importation, if you will, to now really being local in its multiple manifestations, regardless of what country you're looking at," says Saucier, a professor of critical Black studies at Bucknell University in Pennsylvania.

That's to everyone's benefit, says Rishma Dhaliwal, founder of London's I Am Hip-Hop magazine.

"Hip-hop is ... allowing you in someone's world. It's allowing you into someone's struggles," she says. "It's a big microphone to say, `Well, the streets say this is what is going on here and this is what you might not know about us. This is how we feel, and this is who

Hip-hop has also gone into other spaces and made them different.

For Usha Jey, hip-hop was the perfect thing to mix with the classical South Asian dance style of Bharatnatyam. The 26-year-old French choreographer created videos last year showing the two styles interacting with each other.

Hip-hop culture "pushes you to be you," Jey says. "I feel like in the pursuit of finding yourself, hip-hop helps me because that culture says, you've got to be you.'

Hip-hop is "a magical art form," says Nile Rodgers, legendary musician, composer and record producer. He would know. It was his song "Good Times," with the band Chic, that was recreated to form the basis for "Rapper's Delight" all those years ago.

The impact that it's had on the world, it really can't be quantified," Rodgers says. "You can find someone in a village that you've never been to, a country that you've never been to, and all of a sudden you hear its own local hip-hop. And you don't even know who these people are, but they've adopted it and have made it their

See Also Page 12

revealed yet.

"I hope to be able to contribute while continuing to learn from this amazing team, who I have been working with since my daughter brought me to see the show at La Jolla Playhouse," Jolie said in a statement. "I can't begin to express how excited I am for this musical to make





forward to sharing this new adaptation of 'The Outsiders' with the world." (AP)

The museum, famous for

its Broadway debut and look

The museum reopened in the afternoon with increased security LONDON: A man was arrested after stabbing another man outside the British Museum in and bag checks. London, police said.

Metropolitan Police said the stabbing occurred near the museum's entrance.

housing the Rosetta Stone, was

public after the isolated incident.

evacuated but police say there

was no additional risk to the

The victim was taken to the hospital with a stab wound and the suspect was arrested on suspicion of causing grievous bodily harm.

The British Museum, founded in 1753, is the world's oldest public national museum and houses works of history, art and culture. (AP)

People & Places

Music

Hip-hop & justice

Rap culture carries the spirit of protest

NEW YORK, Aug 10, (AP): In the early days of hiphop, plugging turntables into a light post and converting an outdoor basketball court into a discotheque may have seemed like a simple invitation to party.

But hip-hop was a response to social and economic injustice in disregarded neighborhoods, a showcase of joy, ingenuity and innovation despite a lack of re-

Hip-hop has been integral to justice movements. It's also been scrutinized by law enforcement and political groups because of their belief that hip-hop and

its artists encourage violent criminality. Hip-hop culture and especially rap music have



can champion the underserved and reclaim space, like tagged walls or impromptu breakdancing battles on a transit platform. Certain forces have de-

monized hip-hop, said Willie Stiggers, co-founder and chair of the Black Music Action Coalition, a group working against systemic racism in the music industry and in society.

been mediums for holding the powerful accountable. Hip-hop

"Of course they want to weaponize it," Stiggers said. "The narrative can't be that this genius cultural expression, that is the greatest cultural force that we have globally, grew out of a disenfranchised people." Since hip-hop's birth in the 1970s, emceeing, beat-

boxing, deejaying, and graffiti have done more than entertain - hip-hop's four elements carry the spirit of resistance and free expression.

Social and religious conservatives have seen hiphop as a threat, but their attempts at stifling the culture have only grown its influence.

However, racial justice activists and free speech advocates see the ongoing persecution of rappers as a proxy war primarily waged against Black and Latino men. And for hip-hop artists who live under repressive regimes throughout the world, "dropping bars" to air one's grievances against the government can mean time behind bars or worse.

'Black history is under attack, Black culture is under attack, rap music is under attack," said US Rep. Hank Johnson, a Democratic sponsor of federal legislation that would protect artists from having their lyrics and creative expression used against them in court.

A study by University of Georgia law professor Andrea Dennis, who co-authored the 2019 book "Rap on Trial: Race, Lyrics and Guilt in America," found roughly 500 criminal trial cases dating to the late 1980s in which rap lyrics were successfully used as evidence. Dennis and other advocates believe the cases, brought against mostly Black defendants, have led to unjust incarceration.

Some have pointed to the criminal street gang conspiracy case, brought under Georgia's criminal racketeering law, against Atlanta rapper Young Thug and over two dozen purported affiliates of the rapper's Young Stoner Life record label. In 2022, Fulton County prosecutors included lyrics from the rapper, referencing drugs and violence, as evidence of an "overt act in furtherance of a (gang) conspiracy."

Young Thug, whose legal name is Jeffrey Williams, co-wrote the Childish Gambino hit "This is America," which is a commentary on violence and systemic racism in the US. The song made history in 2019 as the first hip-hop track to win the song of the year Grammy.

As hip-hop and rap music grew into a force in American culture, its pioneers used it to speak to their personal realities. In 1982, in the song "The Message." Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five decried stark poverty and disinvestment while in 1992, Tupac Shakur railed against police brutality in the song "Changes."

In 2016, following the fatal police shootings of Philando Castile and Alton Sterling, rap music and protest were linked. It was rare then to attend a demonstration and not hear Kendrick Lamar's 2015 song "Alright," a celebration of triumph over adversity in the face of systemic oppression and injustice.

"All Black creative expression is political because Black life is political," said Timothy Welbeck, the director of the Center for Anti-Racism at Temple University in Philadelphia.

Movements

"It makes sense that social movements would gravitate towards hip-hop, as a culture and rap music as a medium of expression," he said. "And it also makes sense that rappers would position themselves in these movements, in part, because rappers are coming out of the communities that are experiencing the need to

In an Associated Press interview earlier this year, Chuck D of Public Enemy said he sees hip-hop as a catalyst for the Black Lives Matter movement.

And then there's hip-hop's global influence on protest, resistance and political dissent. From the Arab Spring and the Palestinian freedom fight to feminism and class struggles, rap music is a popular medium for calls to action, as well as call-outs of despots and

In 2016, on a visit to Vietnam during a historic tour of Asia, former President Barack Obama answered questions about human rights and free expression across the continent. One question came from Suboi, a female rapper known as Vietnam's "Queen of Hip-Hop" who said she struggled against the Vietnamese stereotype that rap music isn't a proper expression for

"Let's be honest, sometimes art is dangerous and that's why governments sometimes get nervous about art," Obama said. "But one of the things that I truly believe is that if you try to suppress the arts, then I think you're suppressing the deepest dreams and aspirations

Civil rights leader Rev. Al Sharpton, who turned 18 as hip-hop really took off out of his native New York, said rap music fueled the movement that has shaped much of his public life. At age 68, he believes hip-hop culture tilled the ground for the election of the first Black American president in 2008.

"I didn't come out of the 'We Shall Overcome' generation," Sharpton said. "I came out of Fight the Power, Public Enemy.'

He added: "Hip-hop took the chains off us and said, 'No, we're gonna say it our way, anyway.' ... It was that freedom. It was that raw, non-watered down kind of expression. We understood that rage and anger, even though we expressed it in different



Musician Robbie Robertson arrives at the Vanity Fair Oscar Party on Sunday, Feb. 22, 2015, in Beverly Hills, Calif. Robertson, the lead guitarist and songwriter for The Band, whose classics include 'The Weight,' 'Up on Cripple Creek' and 'The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down,' has died at 80, according to a statement from



Musician Sixto Rodriguez attends the National Board of Review Awards gala at Cipriani 42nd St. on Jan. 8, 2013, in New York. Singer and song-writer Rodriguez, who became the subject of the Oscar-winning documentary 'Searching for Sugar Man' has died, according to the Sugarman org website on Tuesday, Aug. 8, and confirmed Wednesday by his grand-daughter. He was 81. (AP)

Variety

LOS ANGELES: Janet Yang has been re-elected to serve as president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the organization has said recently. This will mark Yang's second term as president of the organization that puts on the Oscars and her fifth year as a governor-at-large.

Yang's background in **Hollywood** is as a producer of films like "The Joy Luck Club," "The People vs. Larry Flynt" and "Over the Moon" as well as the Emmywinning film "Indictment: The McMartin Trial." After serving the film academy in various positions over the years, she was elected president last year and oversaw the 95th Academy Awards in March, which saw an uptick in viewership com-

pared to the last few years.

Academy CEO **Bill Kramer** said in a statement that under Yang's leadership, 'these dedicated governors will guide the Academy's ongoing efforts to elevate the work of our global membership and film community, highlight our industry's rich history, foster meaningful dialogue, and continue to build equity and inclusion in every aspect of our organization."

The Academy's board of governors also announced the election of several officer positions, including several firsttime officers like Howard Berger to the Museum Committee, Brooke Breton to the Education and Outreach Committee, Tom Duffield to the Finance Committee and Howard A. Rodman to the Govern-

ance Committee. (AP)

BAYREUTH, Germany: Two years after the debut of the Bayreuth Festival's first female conductor, Nathalie Stutzmann became the second to lead a Richard Wagner opera in the Festpielhaus' famous covered pit.

The 58-year-old former contralto, fresh off her first season as Atlanta Symphony Orchestra music director, drew a luminous performance of "Tannhäuser" recently in a revival of the Tobias Kratzer 2019 production - the one featuring the title character in a clown suit and a murder in a Burger King parking lot.

"It's good news to be second, Stutzmann said. "It proves that things are moving."

Launched by Richard Wagner in 1876 and currently run by great-grand-daughter **Katharina Wagner**, the festival broke its conductor gender barrier when Oksana Lyniv led a new staging of "Der Fliegende Holländer (The Flying Dutchman)" in 2021. The 45-year-old returned this summer to preside over the Dmitri Tcherniakov production for the third straight year.

"They are very highly accepted,"

Obituaries

He helped reshape contemporary rock

The Band's Robertson dies at 80

NEW YORK, Aug 10, (AP): Robbie Robertson, The Band's lead guitarist and songwriter who in such classics as "The Weight" and "Up on Cripple Creek" mined American music and folklore and helped reshape contemporary rock, died Wednesday at 80.

Robertson died in Los Angeles, surrounded by family, "after a long illness," publicist Ray Costa said in a statement

From their years as Bob Dylan's masterful backing group to their own stardom as embodiments of old-fashioned community and virtuosity, The Band profoundly influenced popular music in the 1960s and '70s, first by transition from folk artist to rock star and then by absorbing some of Dylan's own influences as they fashioned a new sound immersed in the American past.

The Canadian-born Robertson was a high school dropout and one-man melting pot who fell in love with the seemingly limitless sounds and byways of his adopted country and wrote out of a sense of amazement and discovery at a time when the Vietnam War had alienated millions of young Americans.

Versatility

The Band started out as supporting players for rockabilly star Ronnie Hawkins in the early 1960s and through their years together in bars and juke joints forged a depth and versatility that made them able to take on virtually any kind of music. Besides Robertson, the group featured drummer-singer Levon Helm, bassist-singer-songwriter Rick Danko, keyboardist singer-songwriter Richard Manuel and all-around musical wizard Garth Hudson. They were originally called the Hawks, but ended up as The Band - a conceit their fans would say they earned - because people would point to them when they were with Dylan and refer to them as "the band."

They remain defined by their first two albums, "Music from Big Pink" and "The Band," both released in the late 1960s. The rock scene was turning away from the psychedelic extravagances of the Beatles' "Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" and a wave of sound effects, long jams and lysergic lyrics. "Music from Big Pink," named for the old house near Woodstock, New York, where Band members lived and gathered, was for many the sound of coming home. The mood was intimate, the lyrics alternately playful, cryptic and yearning, drawn from blues, gospel, folk and country music. The Band itself seemed to stand for selflessness and a shared and vital history, with all five members making distinctive contributions and appearing in publicity photos in plain, dark

Through the "Basement Tapes"

Searching for Sugar Man singer Sixto Rodriguez dies at age 81

DETROIT, Aug 10, (AP): Sixto Rodriguez, who lived in obscurity as his music career flamed out early in the US only to find success in South Africa and a stardom he was unaware of, died Tuesday in Detroit. He was 81.

Rodriguez's legacy would take off back home after the singer and songwriter became the subject of Oscar-winning documentary "Searching for Sugar Man."

His death was announced on the Sugarman.org website and confirmed Wednesday by his granddaughter, Amanda Kennedy. He died following a short illness,

according to his wife, Konny Rodriguez, 72.

A 2013 Associated Press story referred to Rodriguez as "the greatest protest singer and songwriter that most people never heard of.'

His albums flopped in the United States in the 1970s, but - unknown to him - he later became a star in South Africa where his songs protesting the Vietnam War, racial inequality, abuse of women and social mores inspired white liberals horrified by the country's brutal racial

segregation system of apartheid. Swedish filmmaker Malik Bendjelloul's documentary "Searching for Sugar Man" presented Rodri-

guez to a much larger audience. The film tells of two South Africans' mission to seek out the fate of their musical hero. It won the Academy Award for best documentary in

Rodriguez was "more popular than Elvis" in South Africa, Ste-phen "Sugar" Segerman said in 2013. The Cape Town record store owner's nickname comes from Rodriguez song "Sugar Man."

As his popularity in South Africa grew, Rodriguez lived in Detroit. But his fans in South Africa believed he also was famous in the United States. They heard stories that the musician had died dramatically: He'd shot himself in the head onstage in Moscow; He'd set himself aflame and burned to death before an audience someplace else; He'd died of a drug overdose, was in a mental institution, was incarcerated for murdering his girlfriend.

In 1996, Segerman and journalist Carl Bartholomew-Strydom set out to learn the truth. Their efforts led them to Detroit, where they found Rodriguez working on construction

"It's rock-and-roll history now. Who would-a thought?" Rodriguez told The Associated Press a dec-

they had made with Dylan in 1967 and through their own albums, The Band has been widely credited as a founding source for Americana or roots music. Fans and peers would speak of their lives being changed. Eric Clapton broke up with his British supergroup Cream and journeyed to Woodstock in hopes he could join The Band, which influenced albums ranging from The Grateful Dead's "Workingman's Dead" to Elton John's "Tumbleweed Connection." The Band's songs were covered by Franklin, Joan Baez, the Staple Singers and many others.

Self-taught

Like Dylan, Robertson was a selftaught musicologist and storyteller who absorbed everything American from the novels of William Faulkner to the scorching blues of Howlin' Wolf to the gospel harmonies of the Swan Silvertones. At times his songs sounded not just created, but unearthed. In "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down,' he imagined the Civil War through the eyes of a defeated Confederate. In "The Weight," with its lead vocals passed around among group members like a communal wine glass, he evoked a pilgrim's arrival to a town where

nothing seems impossible. The Band played at the 1969 Woodstock festival, not far from where they lived, and became newsworthy enough to appear on the cover of Time magazine. But the spirit behind their best work was already dissolving. Albums such as "Stage Fright" and "Cahoots" were disappointing even for Robertson, who would acknowledge that he was struggling to find fresh ideas. While Manuel and Danko were both frequent contributors to songs during their "Basement Tapes" days, by the time of "Cahoots," released in 1971, Robertson was the dominant writer.

They toured frequently, recording the acclaimed live album "Rock of Ages" at Madison Square Garden and joining Dylan for 1974 shows that led to another highly praised concert release, "Before the Flood." But in 1976, after Manuel broke his neck in a boating accident, Robertson decided he needed a break from the road and organized rock's ultimate sendoff, an all-star gathering at San Francisco's Winterland Ballroom that included Dylan, Van Morrison, Neil Young, Muddy Waters and many others.

Katharina Wagner said. "I hope that this question would disappear with time, that we are just talking about good conductors and not female and male conductors anymore."

Stutzmann's year so far has also included debuts with the New York Philharmonic and the Metropolitan Opera, where she provoked the orchestra when she alleged in a New York Times interview that musicians were bored





playing while not being able to see onstage activity. The orchestra criticized her in a statement, prompting Stutzmann to apologize. At Bayreuth, conductors must adjust

to a pit Richard Wagner designed to keep the orchestra hidden from the audience, arranged in nine rows that descend toward the stage: violins in the first two, followed by violas, cellos, double basses, woodwinds, brass and percussion. (AP)

Wildfires

Residents escape

At least 36 dead as fires 'burn' Hawaii

WAILUKU, Hawaii, Aug 10, (AP): Several thousand Hawaii residents raced to escape homes on Maui as the Lahaina fire swept across the island, killing at least 36 people and burning parts of a centuries-old town.

The fire took the island of Maui by surprise, leaving behind burned-out cars on once busy streets and smoking piles of rubble where historic buildings had stood. Flames roared throughout the night, forcing adults and children to dive into the ocean

Maui county announced the updated death toll on its website late Wednesday, writing that no other details were currently available on the deaths. Officials said earlier that 271 struc-

stay away.

tures were damaged or destroyed and dozens of people injured.

On Wednesday, Maui crews continued to battle blazes in several places on the island. Authorities urged visitors to

> residents Lahaina Kamuela Kawaakoa and Iiulia Yasso described a harrowing escape under smoke-filled skies Tuesday afternoon. The couple and their 6-year-old son got back to their apartment after a quick dash to the supermarket for water, and only had time to grab a change of clothes and run as the bushes around them caught fire.

"We barely made it out," Kawaakoa said at an evacuation shelter on Wednesday, still unsure if anything was left of their apartment.

As the family fled, a senior center across the road erupted in flames. They called 911, but didn't know if the people got out. Fire alarms blared. As they drove away, downed utility poles and fleeing cars slowed their progress.

Kawaakoa, 34, grew up in the apartment building, called Lahaina Surf, where his dad and grandmother also lived. Lahaina Town dates back to the 1700s and has long been a favorite destination for tourists.

"It was so hard to sit there and just watch my town burn to ashes and not be able to do anything," Kawaakoa said. "I was

The Hawaiian fires were whipped by strong winds from Hurricane Dora passing far to the south. It's the latest in a series of disasters caused by extreme weather around the globe this summer. Experts say climate change is increasing the likelihood of such events.

Devastation

As winds eased somewhat on Maui, some flights resumed Wednesday, allowing pilots to view the full scope of the devastation. Aerial video from Lahaina showed dozens of homes and businesses razed, including on Front Street, where tourists once gathered to shop and dine. Smoking heaps of rubble lay piled high next to the waterfront, boats in the harbor were scorched, and gray smoke hovered over the leafless skeletons of charred trees.

"It's horrifying. I've flown here 52 years and I've never seen anything come close to that," said Richard Olsten, a helicopter pilot for a tour company. "We had tears in our eyes."

About 14,500 customers in Maui were without power early Wednesday. With cell service and phone lines down in some areas, many people were struggling to check in with friends and family members living near the wildfires. Some were posting messages on social media.

Tiare Lawrence was frantically trying to reach her siblings

who live near where a gas station exploded in Lahaina. "There's no service, so we can't get a hold of anyone," she said from the Maui community of Pukalani.

Maj. Gen. Kenneth Hara, from the Hawaii State Dept. of Defense, told reporters Wednesday night that officials were working to get communications restored, to distribute water, and possibly adding law enforcement personnel. He said National Guard helicopters had dropped 150,000 gallons of water on the Maui fires.

State Department of Education Superintendent Keith Hayashi said in a statement that a team was working on contingency plans and preparing for the possible loss of the King Kamehameha III elementary school that had been in Lahaina for more than a century.

"The department is striving to maintain regular school schedules to provide a sense of normalcy, but will keep most Maui schools closed for the remainder of this week," he said. The Coast Guard said it rescued 14 people who jumped into

the water to escape flames and smoke, including two children. Among those injured were three people with critical burns who were flown to Straub Medical Center's burn unit on the island of Oahu, officials said. At least 20 patients were taken to Maui Memorial Medical Center, officials said, and a firefighter was hospitalized in stable condition after inhaling smoke.

Richard Bissen Jr., the mayor of Maui County, said at a Wednesday morning news conference that he didn't have details on how or where on the island the six deaths occurred. He said officials hadn't yet begun investigating the immediate cause of the fires, but officials did point to the combination of dry conditions, low humidity and high winds.

More than 2,100 people spent Tuesday night in evacuation centers. Another 2,000 travelers sheltered at Kahului Airport after many flights were canceled. Officials were preparing the Hawaii Convention Center in Honolulu to take in thousands of displaced tourists and locals.

Mauro Farinelli, of Lahaina, said the winds had started blowing hard on Tuesday, and then somehow a fire had started

"It just ripped through everything with amazing speed," he said, adding it was "like a blowtorch."

Evacuation

The winds were so strong they blew his garage door off its hinges and trapped his car in the garage, Farinelli said. So a friend drove him, along with his wife Judit and dog Susi, to an evacuation shelter. He had no idea what had happened to

"We're hoping for the best," he said, "but we're pretty sure

it's gone.' President Joe Biden said he'd ordered all available federal assets to help with the response. He said the Hawaii National Guard had mobilized Chinook helicopters to help with fire suppression as well as search and rescue efforts on Maui.

Our prayers are with those who have seen their homes, businesses and communities destroyed," Biden said in a statement. Former President Barack Obama, who was born in Hawaii, said on social media that it's tough to see some of the images coming out of a place that is so special to many.

Alan Dickar, who owns a poster gallery and three houses in Lahaina, said most tourists who come to Maui visit Front Street. "The central two blocks is the economic heart of this island,

and I don't know what's left," he said. Dickar took video of flames engulfing the main strip before

escaping with three friends and two cats.

"Évery significant thing I owned burned down today," he said. "I'll be OK. I got out safely."

Wildfires were also burning on Hawaii's Big Island, Mayor Mitch Roth said, although there had been no reports of injuries or destroyed homes there. Roth said firefighters had needed to extinguish some roof fires and there were continuing flareups of one fire near the Mauna Kea Resorts.

Acting Gov. Sylvia Luke said the flames had wiped out communities and urged travelers to stay away. 'This is not a safe place to be," she said.

Luke issued an emergency proclamation on behalf of Gov.

Josh Green, who was traveling. Green's office said he'd cut short his trip and was returning Wednesday evening. Fires in Ĥawaii are unlike many of those burning in the US West. They tend to break out in large grasslands on the dry sides of the islands and are generally much smaller than mainland fires. A major fire on the Big Island in 2021 burned homes

and forced thousands to evacuate.



Virgin Galactic's VSS Unity departs Mojave Air & Space Port in Mojave, Calif., for the final time as Virgin Galactic shifts its SpaceFlight operations to New Mexico, Feb. 13, 2020. Virgin Galactic is taking its first space tourists on a rocket ship ride after years of delays, including one passenger who bought his ticket 18 years ago and a mother-daughter duo from the Caribbean. (AP)

Virgin Galactic all set to fly its first tourists to the edge of space

Virgin Galactic is taking its first space tourists on a long-delayed rocket ship ride, including a former British Olympian who bought his ticket 18 years ago and a mother-daughter duo from the Caribbean.

The flight window opens Thursday morning at Spaceport America in the New Mexico desert for a ride to the edge of space. If all goes well, Richard Branson's company will begin offering monthly trips to customers on its winged space plane, joining Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin and Elon Musk's SpaceX in the space tourism business.

Virgin Galactic passenger Jon Goodwin, who was among the first to buy a ticket in 2005, said he had faith that he would someday make the trip. The 80-year-old athlete - he competed in canoeing in the 1972 Olympics - has Parkinson's disease and wants

to be an inspiration to others.

"I hope it shows them that these obstacles can be the start rather than the end to new adventures," he said in a statement.

Ticket prices were \$200,000 when Goodwin signed up. The cost is now \$450,000.

He'll be joined by sweepstakes winner Keisha

Schahaff, 46, a health coach from Antigua, and her daughter, Anastatia Mayers, 18, student at Scotland's University of Aberdeen. Also aboard the plane-launched craft, which glides to a space shuttle-like landing: two pilots and the company's astronaut trainer. (AP)

It will be Virgin Galactic's seventh trip to space since 2018, the first with a ticket-holder. Branson, the company's founder, hopped on board for the

first full-size crew ride in 2021. Italian military and government researchers soared in June on the first commercial flight. About 800 people are currently on Virgin Galactic's waiting list, according to the com-

pany.
Virgin Galactic's rocket ship launches from the belly of an airplane, not from the ground, and requires two pilots in the cockpit. Once the mothership reaches about 50,000 feet (10 miles or 15 kilometers), the space plane is released and fires its rocket motor to make the final push to just over 50 miles (80 kilometers) up. Passengers can unstrap from their seats, float around the cabin for a few minutes and take in the sweeping views of Earth, before the space plane glides back home and lands on a run-



In this long exposure photo, a streak appears in the sky during the annual Perseid meteor shower at the Guadarrama mountains, near Madrid, in the early hours of Aug. 12, 2016. The best viewing for the annual shower visible around the world will be from Saturday night, Aug. 12, 2023, local time, into early Sunday morning, when viewers might be able to spot a meteor per minute. (AP)

Ecology

US to release wolves into wild: The

US government will settle a lawsuit with conservation groups and commit to releasing more endangered red wolves into the wilds of North Carolina, where nearly three dozen of the canine species are believed to still run free.

The conservation groups sued the US Fish and Wildlife Service in 2020 after it stopped releasing captive-bred wolves. Eastern North Carolina is the only place in the world where they roam wild outside of zoos and wildlife refuges.

The Southern Environmental Law Center filed the lawsuit on behalf of the Red Wolf Coalition, Defenders of Wildlife and the Animal Welfare Institute. A settlement agreement was reached Wednesday, according to documents filed in US District Court in North Caro-

"For 25 years, North Carolina was home to one of the most successful predator reintroductions in the world," Ramona McGee, a Southern Environmental Law Center attorney, said in a statement. "This settlement puts us on a path to restoring the red wolf to its rightful place as a celebrated success story.

Red wolves once occupied much of the Eastern U.S. but were driven to near extinction by trapping, hunting and habitat loss before they were reintroduced to North Carolina in 1987. Their range is limited to five North Carolina counties. Scientists at zoos and other sites have maintained a captive population of nearly 300 wolves in recent years.

Wolf numbers were bolstered by releases of captive-born pups and sterilization of coyotes that competed for space. But those approaches were halted in 2015 amid pressure from conservative politicians and landowners who deemed

wolves a nuisance. US District Judge Terrence Boyle noted in his order that the conservation groups were likely to succeed, while demonstrating that "extinction is a very real possibility." (AP)

Bear attacks man: A Pennsylvania man says he's paying a lot more attention to his surroundings after a surprise attack by a bear in the garage of his home.

John Swartz, 60, and his wife Lori, 59, were watching TV at their home outside Danville on the evening of July 27 when he remembered he had to turn off a hose he'd left running to fill an inflatable pool. So he walked into the two-car garage, where the shutoff valve was located - unaware that a bear had wandered in a minute

The next thing he knew, he said, he was thrown against shelving units, heard a growl and knew immediately it was a bear. When he turned to flee, the bear bit him on the head. Holding his injured

Health

Docs grappling with how to help long COVID patients

COVID-19 took a toll on heart health

ST. LOUIS, Aug 10, (AP): Firefighter and paramedic Mike Camilleri once had no trouble hauling heavy gear up ladders. Now battling long COVID, he gingerly steps onto a treadmill to learn how his heart handles a simple walk.

"This is, like, not a tough-guy test so don't fake it," warned Beth Hughes, a physical therapist at Washington University in St. Louis.

Somehow, a mild case of COV-ID-19 set off a chain reaction that eventually left Camilleri with dangerous blood pressure spikes, a heartbeat that raced with slight exertion, and episodes of intense chest pain. Doctors were stumped until Camilleri found a Washington University cardiologist who'd treated patients with similar post-COVID heart trou-

"Finally a turn in the right direction," said the 43-year-old Camilleri. He started to see a little improvement -- only to have a recent reinfec-

tion knock him down again. Well into the pandemic's fourth year, how profound a toll COVID-19 has taken on the nation's heart health is only starting to emerge.

"We are seeing effects on the heart and the vascular system that really outnumber, unfortunately, effects on other organ systems," said Dr. Susan Cheng, a cardiologist at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles.

For up to a year after a case of COVID-19, people may be at increased risk of developing a new heart-related problem, anything from blood clots and irregular heartbeats to a heart attack -- even if they ini-

tially seem to recover just fine.

Among the unknowns: Who's most likely to experience these aftereffects? Are they reversible - or a warning sign of more heart disease later in life?

"We're about to exit this pandemic as even a sicker nation" because of virus-related heart trouble, said Washington University's Dr. Ziyad Al-Aly, who helped sound the alarm about lingering health problems. The consequences, he added, "will likely reverberate for generations."

Heart disease has long been the top killer in the nation and the world. But in the U.S., heart-related death rates had fallen to record lows in 2019, just before the pandemic struck.

COVID-19 erased a decade of that progress, Cheng said.

Heart attack-caused deaths rose during every virus surge. Worse, young people aren't supposed to have heart attacks but Cheng's research documented a nearly 30% increase in heart attack deaths among 25- to 44-year-olds in the pandemic's

head, he stumbled back toward the house,

but surveillance video later showed a sec-

when I tripped over him," he told The (Sunbury) Daily Item.

to stop the bleeding. Looking out the win-

dow while waiting for the ambulance, he

saw the 250-pound (114 kilogram), tall,

thin animal ambling by their RV.

ond encounter with the animal.

An ominous sign the trouble may

continue: High blood pressure is one of the biggest risks for heart disease and "people's blood pressure has actually measurably gone up over the course of the pandemic," she said.

Some of these patients have what's known as long COVID, the catchall

term for dozens of symptoms that often include fatigue and brain fog. The National Institutes of Health is beginning small studies of a few possible treatments for certain long COVID symptoms, including heartbeat problem. But Cheng said patients and doc-

tors alike need to know that sometimes, cardiovascular trouble is the first or main symptom of damage the coronavirus left behind.

"These are individuals who wouldn't necessarily come to their doctor and say, 'I have long COV-ID," she said.

Camilleri first developed shortness of breath and later a string of heartrelated and other symptoms after a late 2020 bout of COVID-19. He tried different treatments from multiple doctors to no avail, until winding up at Washington University's long COVID clinic.

Abnormalities

There, he saw Dr. Amanda Verma for worsening trouble with his blood pressure and heart rate. Verma is part of a cardiology team that studied a small group of patients with perplexing heart symptoms like Camilleri's, and found abnormalities in blood flow may be part of the problem.

How? Blood flow jumps when people move around and subsides during rest. But some long COVID patients don't get enough of a drop during rest because the fight-or-flight system that controls stress reactions stays activated, Verma said.

Some also have trouble with the lining of their small blood vessels not dilating and constricting properly to move blood through, she added.

Hoping that helped explain some of Camilleri's symptoms, Verma prescribed some heart medicines that dilate blood vessels and others to dampen that fight-or-flight response.

Back in the gym, Hughes, a physical therapist who works with long COVID patients, came up with a careful rehab plan after the treadmill test exposed erratic jumps in Camilleri's heart rate.

"We'd see it worse if you were not on Dr. Verma's meds," Hughes said, showing Camilleri exercises to do while lying down and monitoring his heart rate. "We need to rewire your system" to normalize that fight-orflight response.

Camilleri said he noticed some improvement as Verma mixed and matched prescriptions based on his reactions. Then he developed even more health problems after a second bout of COVID-19 in the spring, a disability that forced him to retire.

How big is the post-COVID heart risk? To find out, Al-Aly analyzed medical records from a massive Veterans Administration database. People who'd survived COVID-19 early in the pandemic were more likely to experience abnormal heartbeats, blood clots, chest pain and palpitations, even heart attacks and strokes up to a year later compared to the uninfected. That includes even middleaged people without prior signs of

heart disease Based on those findings, Al-Aly estimated 4 of every 100 people need care for some kind of heart-related symptom in the year after recovering from COVID-19.

Per person, that's a small risk. But he said the pandemic's sheer enormity means it added up to millions left with at least some cardiovascular symptom. While a reinfection might still cause trouble, Al-Aly's now studying whether that overall risk dropped thanks to vaccination and milder coronavirus strains.

More recent research confirms the need to better understand and address these cardiac aftershocks. An analysis this spring of a large US insurance database found long COVID patients were about twice as likely to seek care for cardiovascular problems including blood clots, abnormal heartbeats or stroke in the year after infection, compared to similar patients who'd avoided COVID-19.

A post-infection link to heart damage isn't that surprising, Verma noted. She pointed to rheumatic fever, an inflammatory reaction to untreated strep throat -- especially before antibiotics were common -- that

scars the heart's valves. "Is this going to become the next rheumatic heart disease? We don't

know," she said. But Al-Aly says there's a simple take-home message: You can't change your history of COVID-19 infections but if you've ignored other heart risks -- like high cholesterol or blood pressure, poorly controlled diabetes or smoking -- now's the time to change that.

"These are the ones we can do something about. And I think they're more important now than they were in 2019," he said.

"Thankfully, the bear didn't retaliate His wife, hearing a scream, met him at the door and quickly called 911 as he tried





Boyle

At the hospital, doctors confirmed that his head injuries were superficial bite marks. His shirt, which had two large paw prints on the shoulders, was taken by a Pennsylvania Game Commission officer for DNA testing. The game commission also set up a trap baited with doughnuts to try to catch the animal.

"It's very understandable as to why it did what it did," John Swartz told WOLF-TV. "I surprised it ... It had one way out and it was through me." (AP)

Jones picks 25 players who haven't been to a WC

Hooper, Cooper dropped, Skelton to lead Wallabies at Rugby World Cup

DARWIN, Australia, Aug 10, (AP): Australia coach Eddie Jones has left out veteran playmaker Quade Cooper and long-time captain Michael Hooper while selecting lock Will Skelton to lead his 33-man squad for the Rugby World Cup.

There's a heavy emphasis on youth in the squad announced Thursday. Cooper gave way to emerging star Carter Gordon and utility back Ben Donaldson. While veteran backrower Hooper was widely expected to be left out after losing his race against time with a calf injury, the axing of Cooper and the selection of Skelton as captain were surprises.

Jones picked 25 players who haven't been to a World Cup, with all nine locks and backrowers yet to feature at the sport's premier event. The 2023 edition kicks off next month in France.

The 35-year-old Cooper was Jones' first-choice No. 10 a month ago but has steadily dropped down the list. Cooper's absence let Jones pick a third scrumhalf, taking uncapped Western Force No. 9 Issak Fines-Leleiwasa to back up Tate McDermott and Nic White.

Jones picked 125-test veteran Hooper and prop James Slipper as co-captains ahead of the Rugby Championship but he's opted to shuffle his leadership plans, naming Skel-

The France-based Skelton will be the fifth player to lead the Wallabies in little more than a year, after Hooper, Slipper, Allan Alaalatoa and McDermott preceded him.

The Wallabies, who have gathered in Darwin in Austra-

four tests since Jones took over in his second stint with the

They were outclassed by defending World Cup champions South Africa in the opening match of the Rugby Championship, then lost closely to Argentina.

In the first match of the Bledisloe Cup, which was also their final Rugby Championship match, the All Blacks kept the trophy for the 21st consecutive year with a dominating win. Last week, in an improved performance by the Wallabies, New Zealand had to rally to edge Australia at Dunedin, New Zealand.

Despite all the losses, Jones was optimistic as ever after naming his squad.

"I've backed the young blokes because they earned it. Simple as that. I haven't handed it to them," Jones said. "They grabbed it. It's exciting for me to go to work each day with these guys who are just busting to improve, to learn and to get better. They want to succeed, and they will succeed and that excitement is rubbing off on everyone. We're in a good place.

The Wallabies, who are now No. 8 in world rankings, will play France in a World Cup warm-up match on Aug. 27 at Stade de France before their Pool C tournament opener

against Georgia on Sept. 9 at the same venue. Australia's remaining pool matches are against Fiji, Wales, and Portugal.

Australia squad:

Forwards: Angus Bell, Pone Fa'amausili, Zane Nonggorr, Blake Schoupp, James Slipper, Taniela Tupou, Matt Faessler, David Porecki, Jordan Üelese, Richie Arnold, Nick Frost, Matt Philip, Will Skelton (captain), Langi Gleeson, Tom Hooper, Rob Leota, Fraser McReight, Rob Valetini.

Pep and Man City to begin their ascent up mountain after 'once in a lifetime' season

Haaland looks to end drought against Burnley

LONDON, Aug 10, (AP): For Pep Guardiola and his Manchester City players,

the comedown has started

from the club's greatest ever season. "We climbed the highest moun-

tain with what we have done," Guardiola said Thursday, in reference to City winning the Premier League, FA Cup and Champions League for a rare treble. "The last two days, we came down the mountain.

The new season starts in earnest on Friday when City opens the Premier League with an away match against Burnley, and it means a 10-month slog begins again.

Guardiola knows that too well and he pretty much acknowledges life will never be as good for City again.

"I don't think it will be possible to do again what we have done last season," he said. "It's once in a lifetime. So I said to the players, 'Forget about it."

"There will be a lot of difficulties," Guardiola added, "to climb as high as possible the mountain and we will see that our football, our behavior, our mentality, will dictate how the season will be. What we have done remains in our hearts, our minds. How nice it was. But it's over ... it's almost impossible to repeat."

SOCCER

City has more games on its schedule - the UEFA Super Cup against Sevilla takes place on Wednesday and there is the Club World Cup in Saudi Arabia in December - and there is a general feeling that City might need to strengthen its squad, especially in attack, to handle it.

Midfielder Ilkay Gundogan has gone to Barcelona and been replaced by Mateo Kovacic.

Defender Josko Gvardiol has come in, most likely to replace Aymeric Laporte, who appears surplus to requirements.

City has sold winger Riyad Mahrez to the Saudi Arabian league and he hasn't been replaced. Cole Palmer, a 21-year-old academy product, has been viewed as a potential replacement but Guardiola couldn't guarantee Palmer would still be at City by the end of the transfer window amid interest from West Ham.

Another winger seems necessary if City is to be as dangerous as last season, especially with potential title rivals Arsenal and Manchester United having strengthened during the offseason.

The biggest threat to City, though, is likely to come from within.

Can the players, Guardiola and his coaching staff rouse themselves again? The European Cup has finally been won and there is another big target in view - City could become the first team in English history to win the top flight in four straight

Maybe that can be their motivation as the season cranks into

"We have to challenge ourselves," he said. "I cannot do it for myself. My staff have to challenge me. I have to challenge them and the players. They have challenge me. I have to challenge the players. We have to push each other. If people expect I'm the only one to do it, it will not be

"I have to admit, I'm really surprised - after so many years having these doubts - that we respond amazingly. We start again. We

Some other things to watch out for ahead of the first round of games:

Get ready for some long, long matches in the Premier League this

In an attempt to deal with a decline in effective playing time, the league will be adding more minutes at the end of each half to make up for stoppages for goals, substitutions, celebrations, time-wasting and other

The Premier League is predicting games will last, on average, 3 minutes and 23 seconds longer than last

Sunday's Community Shield,

ton as skipper with McDermott as his deputy.

RUGBY

lia's Northern Territory for a four-day camp, have lost all

Lauren James handed 2-match ban

SYDNEY, Aug 10, (AP): England midfielder Lauren James was handed a two-match ban Thursday following her sending-off against Nigeria in the round of 16 at the Women's World Cup.

James was red-carded for violent conduct after standing on Nigeria defender Michelle Alozie. She will now miss the quarterfinal match against Colombia in Sydney on Saturday, and a possible game in the semifinals.

James has been one of the stars of the tournament, scoring three goals and providing three more assists as England advanced as Group D winner.

She has apologized for her conduct in getting a red card.

Obviously she's disappointed with what happened on the day," England forward Beth England said.



Chaco stadium in Asuncion, Paraguay. Botafogo won 2-1 on aggregate. (AP)

Arsenal's Declan Rice, (right), duels for the ball with Manchester City's Bernardo Silva during the English FA Community Shield final soccer match between Arsenal and Manchester City at Wembley Stadium in London. (AP)

when Arsenal beat Man City on penalties, showed the significance this can have. Arsenal scored its equalizer in the 11th minute of stoppage time to take the game to a shootout.

It's six games - if the Community Shield is included - and counting since Erling Haaland last scored a goal for Man City.

Have defenses figured out a way to stop last season's top scorer in the league, with 35 goals? Or is this just a blip for a striker who took scoring goals in English soccer to new lev-

Haaland slowed down at the end of last season pretty much once City had the league wrapped up, with the drought also taking in the wins in the FA Cup final against Man United and the Champions League final against Inter Milan.

It would be no surprise if he gets back up and running against promoted Burnley at Turf Moor.

Europe's largest soccer stadium overhauled

Barca to miss Camp Nou advantage this season

BARCELONA, Spain, Aug 10, (AP): Beyond courting and developing some of the world's top talent, Barcelona has also based its success on a strong home advantage thanks to Europe's largest soccer stadium.

That will be different this season, when the team plays at a smaller, less accessible stadium while its 99,000-seat Camp Nou undergoes a complete facelift that won't be finished for at least three years.

Barcelona will spend its time away from Camp Nou at the Lluís Companys Olympic Stadium, which can hold 49,000 people. That will surely translate to a quieter, less intimidating atmosphere for rivals, as well as less revenue for a club still battling severe financial problems.

Some 35,000 people turned out for Barcelona's first game at its temporary home on Tuesday, against Tottenham in a friendly that the club uses to present its team for the upcoming campaign. That's compared to the 83,000 who showed up at Camp Nou for the equivalent game on year ago.

Coach Xavi Hernández took the microphone to address the crowd that watched his team beat Tottenham 4-2. He asked them to hang in

"We have the same motivation as last season. But this season will not be easy. It will be an atypical season. We won't be at our home," Xavi told the stadium. "We will need you more than ever, need your support, your solidarity, your sacrifice. It is important that you make us feel like

we were at Camp Nou.' While Barcelona has proven beatable at home in recent years, there was a time not too long ago when it was nearly invincible at Camp Nou. With Lionel Messi and company at their best, Barcelona went more than seven years without losing a Champions League home game between September 2013 and December 2020. During that stretch it was also rare for the team to lose a Spanish league game when it was playing in front of its fans.

Only 17,000 club members bought season tickets for this campaign, far from the 27,000 that club president Joan Laporta had hoped for. The rest of the seats will be sold on a gameby-game basis.

SOCCER

Last season, the club sold 83,000 season tickets to its club members and had an average turnout that was roughly the same. The top turnout for a single game last season was the 95,000 who saw Barcelona beat Real Madrid 2-1 in a match that put the team on its way to winning the Spanish league title.

Barcelona opens the Spanish league season away at Getafe on Sunday. It will then play its first home game against Cádiz on Aug. 20.

The stadium that featured in 1992 Summer Olympics is not without its attractions. It sits atop the Montjuïc hill which provides spectacular views of the city, and has other lures particularly for tourists, including parks, an Olympic museum, and an art museum. Barcelona's crosstown rival Espanyol played at the Olympic Stadium from 1997-2009 while it was building its new stadium.

But many local fans consider the Olympic Stadium harder to get to than Camp Nou, which is within easy walking distance from nearby subway stations. Even Laporta had to admit that "going up to Montjuïc is inconvenient, but it doesn't seem like a large one to me.'

To help fans avoid the hike up the hill there will be shuttle buses to help ticket holders reach the stadium.

The club has also upgraded the Olympic Stadium's facilities, including putting a cover over its ath-



In this Wednesday, Sept. 7, 2022 file photo, a general view of the Camp Nou stadium ahead of the Champions League Group C soccer match between FC Barcelona and Viktoria Plzen in Barcelona, Spain. (AP)

letics track and giving its changing

rooms a makeover. Perhaps more importantly for Barcelona in the mid-term, the time away from Camp Nou will mean a financial blow to a club that is struggling to reduce a massive debt of some 1.3 billion euros (\$1.4 billion). That figure does not include the loan commitments the club has taken on

to remodel its stadium. The club said that the rental cost of the municipal stadium will run between 15-20 million euros (\$16.5-\$22 million) for the season. In April, Laporta said that playing away from Camp Nou will leave a hole of around 93 million euros (\$102 million) in the club's accounts between the rent paid and the lower revenues. Laporta has said the club is trying to cash in on its recent league title and the Champions League success of its women's team to lock up new sponsors to make up for the shortfall. Its women's team, however, is still set to play at its much smaller stadium outside the city.

Unlike rival Real Madrid, which took advantage of the pandemic to renovate its Santiago Bernabéu when health restrictions prohibited the public from attending games anyway, Barcelona's plans to overhaul Camp Nou have been delayed for years. They finally got underway this summer when crews started demolishing parts of it.

Barcelona hopes to be able to return to playing games at Camp Nou in November 2024. The new-look stadium will seat 105,000 people and have better retail services to further boost game-day revenues. Work, however, is expected to continue on the stadium into 2026, meaning that attendance will still be reduced until then. The entire project has required Barcelona to secure 1.45 billion euros (\$1.6 billion) in backing from multiple investors.

Lorenzen throws no-hitter, Phillies shut out Nationals

Athletics snap AL West-leading Rangers eight-game winning streak

PHILADELPHIA, Aug 10, (AP): Michael Lorenzen threw the 14th no-hitter in Philadelphia Phillies history, a dazzling performance in only his second start with his new team, which beat the Washington Nationals 7-0 on Wednesday night.

The 31-year-old Lorenzen (7-7) struck out five, walked four and improved to 2-0 since he was acquired from Detroit at the trade deadline for a minor leaguer. Lorenzen re-



Lane tired Thomas on a grounder to open the ninth and struck out Joey Menlooking. eses The crowd 30,406 erupted when Lorenzen retired Dominic

Smith on a flyball on his 124th pitch to end the game.

Washington was no-hit for the first time in its 19 seasons since the franchise moved from Montreal

The no-hitter was the fourth in the majors this season. Phillies left fielder Weston Wilson homered in his first major league

plate appearance and after nearly 2,900 at-bats in the minor leagues. Nick Castellanos homered twice to reach 200 for his career.

MacKenzie Gore (6-9) gave up six runs and seven hits in five innings. He walked one and struck out five.

Athletics 2, Rangers 0 In Oakland, Freddy Tarnok threw four scoreless innings relief for his first MLB win and five Oakland pitchers combined for a four-hitter as the Athletics snapped AL Westleading Texas' eight-game winning

BASEBALL

Zack Gelof hit his sixth homer of the season and rookie Esteury Riuiz singled, stole two bases to raise his season total to 46 and scored the A's

Oakland won for just the eighth time in 23 games since the All-Star break. The Rangers entered the game with their longest winning streak since 2017 and leading their division by three games over the Houston As-

Tarnok (1-1) anchored the A's on the mound in relief of opener Austin Pruitt, giving up two hits and two walks with four strikeouts in the the longest and most efficient outing of his career.

Jordan Montgomery (7-10) allowed seven hits and two runs in six innings in his second start with the Rangers since being acquired in a trade from the Cardinals on July 30.

Brewers 7, Rockies 6, 10 innings In Milwaukee, Mark Canha scored the winning run in the bottom of the 10th inning on a throwing error by shortstop Ezequiel Tovar off a grounder by Andruw Monasterio and NL Central-leading Milwaukee beat

Justin Lawrence (3-5) started the 10th with a pitch-strike violation on Canha, who lined the next pitch to deep center for a ground-rule double that scored William Contreras and tied the game. Canha advanced on a ground out and, one out later, scored the winning run when Tovar shorthopped a throw to first on a ground ball off the bat of Monasterio.

Bryse Wilson (4-0) picked up the win despite allowing a run in the top of the 10th.

In the top of the 10th, Jurickson Profar, who went 2 for 5 with a homer and two RBIs, reached on the fielder's choice before Tovar doubled to left field, where Canha misplayed the ball and allowed Profar to score, giving the Rockies a 6-5 lead.

Marlins 5, Reds 4

In Cincinnati, Josh Bell homered twice and drove in four runs, Bryan De La Cruz hit the go-ahead shot in the ninth and Miami rallied late to

Trailing 4-1, Bell hit a game-tying three-run home run in the eighth inning before De La Cruz led off the ninth by going the opposite way to right field against Alexis Diaz (3-4). Bell gave the Marlins a 1-0 lead with a second-inning solo shot.

Graham Ashcraft pitched seven impressive innings, Christian Encarnacion-Strand homered and drove in three runs for the Reds, who have lost eight of their past nine games.

Spencer Steer also homered and Joey Votto had three hits for the

Reds. Tanner Scott (6-4) pitched the eighth for the win. David Robertson allowed a hit before striking out Elly De La Cruz for his 17th save in 21 tries and third for the Marlins since being acquired in a trade with the New York Mets.

Red Sox 4, Royals 3

In Boston, Alex Verdugo had a two-run double to help Boston beat Kansas City in a game with one of the strangest ground-rule doubles in

Fenway Park history.

In the top of the second inning with two out and Matt Duffy on first base, Kyle Isbel lashed a drive to left field that looked as if it would be caught by Masataka Yoshida, who lunged



Los Angeles Angels shortstop Andrew Velazquez reaches for the throw from first baseman C.J. Cron, who was charged with an error, on a ball hit by San Francisco Giants' Blake Sabol during the ninth inning of a baseball game in Anaheim, Calif. (AP)

and clasped his glove. But Yoshida missed the ball, crashing into the wall. He got up, clearly confused, looking around for the ball.

The ball was not on the field. It had smashed through one of the red lights on the wall that denote the number of outs. Yoshida picked the ball through the hole in the light, with the play ruled a ground-rule double.

The Red Sox scored three runs in fourth to erase a one-run deficit on Verdugo's two-run double and Reese McGuire's RBI single.

Nick Pivetta (8-6) went five innings, allowing two runs - on MJ Melendez's home runs - with eight strikeouts. Kenley Jansen got the save, his 25th of the season, after giving up a homer to Freddy Fermin in

Jordan Lyles (3-13) took the loss, giving up four runs and seven hits with six strikeouts in eight innings.

Blue Jays 1, Guardians 0 In Cleveland, George Springer homered in the first inning and Kevin Gausman struck out six in a com-

bined six-hitter to lead Toronto. Springer belted a 393-foot shot to left-center on the 13th pitch of his at-bat against Logan Allen (5-5), delighting the boisterous Blue Jays fans who occupied most of the lower bowl at Progressive Field.

Gausman (9-6), an All-Star for Toronto this season, worked seven innings, scattering four hits without a walk and increasing his AL-leading strikeout total to 183. Erik Swanson, Tim Mayza and Jordan Hicks followed as Toronto posted its 12th shutout, tying for the most in the ma-

Hicks earned his 11th save by retiring the only batter he faced, Oscar Gonzalez, as the Blue Jays remained in the third and final AL wild-card position.

Kole Calhoun had two hits for the free-falling Guardians, who have lost

Dodgers 2, Diamondbacks 0

In Phoenix, David Peralta's basesloaded, two-run single against his former team broke a scoreless tie in the eighth inning and Los Angeles beat Arizona.

The win was the fourth in a row for the Dodgers while the Diamondbacks lost their eight straight. The loss dropped them under .500 for the first time since they lost the home opener to the Dodgers on April 6 to go 3-4.

Arizona led the NL West by a halfgame over the Dodgers at the All-Star break. Since then, the Dodgers are 16-8 and the Diamondbacks are 5-19.

With two outs in the eighth, Freddie Freeman greeted Kyle Nelson (5-3) with his MLB-leading 42nd double. Will Smith was walked intentionally and Max Muncy drew a walk to load the bases for Peralta, who played his first nine seasons for Arizona. He lined a single to right to score Freeman and Smith.

Caleb Ferguson (6-3) relieved starter Bobby Miller with two on in the seventh, and Evan Phillips got the last three outs to complete the combined shutout and pick up his 16th

Mets 4. Cubs 3

In New York, Pete Alonso launched yet another homer against Chicago, and Jeff McNeil hit a tiebreaking shot that sent New York to

With the bases loaded in the ninth inning, Phil Bickford struck out No. 3 batter Ian Happ to save it for New York. It was Bickford's second major league save - first for the Mets since being acquired from the Los Angeles Dodgers for cash at last week's trade

The Cubs lost for just the sixth time in 22 games and fell 2 1/2 games behind first-place Milwaukee in the NL Central. Christopher Morel and Seiya Suzuki homered for the Chicago, bunched with several teams fighting tooth-and-nail for the league's

Pak drop Masood for series & Asia Cup

India-Pakistan game among nine CWC matches to be rescheduled

bowling allrounder.

and captain Babar Azam.

begins in Multan from Aug. 30.

DELHI, India, Aug 10, (AP): The meeting between archrivals India and Pakistan at this year's Cricket World Cup was among nine matches to be rescheduled on Wednesday, less than two months before the start of the tournament.

The India-Pakistan game will now take place in Ahmedabad on Oct. 14, a day earlier than originally scheduled. The original date had been heavily criticized as it would have clashed with the start of Navratri festivities in the city and strain police resources in Ahmedabad.

The Navratri week, starting Oct. 15, is celebrated with pomp and splendor across India and leads up to the festival of Diwali every year.

Further changes to the schedule were necessary as Pa-

kistan was set to play Sri Lanka in Hyderabad on Oct. 12,

leaving only a two-day gap to the rescheduled India game. That match was moved to Oct. 10.

Two other games originally scheduled for Oct. 14 were also moved to make sure the highly anticipated India-Pakistan game is a standalone event. New Zealand vs. Bangladesh in Chennai will be played on Oct. 13 as a day-night game, while England vs Afghanistan in Delhi has been moved forward to Oct. 15.

As a result, Australia-South Africa in Lucknow on Oct. 13 has also been

moved forward one day. Meanwhile, England vs. Bangladesh in Dharamsala on Oct. 10 is now a day game instead of a day-night affair to accommodate Pakistan's game against

Security concerns in Kolkata in connection to the Diwali festivities in November also led to some scheduling changes. The double-header with Australia vs. Bangladesh in Pune and England vs. Pakistan in Kolkata has been moved to Nov. 11, one day earlier than planned. In turn, India's game against the Netherlands in Bangalore was moved down one day to Nov. 12.

The World Cup will kick off in Ahmedabad on Oct. 5, with the opening game between 2019 World Cup finalists England and New Zealand. Tickets for the event will go on sale on Aug. 25.

Grant Hartwig (4-1) worked 2 1/3

Jonathan Araúz added an RBI

single and the Mets got strong work

from their shaky bullpen to take two

of three games from the Cubs, who

Wesneski (2-4) with a leadoff homer

in the sixth that put the Mets ahead.

Abraham Almonte doubled and

scored on Araúz's single to make it

Braves 6, Pirates 5

slugged three hits and Michael Harris

II tagged on a popup to right field and

scored on a close call in the eighth in-

ning, lifting Atlanta past Pittsburgh.

ley's fly into shallow right off Car-

men Mlodzinski (2-3) that was

fielded by backpeddling Jared Triolo.

Harris raced home on Austin Ri-

In Pittsburgh, Ronald Acuña Jr.

McNeil greeted reliever Hayden

won their previous six series.

scoreless innings in relief of Mets

starter David Peterson.

Masood

ing left third before Triolo caught the

ball, but the call was reversed follow-

ing a review and the Braves moved

RBI double in the fourth, one day

after leaving in the sixth inning after

being hit on the left elbow by a pitch

Atlanta's Pierce Johnson (2-6)

struck out one, walked one and al-

lowed one hit in 2/3 of an inning. Rai-

sel Iglesias allowed two singles with

two outs in the ninth before striking

Tigers 9, Twins 5

homered twice and Detroit had 17

hits in win over Minnesota.

In Detroit, Spencer Torkelson

Miguel Cabrera went 3 for 4, giv-

ing him 3,145 career hits to move

out Henry Davis for his 22nd save.

from Colin Holderman.

Acuña was 3 for 6, including an

ahead 6-5.

to political tensions between the two countries, the Asian Cricket Council has chosen Sri Lanka as the other venue for the Asia Cup, where India will play all its games. Pakistan will host four matches while Sri Lanka will host nine matches, including the final on Sept. 17.

An 18-member squad was announced for the series against Afghanistan while middle-order batter Saud Shakeel has been omitted from the 17-member team for the Asia Cup.

Pakistan dropped opening batter Shan Masood and re-

The left-handed Masood had a below par home season

Ashraf, who has taken 28 wickets and scored 1,060 runs

against New Zealand this year when he scored only 52 runs

in four ODIs after the selectors recalled him for the first time

in 31 ODIs, last played in the ODI series against England in

2021 but was recalled to add balance to the side as a fast-

The squads were announced by newly appointed chief se-

lector Inzamam-ul-Haq on Wednesday after consulting with

team director Mickey Arthur, head coach Grant Bradbrun

Pakistan is due to play a three-match ODI series against

Afghanistan in Sri Lanka this month before the Asia Cup

CRICKET

After India refused to tour Pakistan for the Asia Cup due

called allrounder Faheem Ashraf for the first time in two

years for the ODI series against Afghanistan and the Asia

Middle-order batter Tayyab Tahir was also recalled after he impressed during the recent ACC Emerging Cup, where he scored a century against India in the final

Fast bowler Ihsanullah was left out because he is recovering from an injury to his bowling elbow.

Abdullah Shafique, Fakhar Zaman, Imam-ul-Haq, Babar Azam (captain), Salman Ali Agha, Iftikhar Ahmed, Tayyab Tahir, Saud Shakeel, Mohammad Rizwan, Mohammad Haris, Shadab Khan, Mohammad Nawaz, Usama Mir, Faheem Ashraf, Haris Rauf, Mohammad Wasim, Naseem Shah and Shaheen Afridi.

Harris slid in ahead of the throw to past Robin Yount into sole posseshome by the second baseman. He was sion of 19th place on the career list. originally called out for possibly hav-Cabrera, who is hitting .331 in his last

> tion after being replaced by a pinchrunner after his third single. Matt Vierling, Zach McKinstry and Eric Haase also had three hits for

> 40 games, received a standing ova-

Bailey Ober (6-6) took the loss for Minnesota, which has lost two in a row after a five-game winning streak.

Tyler Holton (1-2) got seven outs to pick up his first career win and Jose Cisnero got the last out for his second

Cardinals 6, Rays 4 In St. Petersburg, Paul Gold-schmidt surpassed 1,100 RBIs with a two-run single and St. Louis beat

Tampa Bay. Goldschmidt put the Cardinals ahead 5-2 on his two-run hit off Kevin Kelly (4-2) during the fourth.

The St. Louis slugger has 1,101 RBIs. Dakota Hudson (3-0) gave up three runs and seven hits over five innings in his third start and ninth appearance since being called up from Triple-A

Memphis last month. Giovanny Gallegos, the fourth Cardinals reliever, worked a perfect ninth for his ninth save in 14 chances.

Jose Siri homered twice for the AL wild card-leading Rays. They are 6-3 over their last nine games.

Twenty-one of Siri's 23 homers have come in his last 67 games since May 1, which is tied for third most in the AL over the stretch.

Angels 4, Giants 1

In Anaheim, Shohei Ohtani allowed one unearned run over six innings of three-hit ball, earning his 10th victory of the season after Mike Moustakas hit a tiebreaking three-run homer to lead Los Angeles.

Ohtani (10-5) surpassed Babe Ruth in yet another measure of two-way

MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, Aug 10, (AP): Results and standings from the MLB games on Wednesday. St Louis Tampa Bay Minnesota Chicago W. Sox San Francisco Milwaukee Colorado 10 inn Washington Pittsburgh Arizona American League **East Division** .614 .595 .560 .518 4-1/2 Atlanta Philadelphia New York 2-1/2 2-1/2 10 11-1/2 Chicago Pittsburgh

excellence at the Big A, becoming the first player in major league history to have multiple seasons with both 10 victories and 10 homers.

Ohtani hasn't allowed an earned run in 19 innings over his last three starts, but the AL MVP frontrunner had to work hard against the Giants' tenacious lineup while issuing three walks and striking out five. Ohtani walked twice and struck out twice at the plate, scoring a run in the Angels' decisive four-run rally.

Luis Rengifo doubled and scored the tying run on Brandon Drury's single before Moustakas hammered a no-doubt homer to right off rookie Tristan Beck (3-1), who took his first major league loss.

Mariners 6, Padres 1

In Seattle, Cal Raleigh put Seattle ahead with a two-run home run in the bottom of the eighth inning, Emerson Hancock allowed just two hits in his major league debut and the Mariners got their seventh straight win.

Raleigh's 450-foot homer came against San Diego reliever Steven Wilson (1-1), and started a five-run inning for the Mariners. Ty France drove in another run in the inning with an RBI double, and later scored on a bloop single by Cade Marlowe.

Hancock allowed just one run in five innings, combining with five relievers on a four-hitter.

Ha-Seong Kim walked to lead off the game against Hancock, stole second and third, and scored on a soft grounder by Juan Soto. Kim also singled in the third to extend his careerbest hitting streak to 15 games.

Matt Brash (8-3) pitched a scoreless eighth inning to pick up the win, and Isaiah Campbell got the last three outs. Astros 8, Orioles 2

In Baltimore, Kyle Tucker homered for the second straight night to give Houston an early lead and the Astros added four runs in the eighth inning in a win over Baltimore.

Austin Hays went deep for the Orioles, who have gone 75 consecutive series of at least two decisions without being swept. Houston can end that streak Thursday after taking the first two games of this three-game

The AL East-leading Orioles remained two games ahead of Tampa Bay thanks to St. Louis' victory over the Rays. The Astros pulled within two of first-place Texas in the AL

Tucker hit a two-run shot off Jack Flaherty (8-7) in the top of the first. Jose Altuve added an RBI single in the second. Hays' two-run homer in the fourth brought the Orioles within one, but Baltimore's bullpen couldn't keep it close.

Cristian Javier (8-2) allowed two runs and four hits in five innings.

White Sox 9, Yankees 2 In Chicago, Mike Clevinger pitched six strong innings, Elvis Andrus drove in three runs and Chicago won for the fourth time in five

Yoan Moncada doubled twice and scored one run while Yasmani Grandal had two hits with an RBI and a run. Gregory Santos pitched two scoreless innings to earn his third save of the season.

The Yankees have now lost seven

out of their last 11 games. They began the day five games back from a wild-card spot. The only offense they could muster

against Clevinger was a solo homer by Giancarlo Stanton - his 18th. The Yankees were 0 for 7 with runners in scoring position as Clevinger (5-5) held them to three hits.



by Los Angeles Dodgers' Will Smith during the fourth inning of a baseball game against the Arizona Diamondbacks in Phoenix. (AP)



USA's Jennifer Valente celebrates winning the Women Elite Omnium on day seven of the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships at the Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome, Glasgow, Scotland. (AP)

Sports

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Quintero ends three-year reign of Lavreysen



Switzerland's Joris Ryf in action in the Men's Elite E-MTB Cross-Country race during day seven of the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships at the Glentress Mountain Bike Trail Centre, Peebles, Scotland. Ryf won the race. (AP)

Al-Ahli host Al-Hazm in opener

Saudi Arabia soccer league starts after spending spree

GENEVA, Aug 10, (AP): The Saudi Arabian soccer league kicks off Friday after a spending spree on bigname players grabbed the world's attention during the European summer offseason. The opening game sees Al-Ahli host Al-Hazm in a 9 p.m. kickoff that should finish minutes before the Premier League starts with champion Manchester City playing at Burnley.

Hundreds of millions of dollars from the kingdom's vast oil wealth were spent to supercharge the statebacked Saudi Pro League's ambitions of being a global player. About a billion more in salaries were turned down by Lionel Messi and Kylian Mbappé, who rejected offers to join

Now the actual games start and the appeal of watching Champions League winners like Karim Benzema, Sadio Mané and Riyad Mahrez - who have followed the January trailblazer Cristiano Ronaldo - in unfamiliar surroundings will be tested.

The league announced Wednesday a slate of broadcast deals in more than 130 markets worldwide. but that did not include the United

"The watching world can now enjoy front row seats as Saudi football transforms," said the league's interim chief executive, Saad Allazeez.

Three of the nine games in each round will be shown in Britain and Germany on the platforms of subscription streaming service DAZN, by French pay-TV network Canal+ and across five different outlets in

China, including Tencent. In North America, DAZN has the rights in Canada and Azteca in Mexico. Global news packages will be provided by London-based SNTV, a joint venture between The Associated Press and the IMG agency which exclusively managed broadcast sales for the next two seasons.

Luring Ronaldo in January to the Al Nassr club was a clear statement of intent by the league, even though he would soon turn 38. It also seemed an opportunistic outlier after the Portugal star's public split with Manchester United weeks earlier on the eve of the World Cup.

The seismic shift in soccer's power game became clearer in early June when Benzema, the 2022 Ballon d'Or winner as the world's best player, decided to leave Real Madrid after 14 stellar years.

The story dominated the final weekend of games in Europe's national leagues and hinted at the full scope of the Saudi domestic soccer project revealed the next day.

The Public Investment Fund (PIF), which oversees \$700 billion of Saudi sovereign wealth, said it was taking majority ownership stakes in four of the top domestic clubs. It effectively nationalized clubs in the biggest cities, Riyadh and Jeddah: Al Nassr, Benzema's Al Ittihad, Al Hilal - the Asian Champions League winner in 2019 and 2021 which pursued Messi and Mbappé - and Al Ahli.

"The Saudi Pro League ... will be supported in its ambition to be amongst the top ten leagues in the world," the national press agency announced in a news release.

SOCCER

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who chairs the PIF, has pushed its huge investments in glob-

al sports. The biggest transfer fees paid, up to \$60 million, have been for lowertier talent now at Al Hilal: Malcom from Zenit St. Petersburg, Rúben Neves from Wolverhampton, and Sergej Milinković-Savić from Lazio. For now, the English Premier League and Champions League organizer UEFA insist they see no threat.

Ronaldo is reportedly getting a \$200 million salary and Benzema more than \$100 million. Both were true marquee signings as free agents, but the league has yet to attract toplevel coaches.

Steven Gerrard agreed to coach Ettifaq after his reputation took a hit when he was fired by Aston Villa last year, and he had first rebuffed the Saudi offer. Abha hired former Poland coach Czesław Michniewicz, whose national team contract was not renewed after a lackluster World

Former Croatia and West Ham manager Slaven Bilic was hired by Al Fateh last month, returning to the country after an initial fivemonth spell in the Saudi league ended in 2019 when he was fired by Al Ittihad. A FIFA judge later awarded Bilic a \$15 million salary settlement in a case the club disputed.

The attraction is not just money. Benzema, Mané and Mahrez cite the importance of playing in a country of

"My mum is Muslim like me," Mané said this week. "She was the first to vote for me to go there and my whole family was excited for me

to come here so it was not hard." Mané is among four recruits from Liverpool's 2019 Champions League winning team, joining Roberto Firmino, Fabinho and captain Jordan Henderson.

At a league event this week, Henderson said he is still adapting to the Saudi climate.

"The heat has been hard and it has been tough trying to adjust, but training has been good," he said. "I enjoyed it and I've been trying to embrace this different experience and culture and way of living and playing football."

Temperatures of 40 Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) are forecast around the 6 p.m. kickoff time for three of the



In this Jan. 22, 2023 file photo, Al Nassr's Cristiano Ronaldo (right), fights for the ball during the Saudi Pro League match between Al Ettifaq FC and Al Nassr FC at Mrsool Park Stadium, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. (AP)

Valente claims more gold

had become the most decorated American track cyclist in history at this year's world championships, winning a gold medal in the scratch race and a bronze medal in the elimination race to give her 19 medals for her career.

GLASGOW, Aug 10, (AP): Jennifer Valente already

Valente capped her week in Glasgow, Scotland,y by making that total a nice, round - and golden - number.

The Olympic champion in the multi-event omnium, Valente built a substantial lead over the first three of four races, leaving her only to keep track of her closest pursuers in the concluding points race. When Amalie Dideriksen and Lotte Kopecky gained a lap on the field, Valente was right there with them, and she was still with them by the time the 80-lap race had concluded.

That allowed the 28-year-old from California to finish with 145 points, thanks in large part to her victory in the tempo race and second-place finishes in the scratch and elimination races. Dideriksen had 136 to take silver for Denmark, while Kopecky earned bronze for Belgium by holding off 2021 world champion Katie Archibald of Britain.

CYCLING

"To back up last year is really special in a different kind of way, Valente said. "I was just elated last year, and so excited and had reached a career goal of mine, and I think this race was really for me and I was focused on myself and my own rac-

Now, Valente will head to the Paris Olympics next summer as the favorite to defend her gold medal from Tokyo.

"I think it'll continue to set in over the next couple of minutes and hours and days," Valente said.

In other finals from the final day of track cycling in Glasgow, Colombia's Kevin Quintero ended the three-year reign of the Netherlands' Harrie Lavreysen in the men's keirin; Emma Finucane of Britain beat Emma Hinze in the semifinals and German teammate Lea Friedrich in the finals of the women's sprint; and Aaron Gate of New Zealand won the men's points race.

In the only final taking place outside the velodrome Wednesday, the heavily favored Swiss mountain bike team anchored by Nino Schurter won the mixed relay in Glentress Forest Park just south of Edinburgh, Scotland.

Schurter was joined by Dario Lillo, Nicolas Halter, Linda Indergand, Ronja Blochlinger and Anina Hutter



Italy's Lorenzo Milesi bites the gold medal after winning the Men Under 23 Individual Time Trial race on day seven of the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships in Stirling, Scotland. (AP)

in finishing nine seconds ahead of silver medalist France on the six-lap circuit. Denmark edged Canada by a single second to take bronze.

In the finals of the keirin, where Lavreysen had won the past three titles, it was Quintero who made a statement. He rushed to the front of the race, which begins behind a motorized bike called a derny that slowly picks up speed before finishing in a sprint, and had plenty of space between him and the field as he crossed the finish line.

Matthew Richardson of Australia took the silver medal and Shinji Nakano of Japan the bronze, while Lavreysen - the sprint world champion who had narrowly escaped the semifinal round - finished out of the medals in fourth place.

The 20-year-old proved that she could be a force at the Paris Olympics in the women's sprint, where she had to take down two of the best in the sport. The Brit first knocked out Hinze, the two-time world champ and bronze medalist a year ago, then beat the reigning silver medalist Friedrich in the finals.

In the first of their best-of-three race for the gold, Finucane came hard around the outside to take the sprint by 15 hundredths of a second. In their second race, Friedrich tried to do the same thing but was unable to catch Finucane at the line.

Ellesse Andrews of New Zealand swept past Hinze in their race for the bronze medal.

In the men's points race, where points are awarded for gaining a lap or placing in sprints, Gate finished with 123 points to win the gold medal. Albert Torres of Spain was second with 107 and Belgium's Fabio van den Bossche third with 95.

"I've wanted that for a long time. I last had a crack at the points race in the world championships in 2012, Gate said. "It was my 4-year-old boys' birthday yesterday so it was nice to make it worthwhile.'

Deal worth more than 100 million euros

Kane has decision to make after Tottenham and **Bayern reportedly reach agreement on transfer**

LONDON, Aug 10, (AP): Harry Kane has a career-defining decision

nine games this weekend.

Ronaldo and Al Nassr.

goalkeeper.

Argentina.

in the future."

Henderson and the Gerrard-

coached Ettifaq team have a 9 p.m.

kickoff Monday when they host

debuts for Mahrez, Firmino and Ed-

ouard Mendy, the former Chelsea

league is also a stage for home-

grown talent to build on that stun-

ning 2-1 win at the World Cup

over Messi and eventual champion

proud, to entertain local fans and the

world" Saudi Arabian Football Fed-

eration president Yasser Al Misehal

said, "but it has to serve the ambi-

tions of the national team now and

"Yes, we want a league to be

The Al Ahli game should mean

In Saudi Arabia, the revamped

The England captain must choose whether to stay at Tottenham, the English team where he has been since 2004, or move to German giant Bayern Munich. The clubs reportedly have

reached an agreement regarding the transfer of Kane - for a deal worth more than 100 million euros (\$110 million) - and now it is over to the striker to decide. Neither club has commented officially about reaching an agreement

for Kane. Tottenham has previously said Kane wasn't for sale, but has held talks with Bayern in recent weeks.

Kane, who is the second highestscoring player in Premier League history with 213 goals, is entering the last year of his contract at Spurs and can leave as a free agent in 2024. It puts pressure on Tottenham to sell him this summer if the club is to get any money for its star player.

Kane reached the Champions League final with Tottenham in 2019. However, he has never lifted a major trophy at the club and the team's progress has stalled. An

eighth-place finish in the Premier League last season meant Tottenham failed to qualify for European

competition. The three Premier time League top scorer could be the key to revitalizing Bayern, which lacked a goal-threat focused scoring through the center last season

after Robert Lewandowski left for Barcelona. Bayern needed goal difference to beat Borussia Dortmund to the German title on the final day of a turbulent season in which its top Bundesliga scorer was Serge Gnabry with 14 goals. Two years ago, Lewandowski scored a re-

cord 41 goals. However, there will be pressure to succeed immediately. Bayern's last high-profile signing from the Premier League, Sadio Mané, was widely considered a flop after his arrival from Liverpool a year ago.

Mané's departure for Saudi Ara-

bia's Al-Nassr and the sale of defender Lucas Hernández to Paris Saint-Germain helped to free up funds to sign Kane.

Kane's move is also a symbolic moment for the England team, whose players are generally reluctant to leave the riches of the Premier League.

SOCCER

No permanent England captain has played for a club outside England since David Beckham at Real Madrid in 2006. England's squad for its most recent games was entirely Premier League-based after Real Madrid midfielder Jude Bellingham withdrew injured.

Kane has long been linked with Manchester United. However, United didn't want to be drawn into protracted negotiations with Tottenham chairman Daniel Levy and opted for a younger option in Rasmus Hojlund, who joined for an initial 64 million pounds (\$82 million) last week.

Tottenham's first game of the new season is at Brentford on Sun-

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Editor-in-Chief AHMED AL JARALLAH

Editorial Office: Airport Road, Shuwaikh

Telephone: 24813566 & 24849144 Fax: 24818267

Advertising: Tel: 24813805 Fax: 24845708 P.O. Box 2270, 13023 Safat, Kuwait E-mail: arabtimes@arabtimesonline.com E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

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