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FIX IMBALANCES AND END DIVERGENT INTERPRETATIONS OF SOME ARTICLES Is it time to amend the Constitution?

Kuwait Constitution was ahead of others in Arab world, but situation is different now

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

Today, the task lies in the hands of the new generation, whether in the Ruling Family or the Parliament

Advice of Al-Solh to Al-Saqer 85 years ago: Homelands are built through understanding, not quarrels ... and through dialogue, not fighting

Let 'understanding' be the basis of the relationship between the Parliament and the government ... "No restriction of a prince or oppression of a minister."

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: In light of the parliamentary escalation against the government on many files and despite the latter's fulfillment of all its promises in the last parliamentary session amid fears of the return of the scene of brandishing interrogations and the vote of no-confidence in the next session, high-level political circles urged the parliamentarians to learn from the past and refrain from repeating the same mistakes. They emphasized the need to reconsider many visions and perceptions, which dominated the political behavior

of the vast majority of parliamentarians in a way that paralyzed the country, disrupted the development and mod-



In this picture released by the Iranian Foreign Ministry, Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, left, speaks during a joint news briefing with his Saudi Arabian counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Aug. 17, 2023. (AP)

Saudi, Iran FMs commend **Kuwait decreases** ties, anticipate Raisi's visit US bond holdings

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared on Thursday that the State of Kuwait, in its quest to establish the fate of the prisoners and the missing by DNA tests, has determined identity of one of the martyrs Hamdan Mohammad Hamdan Al-Mutairi.

Ambassador Rabie' Al-Adsani, the assistant foreign minister for the prisoners and missing affairs, said in a statement to KUNA on Thursday that the martyr had been detained by troops of the flagrant Iraqi aggression on the State of Kuwait in 1990 and his remains were found recently, indicating that the corpse was quite disfigured and made forensics' task quite hard.

However, relentless efforts by the public department of forensic evidences and its use of state-of-art techniques resulted in determining the corpse identity, the latest to be listed among Kuwait's martyrs. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: The National Center for Cyber Security and Google Cloud Platform discussed in a Kuwait meeting on Thursday ways to address mounting challenges through cooperation and coordination.

In a press statement, Head of the National Center for Cyber Security, Mohammad Bouaraki and Dominick Delfino -- global vice president of cybersecurity sales -focused their meetings on the rapid global development in cloud serernization machine, and dragged Kuwait from the leadership position to the last cart in the train of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

They attributed the country's continuous rotation in the vicious cycle of parliamentary escalation and early elections to the struc-tural defect in "parliamentary behavior". They underscored the importance of understanding the essence of the role of parliamentarians, and the mechanisms for doing their work and their competencies. They stressed the need to return to the sources, as Kuwait was the only one in the Gulf and the region that had the lead in



As a reminder, they referred to the letter of the late prominent Lebanese politician Kazem Al-Solh to former Kuwaiti MP Abdullah Al-Saqer in 1938 after the former's visit to Kuwait when he met a number of Kuwaiti youths who were enthusiastic about reform.

They disclosed that Al-Solh wrote to his friend Al-Saqer, congratulating him on winning the parliamentary membership. He said: "One of the most important news we read in the

newspapers is this movement that we hope to be blessed — the establishment of the parliamentary system in Kuwait.

Al-Jarallah

"The benefits of such a movement are vast and great, provided that it invests well in the supreme interests, not personal or partisan interests. "In many countries, especially in the East, it is unfortunate that

this system proved to be in vain, a jest and a mockery of the interest of the nation towards the interest of individuals. "Therefore, I hope that after you realize this dream of many peo-

ple you will not fall into the mistakes that others have fallen into. 'Your concerns should be genuine and comprehensive reforms, and pure national service; not restricting a prince or oppressing a minister, rich man or merchant.

"I still adhere to the opinion I expressed in Kuwait. It is better for reform to take place through cooperation and understanding among sheikhs (the ruling house), rather than for it to take place against their will.

'We discussed two methods - resistance and understanding. We found that each has its own benefit and harm. For Kuwait, understanding is first, more fruitful and faster.

According to the political circles, the Kuwaiti Constitution could be considered ahead of others in the Arab world on the eve of its inception and launching of the democratic experiment.

They pointed out that in application, it became clear that more than one article could have several interpretations. They said this is basically the cause of crises that surfaced later, some of which continue up to this day.

RIYADH, Aug 17, (Agencies): Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud and Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian commended on Thursday bilateral ties, expressing desire to further bolster them during the anticipated visit by President Ebrahim Raisi to the Kingdom.

During a joint press conference in Riyadh on the sidelines of Amir-Abdollahian's first visit to Saudi Arabia, Minister Al-Saud indicated that a variety of issues were discussed during his gathering with his Iranian counterpart.

He affirmed that the visit came as an extension of the Beijing talks on the resumption of relations between the two sides.

He expressed Saudi Arabia's keenness on implementing the tenets of the Beijing accord, reflecting the Kingdom's desire to activate the security and economic agreements mentioned therein.

The Saudi minister also expressed his country's gratitude towards Iran's support to the Saudi bid to host the EXPO 2030.

On his part, Amir-Abdollahain commended the noticeable improvement in ties, stressing that it was important to implement the items mentioned in the Beijing agreement.

In regards to President Raisi's possible visit to Saudi Arabia upon the invitation of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, the Iranian official said that the President was eager to pay a visit to the Kingdom.

Back to the Beijing accord, Amir-Abdollahian said that both countries were eager to establish committees that would focus on implementing the agreement.

He expressed that Iran and Saudi Arabia must bolster cooperation within the context of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to achieve further security in the region. The Iranian official also reiterated Iran's support for Saudi Arabia to host the EXPO

Day by Day

THE airplane thief who manipu-

lated agencies and fabricated documents is on the brink of fac-

ing dire consequences in Gulf

nations, as his background and

activities have become widely

warn him is his cardiologist, but

even this expert anticipates im-

pending troubles, which have

become evident from emerging

signs. The airplane thief is currently

country, following the exposure of

his case. Simultaneously, he is being pursued in the sole country where

he currently resides. There, he

resorts to bribing the police and security personnel in a desperate

attempt to evade accountability

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

and subsequent arrest.

The only person who can still

known.

Also:

2030.

UNITED NATIONS: Threats to return to war in Yemen are hindering efforts to start peace talks as the Arab world's poorest country faces an increasingly dire economic situation, a senior U.N. official said Wednesday

Hans Grundberg, the U.N. special representative for Yemen, told the Security Council that hostilities between Houthi rebels and government forces haven't returned to levels before a six-month truce that ended in October, but he said intermittent fighting and exchanges of fire have continued.

He singled out six front-line areas. They include Yemen's third-largest city, Taiz, which has been under siege by the Houthis since 2016; Hodeida, where Yemen's main port is located; and the oil-rich eastern province of Marib, which the Houthis attempted to seize in 2021.

Yemen's civil war erupted in 2014 when the Iran-backed Houthis swept down from their northern stronghold and chased the internationally recognized government from the capital. Sanaa. A Saudi-led coalition intervened the following year on behalf of the government, and in time the conflict turned into a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

The war has devastated Yemen, killing more than 150,000 people and creating one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters. The restoration of Saudi-Iran ties in April raised hopes of progress in ending the conflict, but so far there has been none.

Grundberg said his recent talks with both sides showed "general willingness to seek solutions, but this still needs to translate into concrete steps, in particular, a clear agreement on the way forward that includes restarting an inclusive Yemeni political process.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: During the first half of this year, Kuwait decreased its holdings of US Treasury bonds by 16.3%, totaling \$7.9 billion. This brought their holdings down to \$40.6 billion by the end of June, compared to \$48.5 billion at the close of December 2022, reports Al-Anba daily.

Furthermore, Kuwait's annual possession of US bonds decreased by \$5.4 billion, a decline of 11.7%, from \$46 billion at the end of June 2022. On a monthly basis, their possession dropped by \$800 million, or 1.9%, from \$41.4 billion at the conclusion of May to \$40.6 billion at the conclusion of last June, as outlined in the data released on the US Treasury website.

Kuwait has opted for diversification in its US bond portfolio, allocating \$2.81 billion to short-term bonds, while the larger portion remains in long-term bonds, amounting to \$37.76 billion. Successful shifts in Kuwaiti investments within US bonds are observable alongside changes in bond vields and shifts in Kuwaiti investments on US stock exchanges

Regarding Gulf states' holdings of US bonds, their strategy in June leaned towards selling. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's investments dwindled to \$108.1 billion, a decrease from \$111.3 billion at the end of May. Among these, \$99.83 billion were in long-term bonds, and \$8.28 billion were in short-term bonds. Similarly, the UAE's investments reduced to \$65.2 billion by the end of June, down from \$69 billion at May's close. Out of this, \$45.46 billion were in long-term bonds, and \$19.73 billion were in short-term bonds.

Globally, Japan continued its streak for the fortyninth consecutive month, securing the top position by possessing US bonds worth \$1,105.6 billion by the end of June, a slight drop from May's \$1,096.8 billion. China followed in second place with \$835.4 billion, down from May's \$846.7 billion. The United Kingdom ranked third with \$672.3 billion, up from May's \$660.4 billion. Belgium claimed the fourth rank with \$332.4 billion, slightly lower than May's \$335.5 billion. Luxembourg occupied the fifth spot worldwide with \$331.8 billion, a decrease from May's \$334 billion.

vices and IT especially within the domain of cybersecurity.

Bouaraki affirmed that it was important to benefit from Google's technology in analyzing data and cybersecurity in accordance with the best systems and global practices. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed on Thursday Kuwait's concern over military clashes in **Libya**'s capi-tol **Tripoli** that resulted in civilian casualties.

In a statement, the ministry affirmed Kuwait's stance of supporting Libya's stability and its political path, within the UN Security Council resolutions, aiming for international endeavors to maintain its unity, interests in peace and prosperity. (KUNA)

STOCKHOLM: Sweden raised its terrorism alert level on Thursday one notch to the second-highest following a recent string of public desecrations of the Holy Quran in the Scandinavian country by a handful of anti-Islam activists, sparking angry demonstrations across Muslim countries.

Sweden has in recent weeks asked citizens abroad and businesses linked to the country to "be attentive and aware of the information the authorities communicate," following a string of public burnings of copies of Islam's holy book by an Iraqi asylum-seeker.

'We know that planned terrorist acts have been prevented," Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson told a news conference. (AP)

They added that with the departure of great officials, including some sons of the ruling house; the task has now fallen into the hands of those who succeeded them from the new generation in the ruling house or in the Parliament. They called on the new generation to seek understanding, not quarrels.

They stressed that wrong practices led to confusion in the citizen's life today. They warned this may threaten the entity of the State in terms of its ability to resist international and regional changes, as a result of the preoccupation of the majority of politicians with protecting their interests at the expense of the homeland.

They went on to say that the 'understanding' - which Al-Solh mentioned in his letter to Al-Saqer - was replaced by quarrels and struggle over personal interests due to the absence of someone to bridle them by force.

They appealed on everyone to look at what happened in Lebanon, where it can be said the situation is similar to that in Kuwait, before some regional countries flocked against it and took advantage of its diversity to strike its national unity. They added this is similar to what Iran does through its tools, or France, Israel and the United States, still seeking to generalize the Lebanese situation in many Arab countries.

They called on the ruling house, politicians, parliamentarians and Kuwaiti elites to heed the advice of Al-Solh and to study it carefully, because when things go south, "there is no use crying over spilled milk."

They asserted that Al-Solh's statement: "There is no restriction of a prince or oppression of a minister," should be the basis for understanding.

They said if a parliamentarian resorts to using his constitutional tools at the wrong place and in the wrong manner, and when the minister succumbs to such an act; some blocs will undoubtedly seek oppression through demands beyond Kuwait's capacity. "This is the beginning of the State's suicide," they warned.

Rains, landslides claim at least 72 in Himalayas

NEW DELHI, Aug 17, (AP): Days of relentless rain in India's Himalayan region have killed at least 72 people this week, a government official said Thursday, as a heavy monsoon triggered landslides and flash floods that have submerged roads, washed away buildings and left residents scrambling for safety.

Rescuers in the mountainous Himachal Pradesh state have been working through challenging weather conditions to save people trapped under mud and debris from the rains that struck over the weekend. India's weather department has put the state on high alert and expects the downpours to continue over the next few days.

Vikram Singh, an operator at the state's emergency operation center, said on Thursday that the 72 deaths occurred over the previous five days and that rescue work was ongoing. Hundreds of roads remain

Over 60 Senegalese migrants feared dead

DAKAR, Aug 17, (AP): More than 60 migrants are feared dead after a Spanish fishing vessel rescued a boat off the Atlantic archipelago of Cape Verde that originally had more than 100 people aboard, authorities and migrant advocates said Thursday.

Seven bodies were found on the boat and an estimated 56 people are missing at sea and presumed dead, said International Organization for Migration spokesperson Safa Msehli. According to Senegal's foreign affairs ministry, 38 people were rescued earlier in the week near Cape Verde, about 620 kilometers (385 miles) off the coast of West Africa.

Families in Fass Boye, a seaside town 145 kilometers (90 miles) north of the capital, Dakar, reached out to Walking Borders on July 20 after 10 days without hearing from loved ones on the boat, group founder Helena Maleno Garzón said.

The Spanish migration advocacy group Walking Borders said the vessel was a large fishing boat, called a pirogue, which had left Senegal on July 10.



Children play on fishing boats known as 'pirogues' in Dakar, Senegal, on June 24, 2023. More than 60 migrants were feared dead after coast guards off the Atlantic island of Cape Verde rescued a boat that started with more than 100 aboard, authorities and migrant advocates said. The Spanish migration advocacy group Walking Borders said the vessel was a large fishing boat, called a pirogue, which had left Senegal on July 10. (AP)

blocked and schools in the capital city of Shimla have been ordered shut as the Indian Air Force and disaster response teams help evacuate people from low-lying, vulnerable areas. The state's chief minister, Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, said over 2,000 people have been rescued using helicopters and motor boats and are now safe in relief camps.

Visuals on social media showed trees falling apart as homes, built atop the hills, collapsed in succession. In the background, people can be heard crying out in horror, as they shouted "get out from here" and "get back.'

In Shimla, a Hindu temple collapsed on Monday amid deadly landslides, and authorities feared that people are still buried under the debris. Authorities said the temple was crowded with devotees, raising fears that the death toll could rise as rescue work carries on.

Weather

By Night:	Hot to rat	her hot &	Kuwait Airport	46	3
humid with n	noderate	southeast-	Abdaly	47	2
erly wind to so			Jahra	49	3
speeds of 08-32 km/h with a chance			Salmiyah	37	3
for mist forming	g over som	ie areas.	Ahmadi	37	3
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	Nuwaisib	44	3
Kuwait City	43	34	Wafra	46	3

Prayer Timings Fajr 03:52 15:27 Asr... Sunrise .. 05:17 Maghrib .. 18:27 Zohr 11:52 Isha 19:49



Expected weather for next 24 hrs: By Day: Hot, partly cloudy and humid with light variable wind to light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind with speeds of 10-40 km/h with a chance for scat-tered light role later on tered light rain later on.

2

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

'Project to help save around billion dollars'

Govt must help remove obstacles facing 'Dhaman' company: CEO Arab

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: The CEO of the Health Insurance Hospitals Company "Dhaman" Thamer Arab says Dhaman is a huge health development project that represents an effective partnership between

the public and private sectors but requires serious government attention, reports Al-Rai daily.

In a press interview, Arab explained that the project can no longer tolerate any delay after completing its operational requirements. The government agencies, especially the Ministry of Health, must work on providing aid and support to remove the obstacles facing Dhaman in order to ensure the success of this development project, which will provide services to about two million residents, and positively reflect on improving the quality of health service provided to the citizens.

The segment of residents who will benefit from Dha-

man services will not all move at one time, but will do so gradually, according to the expiry date of their residency.

Arab highlighted some advantages that will result from the start of the operational phase of the project, most notably saving the State Treasury about one billion dollars

He explained that for enrolling a resident, the employer, when renewing the residency or issuing a new residency, will apply through the Dhaman website to register his employees, obtain the Dhaman health policy and pay the fees, which applies to the resident who wants to register his family.

Therefore, it is not required to register those who currently have valid residency. This means that the transition to the Dhaman system is gradual according to the expiry dates of residency, and large numbers will not be transferred at one time.

With the cooperation of the Ministry of Health, the company will carry out an awareness program in Kuwait. This awareness program will show a plan for the transfer of beneficiaries to Dhaman facilities, service delivery sites and the policies in place so that the process is carried out smoothly. At the same time, Dhaman will develop a vision for implementing the new fee collection mechanism in coodination with the concerned government agencies.

The company has signed a contract with the Spanish health provider Ribera Salud in this regard. The role of the partner is to support Dhaman in operating hospitals and health care centers, in line with the application of the integrated system model for maintaining health (HMO), which Dhaman is applying for the first time in the region.

This model requires a global expert who has achieved success in its application.

This comes especially since Dhaman will provide primary and secondary health services to about 40 percent of the population, with capabilities that are much less than their counterparts in the Ministry of Health. The annual budget of the ministry is about KD 3 billion but the capital of Dhaman is KD 230 million. The employees of the Ministry of Health are about 66,000 while the number of employees in Dhaman is about 7,000 within a period of five years. The ministry's primary care centers have more than 100 centers and about 5,000 beds in their hospitals, according to statistics.

However, Dhaman will have 12 primary health care centers with 761 beds in their hospitals.

Arab said, "The model according to which we work is based on the concept of reducing expenses. We therefore need a global operator with long experience in health management who can apply this on the ground."

He referred to the identification and distribution of the Dhaman network, which was based on a study of the geographical distribution and population density of residents who are covered by the company's services, either with regard to primary care centers or hospitals, adding that this was done with the cooperation of many consulting companies and using the database of the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI).

Arab confirmed that the Public Authority for Investment is currently working with the concerned regulatory authority to allocate 50 percent of the company's shares to citizens according to the bidding brochure, adding that, "We hope to fulfill all the requirements of the Capital Markets Authority and the relevant authorities soon for the benefit of citizens.'

HH Amir congrats Indonesian Pres

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable to President of Indonesia Joko Widodo congratulating him on his country's national day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished the president of Indonesia wellness and his country and people progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable to President of Indonesia Joko Widodo, congratulating him on his country's national day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished the president of Indonesia wellness

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable to President of Indonesia Joko Widodo, congratulating him on his country's national day.

Weekend weather hot and humid

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17, (KUNA): The weather in Kuwait will be hot and humid over the weekend, particularly in seaside regions, Director General of the meteorological department Abdulaziz al-Qarawi said on Thursday.

The seasonal Indian depression continues to weigh in, coupled with hot and humid winds, along with scattered clouds and drizzles. Today's heat will be maximum 45

degrees and drops to 31-34 degrees at night. On Friday, the highest temperature will range between 44 and 47 degrees. At night,

it will fall to the level of 32-35 degrees. On Saturday, Al-Qarawi said the weather will be hot, partially cloudy and wet in coastal regions, and the highest forecast heat will be at the level of 45-48 degrees, but will taper off at night to the level of 32-35 degrees



'Need to address Bedoun issue'

Revise remuneration for Kuwaiti doctors: MP

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh

Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: MP Fahd Falah Bin Jame'e has submitted a proposal to revise regulations on the salaries and allowances of Kuwaiti physicians and dentists.

He suggested extending the working hours of doctors in public hospitals and then grant them overtime pay. He clarified this is optional for the doctors; that is, only if they are willing to work overtime. He pointed out this will encourage Kuwaiti doctors to work in public hospitals and it could be one way of nationalizing the health sector.

On the other hand, MP Fahd Falah Bin Jame'e underscored the need to address the Bedoun issue. He pointed out it is unacceptable that some Bedouns are the grandchildren of those who have been residing in Kuwait since the 1950s, and worked at Kuwait Oil Company and Kuwait Army, yet they have not been granted citizenship. He emphasized the need to review the cases individually to ensure that citizenship is granted only to those who deserve it.

He called for the cancellation of the Central System for Remedying the Status of Illegal Residents (CSRSIR) or at least appoint an honest member of Sabah Family to manage it. He added some Bedouns are forced to pay illegal money just to renew their security cards.

Moreover, MP Muhammad Hayef Al-Mutairi forwarded queries to Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and acting Minister of Education Muhammad Al-Ostad about the delay in adding the Holy Quran subject to the curriculum of kindergartens and the steps taken since he submitted the proposal on Aug 25, 2020. On the public tenders, Al-Mutairi requested for details like the number of direct contracts that the minister signed in fiscal 2022/2023, if some contracts were signed more than once at the same time or at different times to divide big tenders in a bid to dodge the monitoring of the concerned institutions like the Central Agency for Public Tenders, State Audit Bureau, and the Legal Advice and Legislation Department. He demanded for copies of six contracts for the supply of air conditioning units in schools during academic year 2022/2023. He asked if these contracts are with the same company.

Abdul Hadi, Egypt and Jordan

By Ahmad alsarraf

Other Voices

According to Abdul Hadi Al-Aj-mi, a former university history teacher and current deputy, a mission was dispatched to Egypt and Jordan

in 2015 to explore scholarship opportunities for students pursuing medical studies. Fast forward eight years, another delegation was dispatched to the same countries. However, upon their return,

the delegation conveyed a verdict that these countries were no longer deemed suitable for medical education. Consequently, the scholarship program was subsequently terminated.

Truth

The truth reveals an entirely dif-

the admission rate at the Faculty of Medicine remained low, with the country's Education Minister possessing the authority to reduce it to 75%.

Upon the delegation's return, it recommended an immediate suspension of any further student enrollment for medical studies in Egypt and Jordan.

We hope that the deputy will engage with the aforementioned facts and consider rectifying any misconceptions or, alternatively, summon the courage to acknowledge any potential errors.

In a similar vein, during a previous period, all governmental bodies turned a blind eye to the alarming involvement of approximately 40,000 male and female students in widespread cheating during recent examinations. The outcome of this situation was that Kuwait achieved the highest percentage of academic excellence ever recorded in the world for the 2022-2023 academic year.

However, the aftermath of this pur-





The commander of the force, Major General Muhammad Al-Suwait, with the participation of the commander of the ground forces of the US Central Command, Lieutenant General Patrick Frank.

Bid to fortify Kuwait-US bonds

On Thursday, the Kuwaiti Army Land Force orchestrated a lecture titled "The Art of Leadership," which was presented by Major General Muhammad Al-Suwait, the Force Commander. This event featured the participation of Lieutenant General Patrick Frank, the Commander of the US Central Command's Land Forces.

In a press release, the Ministry of Defense highlighted that the lecture's objective was to facilitate the

exchange of practical and administrative insights. It aimed to elevate the understanding of leadership concepts across different levels among the assistant officers from various forma-tions within the land force, as well as among the allied US forces.

The lecture undoubtedly served as a platform to foster cross-learning, en-hance leadership acumen, and fortify the bonds between Kuwaiti and US military forces. (KUNA)

Beware 'online' fraud: ministry

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17, (Agencies): The Kuwaiti Ministry of Commerce and Industry, on Thursday, warned against various dubious entities trying to pose as representatives of the ministry online and scamming consumers.

A statement by the ministry said that acts of fraud against citizens and residents were on the rise due to scammers using fake ministry accounts on the web and social media platforms.

The ministry is monitoring the situation and will bring fraudsters to justice via legal means in coordination with the Ministry of Interior, indicated the statement, noting that there were efforts to block fake sites and accounts.

It went on to stress that citizens and residents should not interact with fake accounts or respond to mysterious messages asking for One Time Password (OTP) or bank data.

All of the ministry services could be found in the Sahel application, it concluded.

Panels hold 2 meetings Focus on area pollution

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: The Environmental Affairs, Food and Water Security Committees on Thursday, along with the Education, Culture, and Guidance Affairs Committees, held two meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to deliberate on the matters listed on their agendas, as well as to address the tasks assigned to them by the council, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The Environment, Food, and Water Security Committee will delve into the council's directive to discuss concerns related to air, soil, and water pollution in collaboration with pertinent government entities. Moreover, the committee will address issues concerning pollution in the Jaber Al-Ahmad area and the northwest Sulaibikhat area.

The meeting will be attended by representatives from key bodies including the Ministries of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, the Municipality, the Environment Public Authority, the Public Authority for Agriculture and Fisheries Affairs, the Public Authority for Housing Welfare, and the Public Authority for Sports.

Simultaneously, the Education, Culture, and Guidance Affairs Committee will focus on the council's mandate to investigate and analyze the factors contributing to the decline in the quality of education across educational institutions encompassing public and private schools, religious institutes, kindergartens, and various types of nurseries.

The meeting is set to be graced by the presence of the Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, the Acting Minister of Education, specialists from the Ministry of Education, the Minister of Public Works and their specialists, in addition to experts from the General Traffic Department.

Meanwhile, in a bid to ensure justice, equal opportunities and transparency; the Civil Service Commission (CSC) affirmed the need for attached and independent agencies, institutions and government companies to publish a general recruitment advertisement whenever the need to attract national professionals arises, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a press statement, the CSC disclosed this is in compliance with the directives of Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of State for Cabinet and National Assembly Affairs and acting CSC Chairman Issa Al-Kandari.

Oueries

MP Muhammad Al-Regaib forwarded queries to all ministers about their plan for the implementation of the nationalization policy, vital job positions that Kuwaitis can occupy, plan for the execution of the program of the government and if they participated in drafting the program.

MP Shuaib Shaaban forwarded queries to Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil, Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs and acting Minister of Finance Saad Al-Barrak about the alleged granting of Waha Club platinum membership to the chairman, members of the Board of Directors, chief executive officer and his assistants at Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC) and others even if they did not meet the conditions.

He asked about the categories and number of job contracts at KAC, absence of a unified



of flight crew and maintenance staff, action taken regarding the passengers whose flights were delayed and compensation granted to them if any. MP Dawoud Maarefi asked Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs

contract form, high prices of tickets,

delayed flights, if there is a shortage

Muhammad Othman Al-Aiban to

provide him with the list of plots al-

Fahd Bin Jame'e

lotted to the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises including the beneficiaries, date of distribution and purpose of each enterprise.

He wants to know if it is true that the construction materials in Ardhiya Vocational Center - a subsidiary of the fund - were stolen. If yes, who are the responsible officials, total value of the stolen items and measures taken against the responsible officials.

He said the Council of Ministers, in a meting held on July 28, 2021, instructed the fund to coordinate with Kuwait Municipality to allocate land for food trucks in Subbiya and establish an outdoor cinema as part of the activities of SMEs. He added the Municipal Council allocated land measuring one million square meters for this purpose; then the Council of Ministers announced on Oct 13, 2021 that the project will be launched on Dec 1. 2021.

He asked why the project was not launched on the specified date and if a new launching date has been set.

He requested for a copy of the feasability study on the project, including the estimated cost and revenues, names and positions of the members of the team tasked to follow up the project; and if the maximum amount of loan granted to the beneficiaries increased from KD400,000 to KD 500,000.

ferent narrative, sourced from parties devoid of any intention to defame. These sources were not only firsthand witnesses but also participants in both the initial 2015 delegation and the subsequent one in 2023.

Numerous high school graduates were admitted to medical schools in Egypt and Jordan, often times funding their own education. As concerns grew regarding their academic performance, a delegation consisting of representatives from higher education and health was dispatched in 2015 to visit both countries.

Their findings highlighted a dire need for significant improvement in the educational landscape. Consequently, a series of stringent requirements were imposed upon the universities, encompassing enhanced admission standards, reduced student numbers, comprehensive teaching, and stricter attendance regulations.

Upon the delegation's return and the graduation of two medical cohorts in Egypt and Jordan, health authorities lodged complaints with higher education, asserting that the caliber of medical graduates from these countries remained subpar, with suspicions arising that some may not even possess the qualifications of true "doctors.'

Requests were made to immediately cease the scholarship program, given the necessity for intensive rehabilitation and training for every graduate -- a process that is both demanding and costly.

In an effort to dispel any potential misinformation, another delegation was constituted just a few months ago, comprised of pertinent authorities. This delegation embarked on visits to Egypt and Jordan, only to discover that the commitments made by these medical faculties were not honored; instead, the situation had worsened.

In Jordan, for instance, an annual admission of 2,000 medical students is divided across 4 lecture halls -- with merely one lecturer to cater to them all. Among these students, 500 are Kuwaitis. On a field visit, it became evident that the majority of students, except one Kuwaiti female student, did not attend classes; they merely listened to prerecorded lectures.

Furthermore, the committee observed a lack of oversight concerning attendance and absenteeism. Hospital visits by the delegation disclosed that students were neglecting vital clinical courses crucial for their medical education

Additionally, it was revealed that

ported excellence led to an unexpected outcome - the rejection of 12 male and female students by the University of Malta, a university not regarded as the premier institution and one in dire need of student enrollment.

The university's refusal was attributed to the students' subpar performance levels, which rendered them incapable of even passing a personal interview.

Regrettably, neither this distressing narrative nor numerous other similar incidents seem to stir the conscience of any political official or parliamentarian to dedicate even a modicum of attention to this critically important matter. This, indeed, is an unfortunate reality we face.

A close friend, who dedicated decades of service to the field of education, recounts an experience where he was appointed as a member of the "Supreme Council for Education." This council is tasked with education development, policy formulation, and shaping future visions.

In its inaugural year, the council convened twice -- once for protocol and acquaintanceship. During the second year, a single meeting was held, after which all meetings ceased. Similarly, none of the proposals or viewpoints put forth by council members, despite the ministerial changes that occurred twice within three years, were considered, discussed, or acted upon.

Tenure

The members' tenure concluded, and each member received 12,000 dinars in exchange for a total of five commutes over the span of three years -- commutes that led them to the meeting venue and back home, with no substantive contributions. This narrative resonates with frustration and disappointment, as the status quo remains unaltered.

This account underscores a pattern that has, is, and likely will continue to manifest within the most pivotal and potentially impactful supreme councils of the state. With this in mind, one can only imagine the state of affairs within other councils, encompassing areas like traffic management, leisure, and contentment.

Add to this, a minister has come forward to express that the objectives outlined in the 2035 plan have yet to materialize. Consequently, he suggests "stretching" the plan's timeline to 2040.

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3

LOCAL

diwaniya 🕝 المعالية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Action shows activation of one of hidden clauses in the govt-parliament consensus'

"MP Dr. Jenan Bushehri, had previously declared her intention to initiate an interrogation against His Excellency the Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Issa Al-Kandari. This was in response to the Council of Ministers' endorsement of the criteria and terms for granting extraordinary salaries to ministers and leaders," columnist Dr. **Abdul Latif bin Nakhi** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"Observers with a political perspective perceive that this announcement has once again unveiled certain concealed clauses within

the consensus between the government and the current parliament. In this regard, Dr Bushehri deserves acknowledgment for her candid communication.

"The adverse reactions from deputies or their associates regarding the interrogation, along with the sentiments conveyed in the doctor's recent statement, where she indicated her potential withdrawal from presenting the interrogation seem accord-

tial withdrawal from presenting Dr Bin Nakhi the interrogation, seem, according to these political observers, to be indicative of the activation of one of the hidden clauses embedded within the government-parliament consensus. This clause appears to be the "planned" decision's re-implementation, albeit with an updated, unofficial variation. The aim is to exert pressure from both within and outside the council on those intending to

initiate an interpellation, thereby either averting it or

compelling a postponement. "These reactions and measures, in the opinion of the aforementioned observers, do not align with the priorities publicly stated by these deputies. Furthermore, the suspension or freezing (not cancellation) of the decision concerning extraordinary salaries, which was conveyed to the doctor through an ostensibly private, possibly verbal, channel, cannot reasonably justify the annulment or deferral of the planned interrogation. Consequently, these observers posit that the revised "planned" decision was employed in relation to the doctor's interrogation, albeit with an early termination.

"Continuing their analysis, these observers contend that another concealed component within the government-parliament consensus revolves around reinforcing the government's standing within the Parliament. This encompasses not only refraining from introducing interpellations but also safeguarding the government from facing parliamentary inquiry committees. In addition, deputies aligned with the government-parliament consensus avoid submitting investigation requests regarding corruption cases. Even though these deputies assert having evidence of financial misconduct, they refrain from seeking the establishment of investigative panels.

"One particular deputy, during the period of the previous annulled assembly, publicly asserted hav-ing evidence of individuals, including ministers, transferring public funds to personal accounts. Instead of pursuing the established channels such as the Parliamentary Public Funds Protection Committee, parliamentary investigation committee requests, or resorting to the Public Prosecution, this deputy sent the evidence to the Prime Minister Despite the passage of nearly a year since this statement, no minister has been held accountable for the alleged fund transfers. "Several observers suggest that the majority of representatives, driven by the government-parliament consensus, even shield the government from uncomfortable queries. For example, a deputy noted in a televised interview during the current parliamentary elections that he had posed eleven questions to the prime minister concerning corruption and public funds during his tenure in the previous council. "However, despite the passage of more than two months since the new council's inauguration, none of these questions addressed to the current prime minister appear on the "Parliamentary Information System" platform managed by the National Assembly's General Secretariat.

and infiltrated their credibility. Counterfeit credentials have granted individuals positions as doctors, advisors, experts, officials, and engineers, masking their ignorance and lethargy with fabricated accolades.

"A glance at our infrastructure reveals this astonishment, and our hospitals tell a similar tale. Fake engineers oversee the nation's development, blueprint its bridges, tunnels, and roads. Worse yet, we have doctors and nurses "so-called," entrusted with our well-being, but instead, they perpetrate harm with their pervasive incompetence, turning lives into graves, dismissed with the feeble term "medical errors."

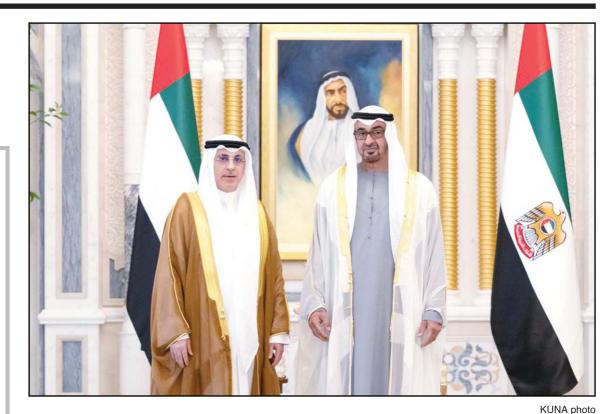
"Moreover, how did counterfeit educators infiltrate our schools and infiltrate our universities to indoctrinate our children when they were naught but vessels devoid of knowledge and ethics? Forgery is not limited to nationals alone; non-Kuwaiti residents have infiltrated the Civil Service Bureau with forged certificates. Haven't investigations uncovered instances of Asian doctors and nurses with faked credentials, infiltrating our medical system and tending to our patients?

"When will we rouse from our slumber and protect our people? Our prudent government and esteemed council, whose members are well-versed, should resurrect this issue through a discerning strategy overseen by prominent local and international academics. Certificate forgery is a matter of national security. Downplaying it is a charade, while addressing it head-on requires courage. The state's future is at stake, its reputation under scrutiny. We don't deny that eliminating this perilous cancer in Kuwait necessitates tough choices; it may even uncover significant scandals. However, sacrificing those counterfeiters, exposing them, and making them an example for the coming generations is far less detrimental than endangering the nation and driving it toward ruin.

"With the remnants of our nation's foundation, and by eradicating this cancer from our society's mindset, the cracks can be mended, and the snowball effect arrested. And understand, O representatives of the Kuwaiti people, that any comprehensive solution lacking the exposure of fabricated and forged certificates, including their numbers and the names of those involved, will be an incomplete fix, inviting those of weak conscience to engage in new chapters of forgery and manipulation of the government, pursuing meaningless certificates to secure financial gains and unearned positions.

"In closing, a piece of advice: to all those who have advanced or secured employment with counterfeit or fake certificates, hold yourselves accountable before divine judgment. Rectify the damage you've inflicted upon public funds before Divine justice reveals your actions. Know that the bonuses and privileges you've received are the ill-gotten fruits of financial malfeasance, feeding not only you but also your family and children. There is still time to regret now."

"We are waiting for the competition between public and private institutions in improving their management style, attracting competent individuals with innovative thought and making good use of creative human resources," columnist Dr Nada Al-Mutaw-



UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan receives the new Kuwait's Ambassador, Jamal Al-Ghunaim.

Kuwait's new envoy to UAE submits credentials

countries.

History is dotted with incidents that served as a testament to the amity between Kuwait and Abu Dhabi, the ambassador said amid a ceremony to usher him into his new post, underlining his commitment to propel bilateral relations to greater levels. The UAE president received a bevy of newly-appointed ambassadors to the Gulf Arab emirate, saying Abu Dhabi looks forward to closer ties with its international partners. (KUNA)

400,000 violations registered against GCC vehicles since Jan

Collected residency fees hiked by 74 pc for '22/'23

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: The linking of General Traffic Departments of the Gulf Cooperation Countries has begun to bear fruit as the Kuwait GTD has succeeded in collecting fines in traffic violations committed by motorists driving Gulf registered vehicles, reports Al-Rai daily.

Kuwait's new ambassador to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Jamal

Al-Ghunaim submitted on Wednes-

day a copy of his credentials to

President Sheikh Mohammad bin

Zayed Al-Nahyan, citing the prox-

imity shared between the Gulf Arab

The daily added, these vehicles during their visit to Kuwait, were involved in committing various kinds of violations, including speeding, crossing the red traffic light and reckless driving thus endangering the lives of other motorists and pedestrians.

The daily added, before the linking of the system the collection of fines was almost non-existent in the past.

The sources stated that the t General Traffic Department is recorded, from the beginning of



The two women with the seized marijuana.

Drugs seized from 2 women

The Criminal Security Sector, through the General Administration for Drug Control, collaborated closely with the General Administration of Customs to successfully apprehend two Asian women, reports Al-Anba daily.

These individuals had attempted to smuggle 15 kilograms of marijuana concealed ingeniously within three postal parcels via air freight.

Upon presenting the seized evidence, the two suspects confessed to their involvement and ownership of the parcels. As a result, they have been handed over to the appropriate authorities for the required legal actions.

Furthermore, efforts are currently underway to locate and apprehend a third individual involved in the

In the cables, the Kuwaiti par-

liament speaker voiced heartfelt

and sincere condolences over the

victims of recent floods that swept

away different areas of India and

House of the People Om Birla.

caused multiple casualties.

Dr Bin Nakhi

In view of the above, it is urged that Dr. Jenan Bushehri continues to employ the constitutional tools for financial oversight and resilience in the face of anticipated pressures.

"Furthermore, an appeal is extended to her and other deputies who did not endorse the "values document" to elevate their response from verbal protest to leveraging alternative constitutional avenues. These measures are necessary to challenge the government's alliance with the deputies aligned with the "values document," particularly in matters that pertain to transforming the nation's identity from constitutional to religious."

Also:

"The plight our nation faces – marked by developmental regression and a postponement of prosperity – is not merely a misfortune for a prosperous and affluent country, blessed with substantial oil-derived financial stability that should outshine its counterparts," columnist **Riyad Abdullah Al-Mulla** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"Rather, it has evolved into a menacing specter haunting our society, seducing more individuals into such practices. The issue of forging certificates has recently taken on a "fluid" trajectory. After being exposed locally, regionally, and internationally, and with our reputation tarnished on the global stage, as evidenced by the vulnerability of our educational institutions, we sense that this matter might have been silenced and laid to rest.

"We remain uncertain about who is responsible for its hushed demise – those who suppressed it or those who fear its exposure? It's unclear if the curtain has fallen on this matter to prevent more jarring revelations and surprises, as what we perceive is lighter and simpler, while the hidden reality could be more profound and grave.

"Was one of the culprits made a scapegoat? Or is he just a cog within the intricate machinery of the "certificate forgery" network? Are our embassy employees in a certain Arab country implicated in this certificate forgery scheme? Then, what about the claim by Deputy Hamad Al-Matar that he will unearth the buried truth and open testimonial files dating back to the 1980s?

"There is no denying that forging university degrees, bachelor's and doctorate certificates is a repugnant crime, executed with a sophistication that has tainted the reputation of respected institutions wa wrote for Al-Jarida daily.

"Columnists and newspapers are competing to determine the features of the expected course in the next executive phase of development plans in the country.

"Meanwhile, some members of the National Assembly have taken it upon themselves to go back and hide behind outdated proposals, unaware of what is most important for the health of the homeland and the citizen.

"Amidst the aspiration of new graduates for jobs, the labor market continues with its few opportunities and fluctuation between attractive and repelling factors. It remains neglected by the parliamentarians and the government.

"The government threw the ball into the court of the private sector, thinking the latter has sufficient resources to advance the career ladder. On the other hand, the private sector is pessimistic enough in terms of withholding resources and stopping government spending.

"As for the government sector, it holds the strategic decision on spending. The absence of the Ministry of Planning contributes to the marginalization of the role of commercial networks and Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Thus, they are vulnerable to parliamentary whims, such that all of them have become obstacles to development."

"One of the easiest ways to spread the western consumerism culture in Arab and Islamic societies is through the movies. For the first time in six decades, the Barbie doll appeared as a girl who cares about her elegance and beauty by displaying her various outfits related to her lifestyle as a modern girl, along with the toiletries and makeup she uses, not to mention the indispensable accessories without which Barbie loses a bit of her elegance," columnist **Sultan Al-Khalaf** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"Here, it may seem normal for a doll to care her elegance despite the feeling of admiration she leaves for young girls in conservative Arab societies. However, the Barbie of today is no longer the Barbie of yesterday, as it transcends the concept of marketing elegance to the concept of marketing the homosexual culture as depicted in the new Barbie movie.

"Kuwait did well when its Ministry of Information banned the screening of the film, because it contradicts the values of the conservative Kuwaiti society. This film deals with the issue of sexual identity as it supports the freedom to choose one's gender and sexual transformation, marginalizing the role of parents as interfering in the affairs of their children. It emphasizes the sanctification of total independence from the umbrella of the parents. In other words, the destruction of the family unit.

"The spread of homosexual culture in western societies does not mean that everyone accepts it. There is a strong reaction resisting its spread. Without that, former US president Trump would not have promised his voters to combat homosexuality if he won in the presidential elections.

"Some western observers think that the Barbie movie is not suitable for their children. What about the Muslim children?!"

- Compiled by Mai Elsoukary

recorded, from the beginning of this year until the end of last June, about 400 thousand traffic violations against Gulf-registered vehicles monitored through traffic cameras and radars.

The sources explained that the administration sent all the violations to the Gulf countries, to collect the violations from their respective citizens, and to transfer them to the Ministry of Finance and their value was estimated at about 8 million dinars.

The sources indicated activating the decision prevented the Gulf vehicles from leaving the border except after paying the traffic fines.

Residency fees rise: The latest official statistics showed that the residency related fees collected in fiscal 2022/2023 increased by 74 percent or KD4.69 million, as the total amount collected reached KD11 million compared to KD6.33 million in fiscal 2021/2022, reports Al-Anba daily.

The final account for fiscal 2022/2023 revealed that Kuwait's revenues from traffic violations amounted to KD78.63 million – KD15.78 million or 25 percent

Move seeks to link fingerprint system – MoH

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) and Ministry of Health have coordinated their efforts in completing procedures for linking the fingerprint attendance system with the integrated system of the CSC, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources. Sources told the daily that

the ministry is currently determining the number of its employees and it will send this information to the CSC soon.

Sources confirmed this step is aimed at ensuring strict compliance with the official working hours among the employees. Sources disclosed that the actual period of tardiness and absenteeism is one of the factors considered in the annual job performance evaluation.

Condolences offered to India

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17, (KUNA): Speaker of the Kuwaiti National Assembly (parliament) Ahmad Al-Saadoun on Wednesday sent a couple of condolences to Chairman of the Indian Council of States Jagdeep Dhankhar and Speaker of the Indian

higher than KD62.84 million in fiscal 2021/2022.

The revenues of the vehicle reservation garage increased by 33 percent or KD72,640 — KD294,470 in fiscal 2022/2023 compared to KD221,820 in fiscal 2021/2022.



180 persons held: The Public Morals Protection Department of the Ministry of Interior has recently 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.

In other news personnel from the Residence Affairs Investigation Administration have seized 139 violators of the residence and labor law form the Capital, Farwaniya and Ahmadi governorates and also raided three fake domestic workers hiring offices in Qurain and arrested 10 violators who worked on daily wage basis.

The sources added, necessary measures are being taken against the arrested persons and they have been referred to the competent authorities.



LOCAL

Newly promoted figures set to take up deputy managing director roles

Oil minister chairs meeting, resolves issue of promotions

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil, and Acting Minister of Finance, and chairman of KPC Board of Directors Saad Al-Barrak, presided over a meeting to effectively resolve a prolonged debate concerning promotion of fresh leaders within the oil sector to appoint personnel in key leadership positions across the oil domain, reports Al-Rai daily.

Oil sources told the daily that the recent appointments adhered strictly to endorsed protocols and regulations, devoid of any external or internal influence. The decision encompasses the elevation of 20 leaders across both the corporation and its 7 subsidiary oil entities. These individuals are set to take up deputy managing director roles within the corporation, and deputy CEO positions within their respective companies. However, the final endorsement of these appointments hinges upon the approval of the boards of directors within their individual companies and sectors.

Among the newly promoted figures within the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation are Walid Khaled Al-Mukhaizeem, Imad Abdul Rahman Al-Kandari, and Asma Ali Al-Qallaf in the global marketing sector.

Further appointments include Abdullatif Eid Al-Azmi in the administrative affairs sector and Qusay Fahd Al-Sarawi in the internal audit sector.

Within the Kuwait Oil Company, the list of newly promoted members features Amina Rajab Saleh, Fahd Salem Al-Kharqawi, Muhammad Khalifa Al-Abduljalil, and Khaled Muhammad Al-Mulla.

Likewise, the Kuwait National Petroleum Company comprises Tariq Nouri Al-Thuwaini, Kholoud Saad Al-Mutairi, and Bandar Mahdi Al-Qahtani. The Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company saw the addition of Ali Muhammad Al-Ajmi.

In the Kuwait Petrochemical Industries Company, Firas Abdel-Hadi Al-Awa and Ahmed Yousef Al-Rashdan received accreditation.

Notably, Hamad Issa Al-Mishari advanced within the Kuwait Oil Tanker Company, while Abdullah Muhammad Al-Afasy and Tariq Mahmoud Ibrahim ascended within the Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company. Lastly, Fadel Abdulaziz Al-Faraj and Imad Abdul Rahman Al-Kharshoom's names were endorsed within the Kuwait International Petroleum Company.



Heads of news agencies in the GCC countries during their 22nd meeting, via video communication technology (Zoom).

Gulf Arab news agencies agree to preliminary joint app

News agencies across the wider Gulf Arab region tentatively agreed on Wednesday to launch a joint application enabling readers to access breaking stories on one platform, which will also provide live streaming of state-run television channels.

The initiative, agreed on during talks via video link, entails a comprehensive application that will feature all social media platforms associated with each Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) news agency, which will also include photographic archives and streaming videos.

The planned project, which is the brainchild of Qatar's state news agency, will serve as a "link" joining news bodies across the GCC, Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) chief Dr. Fatma Al-Salem told the talks, underlining the initiative as a step closer towards greater cooperation.

KUNA's director general went on to cite some notable initiatives the agency has worked on as of late, which include panel discussions on pressing social issues, in addition to the agency's use of social intelligence technology, she underlined.

The talks underscored common pitfalls that news sources often fall into, which chiefly revolve around the spread of fallible information and fake news, calling for an urgent solution to address the matter in a bid to preserve the credibility of these sources.

The chiefs of GCC state news agencies shared their views on a myriad of projects in the works, which run the gamut from joint seminars and workshops to the use of cutting-edge technology in the field of journalism. (KUNA)

Kuwait contracts awards base 'nosedives' in July

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: The MEED magazine stated that after Kuwait recorded a strong performance in the field of contract awards during the past few months, the last of which was the award of contracts worth \$583 million last June, the value of awards decreased during July to only \$25 million, as Kuwait fell to the bottom of the list of countries that registered contract awards in July, reports Al-Anba daily.

Kuwait took the last place in the Gulf and regionally with a single contract represented in a tender awarded by the Ministry of Electricity and Water to the National Electrical Switchgear Company for the construction of two main transformer stations. Thus, the value of Kuwait contract awards decreased in July, to be limited to 4.3% of the previous June awards.

On a regional level, the Middle East and North Africa region - MENA recorded contract awards worth \$11.9 billion, supported by large contracts awarded in Iraq, Algeria, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar.

The total awards for the month of July compares favorably with the \$6.7 billion of deals awarded in July last year, up 77.6%, but below the average monthly total of \$15.7 billion over the past 12 months. This follows a strong second quarter that saw \$58.2 billion worth of deals signed, making the second quarter of 2023 the strongest since 2014.

The Gulf states recorded awards amounting to \$2.939 billion in the UAE, ranking first in the Gulf and second regionally, followed by Saudi Arabia in second place in the Gulf and third regionally with \$1.718 billion, then Qatar and Oman in the third and fourth positions with \$1 billion and \$224 million, respectively, then Kuwait in the center. Fifth and last in the Gulf and regionally, while Bahrain was absent from the list for the third month in a row.

Oil minister 'identifies' difficulties in setting timetable to make profit



Losses in 2023 may reach nearly \$1bn

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil, Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, Acting Minister of Finance, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, Dr. Saad Al-Barrak, said 3 reasons outside the control of the "Vietnam Refinery and Petrochemical Complex" and the Kuwait Petroleum International are

18.28% annual decline

Kuwait's oil exports fell by 340,000 bpd in June

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Kuwait, in June 2023, recorded an 18.28 percent annual decline in its crude oil exports – a reduction of 340 thousand barrels per day and according to the "Judy" initiative data Kuwait's crude oil exports in June totaled 1.520 million barrels per day, marking a decrease from the previous year's 1.860 million barrels per day in the same month, re-

Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)						
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast per night.					
NOW	NOW					
BHD 57.173/-net	BHD 128.000 /-net					
Weekends (Thursday & Friday)						
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.					
NOW	NOW					
BHD 65.000/-net	BHD 145.000 /-net					
mo period from 1 st – 31 st August 2023	Terms & conditions ap					

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reasons for the expected losses during 2023, which may reach to nearly a billion US dollars, reports Al-Rai daily.

Dr Al-Barrak indicated that the Vietnam Refinery and Petrochemical Complex and its advisors has submitted a range of proposals to improve the company's financial situation such as financial restructuring of debt and its alternatives which the KPC International has put for discussion.

This came in response to a parliamentary query by MP Marzouq Al-Ghanim regarding the meeting held last July, during which the losses of the Vietnam Refinery for 2023 were tabled for discussion, and wondered if the Vietnam Refinery Company will achieve losses of a billion dollars by yearend.

Al-Barrak explained in the response that "the partners of the Vietnam Refinery and Petrochemical Complex Company hold periodic meetings of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Vietnam Refinery and Petrochemical Complex Company, in the presence of the supporting secondary committees, the executive management and its advisors to find out and discuss the latest developments related to the technical, administrative, financial and commercial performance of the refinery.

The results of the various workshops held by the Vietnam Refinery and Petrochemical Complex Company, in which representatives of the partners participate, are aimed improving the performance in all fields. The Executive Committee of the Vietnam Refinery and Petrochemical Complex Company held its meeting as scheduled on July 20, 2023, to be followed by subsequent monthly meetings to achieve the desired goals.

as scheduled on July 20, 2023, to be forlowed by subsequent monthly meetings to achieve the desired goals. He added, "According to the recent forecasts of the Vietnam Refinery and Petrochemical Complex Company, which were reviewed at the company's executive committee meeting on July 20, 2023, the losses in 2023 may reach nearly one billion US dollars, and the expected losses are due to the following reasons including the fluctuation of the profit margin due to the fluctuation in the prices of petroleum products; closing the refinery for maintenance for a period of two months which will stop the cash flows during that period and high loan interest rates."

These are data outside the control of the refinery company and the Kuwait International Petroleum Company.

Regarding the plans and programs of the Kuwait Petroleum International, in cooperation with its partners, to avoid losses and achieve appropriate profitability, Al-Barrak explained that "KPI has recently discussed with its partners a number of long- and short-term solutions proposed by the Vietnam Refinery and Petrochemical Complex and its advisors related to improving the company's financial performance.

These include financial restructuring

ports Al-Rai daily.

These statistics showed a 0.99 percent increase, equivalent to 15,000 barrels per day, in Kuwaiti crude oil exports compared to May. Specifically, they rose from 1.505 million barrels per day in May to 1.520 million barrels per day in June 2023.

During the same month, Kuwait observed a substantial 37.81 percent year-on-year growth in its oil product exports, which translates to around 304 thousand barrels per day. The recorded figures for oil product exports from Kuwait indicated 1.108 million barrels per day, a considerable climb from the 804 thousand barrels per day reported in June of the previous year.

On a monthly basis, there was a 23.94 percent rise, equal to 214,000 barrels per day, compared to May 2023, where exports stood at approximately 894,000 barrels per day. The "Judy" initiative revealed that

The "Judy" initiative revealed that Kuwait's average crude oil production in June 2023 experienced a 6.46 percent annual decrease, equivalent to 176 thousand barrels per day. The crude oil production of the country reached 2.548 million barrels per day in June, down from the 2.724 million barrels per day recorded in the same month of 2022.

In the broader context, the data from "Judy" demonstrated that Saudi Arabia's crude oil exports witnessed a decline of 124 thousand barrels per day in June, reducing from 6.928 million barrels per day in May to 6.804 million barrels per day.

Additionally, Saudi Arabia's petroleum product exports experienced a decrease of 0.026 million barrels per day, reaching 1.347 million barrels per day in June while Saudi Arabia's demand for oil products displayed an increase of 0.151 million barrels per day in June, reaching 2.627 million barrels per day; concurrently the Kingdom's crude oil production decreased by 3 thousand barrels on a monthly basis, settling at 9.956 million barrels in June.

of debts and its alternatives, in light of the faltering of the recent negotiations with the financiers as a result of the Vietnamese partner's incompatibility with the foreign partners, and its failure to accept a number of non-binding clauses for the financial restructuring of the Vietnam Refinery and Petrochemical Complex Company with the aim of reaching a consensual solution, after completing the study of all the options offered technically and legally.

He pointed out that, accordingly, "it is difficult at the present time to set a timetable for achieving profitability and avoiding losses, in light of the continuation of discussions between the partners, who are keen to accelerate the pace of reaching a consensual solution as soon as possible."

What's On



Photos from the event

HE ambassador hoists national flag at half-mast

Bangladesh Embassy Kuwait observes National Mourning Day

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Bangladesh Embassy in Kuwait observed the National Mourning Day, the 48th martyrdom Anniversary of the architect of Independent Bangladesh, the Greatest Bangalee of all time, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on Tuesday, Aug 15 at the Chancery with due solemnity. Presided over by H.E. Major General Md Ashikuzzaman, ndc,afwc,psc,G, Ambassador of Bangladesh in Kuwait, Embassy officials, members of the Bangladesh community and representatives of the print and electronic media were present at the program. On this day, in the early morning H.E. Major General Md Ashikuzzaman, ndc,afwc,psc,G, ambassador of Bangladesh in Kuwait hoisted the National Flag at half-mast ceremoniously in the presence of the Embassy officials and members of Bangladesh community in Kuwait. In the afternoon, H.E. the Ambassador along with Bangladesh community and Embassy official presenteds floral wreath at the portrait of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Bangabandhu Corner of the embassy, and stood in solemm silence for one minute to commemorate all the martyrs of 15 August 1975. At that time, special prayers were offered seeking divine blessings for the souls of all martyrs along with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and prosperity of the country and nation. After that, the members of various social organizations of Bangladesh Community in Kuwait paid tribute to all the martyrs including Bangabandhu by placing wreaths of flower at the portrait of Bangabandhu.

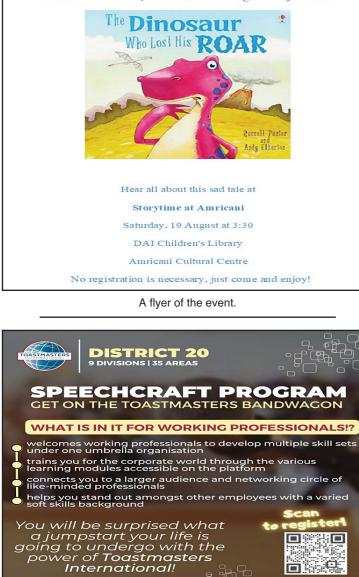
Later on, a discussion program was held of the occasion of the National Mourning Day. The discussion program began with recitation from the Holy Quran. The messages given by the Hon'ble President, the Hon'ble Prime Minister, the Hon'ble Foreign Minister and Hon'ble State Minister for Foreign Affairs were read out by Officers of the Embassy. After the speech, a video documentary titled "Dark Night of the Bangalis" were screened. The discussion session took place in a very lively atmosphere. Members of Bangladesh community in Kuwait including various professionals, freedom fighters, leaders of cultural organizations voluntarily took part in the discussion. They recall the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with deepest respect in their speeches.

In his speech, H.E. Major General Md Ashikuzzaman, ndc,afwc,psc,G,

Ambassador of Bangladesh in Kuwait recall with deep respect, the father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and all martyrs of 15 August 1975 who were brutally assassinated by a group of killers with the direct and indirect connivance of anti-liberation forces. During his speech, he highlighted the struggling life of Bangabandhu, friendly foreign policy and his sincere efforts to establish world peace and harmony. H.E. Ambassador told, Bangabandhu as a symbol of independence and ambassador of freedom for oppressed and exploited people in the world. Bangabandhu's principles and ideals will remain an eternal source of inspiration for freedom-seeking people in worldwide and against exploitation and oppression. He also urged all to follow the ideals of Bangabandhu sincerely and work jointly under the prudent leadership of the Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to establish happy and prosperous Bangladesh as dreamt by Bangabandhu.

He thanked all the people who were present at the discussion session and requested to all Bangladesh nationals in Kuwait to abide by the rules and regulations of the State of Kuwait.

It's never fun to lose your voice, but imagine if you are



Magic Hornets lift PBAK 2023 GCC-OFW Cup

Goan Strikers and Five Star bag runners-up trophies

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: After the week championship finals of the Philippine Bowling Association in Kuwait 2023 GCC-OFW Cup Team Bowling Tournament held last Friday 11 August at Kuwait Bowling Sporting Center in Salmiyah Recreational and Bowling Center, the standing of the six teams finalists in 6 games series were: Magic Hornets (6269), Goan Strikers (6114), Five Star (5840), X-Warriors (5766), X-Terminators (5678) and Pin Crushers (5567).

Out of six finalists of the GCC-OFW Cup, Magic Hornets and Goan Strikers were considered colossus of the league due to 4 Class As' comprising the first 5 team bowlers. Rest were nothing only class Bs and Cs that's why handicapping was applied to make it equal when summation of gathered points plus team handicap for the total points per event. Pin Crushers team was one of the dark horses in the league but with its significant statistical data, improved team performance plus twenty marks handicap were their aces in hand to compete with the giants in the tournament for the championship or the first runner up position,



A flyer of the event.

Toastmasters Speechcraft Program in Sept

Are you ready to conquer your fear of public speaking and enhance your communication skills? Look no further than the Toastmasters Speechcraft Program, coming this September! This transformative program is designed to empower individuals like you to become confident and effective speakers.

Under the guidance of experienced Toastmasters, you'll learn the art of crafting impactful speeches, mastering body language, and captivating your audience. Through practical sessions and supportive feedback, you'll gain the tools to excel in various speaking situations, whether it's giving presentations at work, acing interviews, or simply expressing yourself with poise.

Join us in September 2023 and embark on a journey of self-improvement and growth. Don't miss this opportunity to unlock your true speaking potential. Embrace the challenge, embrace your voice – enroll in Toastmasters Speechcraft today! Your journey to becoming a charismatic communicator begins here.

Registration link: https://forms. gle/8gUNkUNmMEudpwZ59 After Game 3 the top notch Magic Hornets faces its potential rival the Goan Strikers in the penultimate game with the score of 970-1084. Despite the loss the Hornets keep its upward rank 1st position.

In the final game, the Hornets team easily demolished the Five Star team and infallible to take home the championship trophy while Five Star slide to 3rd place. X-Warriors murdered the X-Terminators team 951-948 and the win-lose result was favorable for X-Warriors Men snatching the 4th spot. The final standing, scores and finals' team members were as follows: 1. Magic Hornets (6269), Rudy de Lima, Rashid Akher Ali, Nasser All Siraj, Neveen Wasel, Mousa Abdullah, Fahal Abul, Ahmad Fadil Karam and Fahmi Husen; 2. Goan Strikers (6114), Lloyd Fernandes, Colin Eric Nelson, Brian Fernandes, Glenn Corbitt, Sheldon Gonsalves and Samantha Fernandes; 3. Five Star Strikers (5840), Abdulaziz Al Aslawi, Waleed Al Ghareeb, Abdulaziz Al Khabbaz, Nasser Al Rashidi, Mina Al Awadhi and Hassan Al Mousawi; 4. X-Warriors (5766), Emad Hawary, Ali Mandani, Ibrahim Al Shehab, Abdullah Al Khawaled, Ahmed El Badri, and Khaled Al Shatti; 5. X-Terminators (5678), Sonia Mathews,

Magic Hornets, the league champion



Goan Strikers, first runners-up

Ronell Valencia, Aga Cuadrazal, Vernie Villaruel, Noe Mahayag, Jhun Hosmillo, Alma Turley, Aqeel Farisy, Mojtaba Dashti and Rawan Alomani; 6. Pin Crushers (5567), Ibrahim Ziaudeen, Lionel Mendes, Shirley Castellino, Melwin Isaac, Kendric Mendonsa, Vasant Harshan and Aamer Hussain.

After the tabulation of final scores, PBAK President Rudy De Lima acted as emcee called the vice president Ms Sonia Mathews and the tournament director Joel Tizon to award the major, cash and special prizes to the winners and recipients. The Magic Hornets team led the five teams in the awarding ceremony held simultaneously after the lane battle.

Champion: Magic Hornets - Team Trophy, Individual Medals and Cash Prize

First Runner-up: Goan Strikers – Team Trophy, Individual Medals and Cash Prize

Second Runner-up: Five Star Strikers – Team Trophy, Individual Medals and Cash Prize

Third Runners-up: X-Warriors –



Five Star Strikers, 2nd Runners-up

Team Trophy and cash prize.

Fourth Runner-up: X-Terminators – Team Trophy and cash prize

Fifth Runner-up: Pin Crushers – Team Trophy and cash prize

PBAK is conducting non-stop year round bowling league and tournaments which are open for all nationalities regardless of race and culture. All games are being held every Friday at Kuwait Bowling Sporting Center located at block 2 Salmiyah infront of Carrefour Supermaket and nearby Al Mowasat hospital. For any enquiry and further details, please contact administrator 67709667.









Pakistan Embassy organized a flag hoisting ceremony to commemorate the 76th anniversary of Pakistan's Independence on Aug 14.

Embassy celebrates 76th Independence Day of Pakistan

By Mujahid Iqbal

The Embassy of Pakistan organized a flag hoisting ceremony at the Chancery on August 14, 2023, to mark the 76th Independence Day of Pakistan. The ceremony was attended by a large number of Pakistani community members. Messages from the president, as well as the prime minister of Pakistan, were read out, where the leadership stressed that the entire nation must work with utmost devotion for the development and progress of the country.

Ambassador of Pakistan to Kuwait Malik Muhammad Farooq paid tribute to the forefathers of the nation for their relentless services and sacrifices, which led to the creation of a separate homeland for the Muslims of the Subcontinent. He stressed that as a nation, Pakistan has witnessed serious challenges and measured up to each one with resilience, resolve and pride. He extended felicitations and urged the community members to work diligently and wholeheartedly for the progress and development of Pakistan. He acknowledged the contribution of Pakistanis residing in Kuwait towards the progress and development of both nations.

As part of a series of events to observe the 76th Independence Day of Pakistan, the ambassador appeared on KTV2 show 'Good Morning Kuwait' to highlight the significance of the day. An exclusive documentary by KTV Arabic in collaboration with the embassy was telecast featuring the 60 years of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Kuwait. His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah conveyed their congratulatory messages to the leadership of Pakistan.

Russia fines Google \$32,000 for videos

17-08-2023

. EGX 30

PHILIPPINES - PSFi

- Nikkei

A Russian court on Thursday imposed a 3-million-ruble (\$32,000) fine on Google for failing to de-lete allegedly false information about the conflict in Ukraine.

The move by a magistrate's court follows similar actions in early August against Apple and the Wikimedia Foundation that hosts Wikipedia.

According to Russian news reports, the court found that the YouTube video service, which is

- DFM

- KSE 100

Tadawu

UAE

SAUDI

PAKISTAN

owned by Google, was guilty of not deleting videos with incorrect information about the conflict which Russia characterizes as a "special military operation".

Google was also found guilty of not removing videos that suggested ways of gaining entry to facilities which are not open to minors, news agencies said, without specifying what kind of facilities were involved. In Russia, a magistrate's court typically

JAPAN

EGYPT

handles administrative violations and low-level criminal cases. Google declined to comment. However, there's little that Mos-

-0.44

-0.70

-0.52

cow can do to collect the fine. The U.S. tech giant's Russia business was effectively shut down last year after the conflict began. The company has said that it filed for bankruptcy in Russia after its bank account was seized by the authorities, leaving it unable to pay staff and suppliers. (AP)

Kuwait's July trade surplus with Japan down 35.6%

Kuwait's trade surplus with Japan narrowed 35.6 percent from a year earlier to JPY 65.1 billion (ÚSD 445 million) in July, down for the fourth consecutive month, as exports remained week, government data showed on Thursday.

But Kuwait stayed in black ink with Japan for 15 years and six months, as exports offset imports in value, the Finance Ministry said in a preliminary report. Overall Kuwaiti exports to Japan plummeted 28.4 percent year-on-year to JPY 86.7 billion (USD 593 million), down for the third straight month. Imports from Japan grew 8.1

percent to JPY 21.6 billion (USD 148 million), up for the 15th month in a row.

Middle East's trade surplus with the world's third-biggest economy narrowed 37.0 percent to JPY 677.7 billion (USD 4.6 billion) last month, with Japanbound exports from the region falling 26.5 percent from a year earlier.

Crude oil, refined products, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and other natural resources, which accounted for 95.0 percent of the region's total exports to Japan, plunged 27.0 percent. The region's overall imports from Japan jumped 21.7 percent on demand for automobiles, machinery and steel. (KUNA)

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'We're investing in all of America'

Biden marks 1-year anniversary of climate, health law

WASHINGTON, Aug 17, (AP): President Joe Biden proclaimed Wednesday his administration is "turning things around" for Americans when it comes to the economy, with his signature climate, health care and tax package giving people "more breathing room" on prices and investing anew in clean energy jobs

Market Movements

+0.09

+0.49

+0.51

Change Closing pts

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"We're leaving nobody behind," Biden told a packed East Room filled with lawmakers, advocates and people who have benefited from his economic policies. "We're investing in all of America - in the heartland, and coast to coast.

His remarks, delivered on the anniversary of the so-called Inflation Reduction Act, came as the White House ramped up efforts to illustrate the real-world impact of Biden's economic plans.

At a White House event Wednesday afternoon to celebrate a year since he signed the bill, the president stood alongside people - from union workers to small business owners to consumers - who the White House says have been aided by the law. That sweeping package, along with the bipartisan infrastructure law and a massive bill that bolsters production of semiconductor chips, make up the core of what the White House has branded "Bidenomics." It's aggressively promoting the concept as Biden seeks to improve his standing with voters amid his re-election campaign.

Before the East Room event, the administration rolled out a new online tool on invest.gov that relays stories from across the country about the impact of the president's economic agenda.

"As all of the great things from this bill roll out over the next few years - and over the next decades, frankly - when it comes to the Inflation Reduction Act, as great as it has been, the best is yet to come," said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., who muscled the legislation through an evenly-divided Senate last year.

The White House is on a sprint to connect what they say is a popular economic agenda with an unpopular incumbent president, as polls show a majority of voters consistently disapprove of Biden's handling of the economy even amid signs of a U.S. economic upswing.

The inflation rate has cooled over the past year to a more manageable 3.2% annually, while job growth has stayed solid and the economy has avoided the recession that many analysts said would be needed to bring down prices. On Tuesday, the Census Bureau reported that retail sales have climbed 3.2% over the past 12 months

That level of consumer spending led the investment bank Goldman Sachs to raise its expectations for overall growth in the third quarter to an annual rate of 2.2%. The Atlanta Federal Reserve's GDPNow estimate jumped even higher with

Biden's approval rating on the economy stagnates, AP-NORC poll shows

WASHINGTON, Aug 17, (AP): President Joe Biden has devoted the past several weeks to promoting the positive impacts of his policies - but his efforts have yet to meaningfully register with the public.

Only 36% of U.S. adults approve of Biden's handling of the economy, slightly lower than the 42% who approve of his overall performance, according to the new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Both figures are close to where Biden's approval numbers have stood for about the past year and a half, including just two months ago. Signs of an improving economic outlook have done little to sway how people feel about the Democratic president as he gears up for a 2024 reelection campaign that could pit him against his predecessor and 2020 opponent, Republican Donald Trump.

Job growth has stayed solid with the unemployment rate at 3.5%, while the pace of inflation has slowed sharply over the past year to the annual rate of 3.2%. Both Biden and Trump have weaknesses as older candidates seeking a rematch. Trump, 77, faces a series of criminal indictments that include his possession of classified material and allegations that he tried to overturn the 2020 election, which has rallied support among Republicans while leaving him with substantial vulnerabilities in a potential general election contest.

Biden, 80, has yet to fully bring Democrats to his side as the lingering after-

the forecast of third-quarter growth reaching 5%.

The evidence of economic strength has yet to translate into political gains for Biden, who has devoted the past several weeks to traveling the U.S. He's emphasized the roughly \$500 billion worth of investments by private companies that have been spurred by his policies.

Aides say the mood of the American electorate has been dampened in recent years by outside forces such as a once-in-a-century pandemic and said it would take time for laws signed by Biden to have an impact on voters' sentiments.

"Once those investments happen, once those jobs are created, once those people are at work, in red districts, purple districts, blue districts, it's very hard to walk away from that," White House energy adviser John Podesta said Wednesday. "And so I'm quite confident that as the public really begins to feel the presence of shocks of inflation still weigh on people's minds. Along with members of his cabinet and Vice President Kamala Harris, Biden has been speaking about the \$500 billion worth of new investments by private companies that he said came from incentives he signed into law.

Erica Basile, a teacher who describes herself as a "staunch Democrat," said she feels the economy is "mediocre, but improving."

"I do think in many ways they're working very hard at getting the economy back on track post-COVID," said Basile, who lives in Lynnwood, Washington. Just 65% of Democrats approve of Biden's economic leadership, while 76% approve of how he's handling the job overall.

In follow-up interviews, some survey respondents felt torn between the desire to return to a sense of normalcy after Trump's presidency and the desire for even more sweeping policies to address climate change, health care costs and taxes.

"When Joe Biden was selected to be the nominee and eventually won, my feeling at the time was that he could be the most milquetoast and undramatic president to help the country cool down," said Steven Peters, 41, who works in information technology in White House, Tennessee. "Unfortunately, that's what he's been. I'm dissatisfied because I had hoped there would be more change.'

Peters added, "He's really middle of the road when a lot of people would like to see more dramatic action.

this law in their lives, particularly on that workforce side, it's here to stay."

Meanwhile, U.S. Treasury marked the law's anniversary by releasing a new analysis that it says shows new clean energy investments spurred by the law are largely benefitting underserved communities. The agency report issued Wednesday states that new investments in clean energy, electric vehicles and batteries are concentrated in areas with lower employment, wages and college graduation rates.

But the name is the Inflation Reduction Act after all, despite the minimal impact that the law has had in actually taming cost prices over the past year. So the administration is also rolling out a new report from the Department of Energy that shows the law will cut electricity rates up to 9 percent and lower gas prices by up to 13 percent by the year 2030.

Agreement definitive

BAE Systems inks deal to 'acquire' Ball Aerospace

FALLS CHURCH, Va., Aug 17, (Business Wire): BAE Systems today announced a definitive agreement for the proposed acquisition of Ball Aerospace for approximately \$5.55 billion. The Ball Aeropace legacy of achieving advances in national security space architecture, mission-enabling technologies, and scientific discoveries are complementary to BAE Systems' portfolio and culture. The proposed acquisition of Ball Aerospace represents an exceptional opportunity to acquire a high quality, technology-based business with market leading space and defense capabilities to solve our customers' greatest challenges. "This marquee acquisition would advance our company's position in some of the fastest growing segments of the defense market and further increase our alignment with enduring customer priorities in both the U.S. National Defense Strategy and U.S. Intelligence Strategy. Ball Aerospace's world-class products, capabilities and deep customer relationships would enhance our existing portfolio in areas including space, C4ISR and missile systems, said Tom Arseneault, President and CEO of BAE Systems, Inc. "We believe BAE Systems and Ball Aerospace share a culture of mission-driven innovation and operational excellence. We look forward

to sustaining the historic legacy of Ball Aerospace and investing in its future.

Ball Aerospace's space related programs account for approximately 70% of its 2023E revenues of \$2.2 billion, with the balance attributable to mission-enabling technologies and R&D for the warfighter across land, sea and air domains. The acquisition of Ball Aerospace would provide a robust platform for accelerating our space strategy. Ball Aerospace has a long and distinguished track record as a proven partner and pioneering innovator, with expertise in spacecraft, mission payloads, optical systems, conformal antennas, and electronically steered arrays. With trusted customer relationships among the Intelligence Community, U.S. Department of Defense and civilian space market, the Ball Aerospace team supports the delivery of a broad set of products and differentiating technologies to meet growing customer demands. Our mutual cultures of commitment to the mission and technology driven innovation would set a solid foundation to serve the combined enterprise and our customers well into the future. The proposed transaction is subject to the satisfaction of customary closing conditions, including required regulatory approvals.

Asia follows Wall Street lower

Wall St holding 'steadier', but

higher bond yields keep biting

NEW YORK, Aug 17, (AP): Wall Street was holding a bit steadier Thursday, and stocks are mixed following their sharp two-day slide.

The S&P 500 was up 0.2% in afternoon trading. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up just 6 points, or less than 0.1%, at 34,771, as of 1 p.m. Eastern time, and the Nasdaq composite was up by less than 0.1%.

Cisco Systems helped lead the way and rose 4.1%. The maker of networking equipment reported stronger profit and revenue for the latest quarter than analysts expected.

Walmart did as well, while also raising its forecast for full-year results. But its stock swung from an early gain to a loss of 1.9%

Stocks broadly have been retreating in August following a torrid first seven months of the year. That's in part because a swift rise in bond yields is forcing a reassessment of how much to pay for stocks.

The 10-year Treasury, which is the centerpiece of the bond market, is now yielding 4.31% after touching its highest level since October earlier in the morning.

If it reaches 4.34%, it will be at a level unseen since 2007, according to Tradeweb. That's before the financial crisis and Great Recession caused yields to collapse to record lows. The 10-year Treasury was yielding less than 0.70% three years ago.

Higher yields are good for bond investors, who get fatter payouts for their investments. But it hurts stock prices because investors are suddenly less inclined to pay high prices for them and other investments that aren't as steady as bonds.

Higher yields also mean borrowers have to pay more to get cash, which can crimp corporate profits and cause unforeseen things to break in the system, like the three high-profile U.S. bank failures that shook markets this spring.

Homebuyers are also feeling the sting of higher yields. The recent rise in the 10-year Treasury yield, which lenders use to price rates on home loans, pushed the average rate on a 30year mortgage this week to its highest level in more than 20 years

Yields have been on the rise as more reports show the U.S. economy remains remarkably resilient. On the upside for markets, the data means the economy has been able to avoid a long-predicted recession. But on the downside, it could also keep upward pressure on inflation. That would give the Federal Reserve reason to keep interest rates higher for longer.

More data came in Thursday show-



People stand near an electronic stock board showing Japan's Nikkei 225 index at a securities firm Thursday, Aug. 17, 2023, in Tokyo. Asian stocks followed Wall Street lower Thursday after notes from a U.S. Federal Reserve meeting dented hopes interest rate hikes are finished. (AP)

ing a firm U.S. economy.

Fewer workers applied for unemployment benefits last week than economists expected. It's the latest signal that the job market continues to be solid

A separate survey of manufacturers in the mid-Atlantic region unexpectedly showed growth, when economists were expecting another month of contraction. Manufacturing has been one of the areas of the economy hit hardest by much higher interest rates.

"The labor market continues to be resilient-maybe too resilient for the Fed's liking," said Mike Loewengart, head of model portfolio construction at Morgan Stanley Global Investment Office.

Other strong economic data recently, including a report showing an acceleration in sales growth at U.S. retailers, mean the Fed could hike interest rates again at some point, he said. Hopes had been rising on Wall Street that the Fed could be done after it raised its main rate last month to the highest level in more than two decades.

Traders had also been hoping the Fed would begin cutting rates early next year. Such a move would be a relief for markets because high rates work to lower inflation by slowing the entire economy and hurting prices for investments.

Minutes from the Fed's latest meet-

ing released Wednesday suggested officials are unsure of their next moves. They say it will depend on what upcoming reports about inflation and the iob market say.

Inflation has cooled considerably from its peak above 9% last summer. But consumers still paid prices that were 3.2% higher in July than a year earlier, and economists say the last stretch to get inflation down to the Fed's 2% target may prove to be the most difficult.

Europe

In early trading, the FTSE 100 in London fell 0.3% to 7,332.01. The CAC 40 in Paris lost 0.4% to 7,233.00 and the DAX in Frankfurt retreated 0.3% to 15,738.25.

Asia

Asian stocks followed Wall Street lower Thursday after notes from a U.S. Federal Reserve meeting dented hopes interest rate hikes are finished.

Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul declined. Shanghai was unchanged. Oil prices were lower.

Wall Street's benchmark S&P 500 lost 0.8% on Wednesday after minutes from the Fed's latest meeting suggested board members are unsure what to do after raising their key lending rate to a two-decade high. Traders had hoped they would decide inflation was under control and last month's rate hike was the last.

Fed officials face a "tough balancing act" between "the risk of an inadvertent over-tightening of policy against the cost of an insufficient one," said Tan Boon Heng of Mizuho Bank in a report.

The Shanghai Composite Index held steady at 3,150.29 while the Nikkei 225 in Tokyo retreated 0.4% to 31,652.76 after being down more than 1%. The Hang Seng in Hong Kong was off 0.1% at 18,308.06, recovering from a loss of more than 2% in early trading.

The Kospi in Seoul shed 0.3% to 2,517.92 and Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 declined 0.5% to 7,161.70.

India's Sensex opened down 0.3% at 65,324.26. Bangkok gained while New Zealand and other Southeast Asian markets retreated.

Nil

In energy markets, benchmark U.S. crude lost 9 cents to \$79.29 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract fell \$1.61 on Wednesday to \$79.38. Brent crude, the price basis for international oils, shed 2 cents to \$83.43. It retreated \$1.44 the previous session to \$83.45 a barrel.

Currencies

The dollar gained to 146.39 yen from Wednesday's 146.24 yen. The euro edged down to \$1.0866 from \$1.0868.

A \$5.4b int'l chip deal with Intel is off after okay from China never arrives

HONG KONG, Aug 17, (AP): A \$5.4 billion acquisition of Israeli chip manufacturer by Intel has been called off after China failed to sign off on the deal amid rising tensions with the United States.

It was a mutual decision between Intel and Tower Semiconductor, the companies said Wednesday. Intel said that the deal was terminated "due to the inability to obtain in a timely manner the regulatory approvals required under the merger agreement.'

The deal required approval from a number of regulators worldwide, including those in China. Chinese regulators failed to approve the deal by a deadline Wednesday, even after Intel CEO Patrick Gelsinger traveled to China last month in a bid to win them over.

The scuttled deal between the two companies comes amid increasing U.S.-China tensions, particularly as the U.S. has tightened export controls and imposed restrictions aimed at crippling China's ability to purchase and manufacture advanced chips.

In response, China's antitrust regulator, the State Administration for Market Regulation, appears to have dragged its feet on approving mergers involving American companies, such as the Intel-Tower deal.

Last month, ahead of Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen's visit to Beijing, China imposed export curbs on two metals used in computer chips and solar cells.

Intel originally aimed to close the deal by the first quarter of the year, but later extended the deadline after it failed to receive approval from China. Intel hoped that its acquisition of Tower would expand its manufacturing capacity and open up growth opportunities for the firm in U.S., Israel, Italy and Japan.

Intel Corp. will pay Tower a ter-mination fee of \$353 million, the U.S. semiconductor giant said.

Tower's U.S. traded stock fell more than 9% at the opening bell and more than 10% in Tel Aviv.

"Tower was very excited to join Intel to enable Pat Gelsinger's vision for Intel's foundry business," said Russell Ellwanger, Tower Semiconductor's CEO in a written statement. "We appreciate the efforts by all parties.

KIB names winner of Al Dirwaza digital account opening draw for July

Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the name of the winner of its AI Dirwaza digital account opening campaign for the month of July, whereby customer Mohammad Hussain Salman Al Ansari won the draw. This draw comes after the Bank renewed the campaign designed to provide a distinctive digital banking experience and to reward customers who opened an Al Dirwaza account through its digital platforms, whether KIB Online or the KIB Mobile application.

Commenting on the draw, Nawaf Al-Khrayef, Assistant General Manager of the Retail Bank-ing Department at KIB, said: "We are pleased to continue announcing the new winners of the draws and prizes of this distinctive campaign, which con-tributes to encouraging customers to save more and embodies KIB's commitment to providing the opportunity to enjoy the latest innovative digital banking solutions. Al Dirwaza account, the best of its kind in Kuwait, continues to attract customers interested in economizing, saving, and profiting, thanks to KIB's professional team and its continuous efforts, in addition to the loyalty and constant support of existing customers."

Al-Khrayef added: "As we continue holding this unique campaign, we further align with KIB's approach to extending innovation to the integrated banking experience provided to all customer segments. The banking experience offers exceptional advantages by focusing on customers' priorities and meeting all their needs. The Al Dirwaza digital account opening campaign continues to witness success, thanks to the high competency level of the team, the swift response for accessing digital services, the added value of prizes and rewards, and the maximum possible use of the best banking product in its category. Al Dirwaza account pro-vides customers with the highest expected monthly returns, in addition to draws for excellent cash prizes, while being fully compliant with the provisions of Islamic Sharia and approved by the KIB Sharia Supervisory Board."



Nawaf Al-Khrayef, AGM of RBD at KIB

7

Exclusive offers from local, worldwide hotels and brands

KFH: 40% off for credit, prepaid card holders

KUUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) offers exclusive discounts for credit and prepaid card holders, in addition to various international promotions from VISA and MasterCard which give customers the privilege to use the cards locally and worldwide. The offers, which are up to 40%, cover hotels, touristic destinations, furniture, sportswear, sport equipment, as well as car accessories stores

The offers include a 10% discount at NIKE & Reebok stores, Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co., and International Optics Co., a 30% discount at Al Jamil Optical Co., and a 40% discount at Ziebart for car shading and protection.

KFH customers can enjoy up to 12% off on more than 985,000 hotels and vacation rentals worldwide with agoda.com when using KFH Visa cards, in addition to a free-rent day, or a 25% discount on reservations. The benefits of discounts can be used multiple times throughout the validity of the promotion.

As for Visa and Mastercard Global offers, KFH customers can get a 10% cashback on booking.com in addition to various discounts from hotels on stays for 3 nights and above

KFH Visa cardholders enjoy up to 20% discount on rooms and suites when they use their Visa card to book their stay in the UAE, Maldives, Bali, UK, Spain, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain and China at Jumeirah Hotels & Resort.

With every booking at The Visa Luxury Hotel Collection (including brands like Peninsula, Park Hyatt, and Shangri-La.), KFH Visa Signature, KFH Visa Platinum or KFH Visa Infinite cardholders receive best available rate guarantee (temporarily unavailable), automatic room upgrade upon arrival, when available, complimentary in-room Wi-Fi, when available, complimentary breakfast for two, \$25 USD food or beverage credit, VIP Guest status and late check-out upon request, when available

Meanwhile, by using KFH Mastercard and KFH Visa Cards, KFH customers will enjoy exclusive promotions that include a 15% off at IHG hotels and resorts in Europe, Maldives, India, Middle East and Africa, in addition to a 10% cashback on booking.com for their next vacation.

KFH Mastercard holders enjoy an exclusive 10% discount on their booking with Rentalcars.com using KFH Mastercard in addition to special rates in Global Rental Car Companies like Budget, Avis, Hertz.

KFH Mastercard holders enjoy lifestyle offers from Bicester Village. The Bicester Village Shopping Collection is defined by its luxury brands, charming open-air 'village' settings, a welcoming and superior service, a calendar of events and, not least, exceptional value for money. World-leading brands offer savings of up to 60%, and sometimes more, on the recommended ret ail price, in their own luxuriously appointed boutiques, all year round. As a KFH Mastercard cardholder you get access to:

Customers can access further exclusive details on KFH's official website and KFH Online Mobile Application as per the terms and conditions.

KFH Customer can have access to more than 100 deals and more than 250 brands in Kuwait through Baitak Rewards Loyalty Program via using their Baitak Rewards points. KFH provides an added value by offering distinguished promotions for credit card holders with the aim of enhancing customers' experience, maintaining the Bank's leadership in the banking cards market in Kuwait, as well as supporting the competitiveness of cards by linking various programs, offers and facilities to meet KFH customers' aspirations.

It is worth mentioning that KFH credit cards are among the best cards praised by top institutions such as MasterCard and Visa and are always awarded for their excellence and efficiency in performance at the banking sector level.



KFH credit cards



KFH prepaid cards



Shopkeeper waits for customers in Damascus, Syria, on Dec. 15, 2022 Syria's president early Wednesday Aug. 16, 2023 doubled public servant and retirees wages and pensions as the war-torn country's national currency spiraled further downwards, reaching a new low for the year. (AP)

National currency spirals downwards Syrian president 'doubles' wages in the public sector

Ooredoo speeds up digital transformation

Group partners with Tech Mahindra and Google Cloud

DOHA, Aug 17: Ooredoo Group, leading ICT provider and techco, has announced new partnerships with Tech Mahindra - a leading provider of digital transformation, consulting and business re-engineering services and solutions - and Google Cloud technologies – global tech giant - that will see the company accelerate its digital transformation journey in six operating companies across its global footprint.

Powered by Google Cloud's



BEIRUT, Aug 17, (AP): Syria's president has doubled public sector wages and pensions as the wartorn country's national currency spiraled further downwards, reaching a new low for the year.

President Bashar Assad issued the two decrees just before midnight Tuesday as the Syrian pound's value against the U.S. dollar declined to a new all-time low, down from 7,000 at the beginning of 2023 to 15,000 pounds to the greenback. At the start of the conflict in 2011, the dollar was trading at 47 pounds.

For over a year, Damascus has been restructuring its program of subsidies for gasoline, diesel for heating, and bread. At the launch of the restructure in February last vear. Svrian Prime Minister Hussein Arnous said the move to scale back fuel subsidies would allow the program to target the poorest families more effectively as well as reducing the Syrian state's deficit.

Though wheat and bread subsidies have not been affected, the move has sparked rare protests in the country, as families struggle to cope with skyrocketing inflation. Syria hiked fuel prices Wednesday, soon after Assad's decree, further rolling back state subsidies.

"The national economy is in a clear state of instability, most notably rapid rise of the currency exchange rate," Arnous told Syria's parliament in a speech late last month, warning that financing government spending through debt and borrowing from the central bank is not sustainable.

Syria's last wage hike was in December 2021, where Assad raised civil service salaries by 30%

The increase in wages might be an immediate relief for Syrians, but would be temporary at best as its economic situation continues to worsen, Sam Heller, fellow at New York-based think tank Century International, told The Associated Press.

"It seems likely to fuel inflation and thus worsen the continued depreciation of Syria's currency," he said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an oppositionlinked war monitoring group based in Britain, said that hours after the decree was issued, fuel and produce prices increased, as public discontent over the dire economic situation worsens.

Syria's currency has been depreciating since 2019, further worsened by neighboring Lebanon's economic meltdown and Covid-19. However, the recent wage hike and a massive government payout to this summer's wheat harvest have increased the amount of money circulating in the market.

"This (wage) increase is all but wiped out following the increases in fuel prices and recent depreciation in the Syrian pound," Karam Shaar, nonresident senior fellow at Washington-based think tank the Newlines Institute, told the AP. "(It) will feed into local (market) prices in a month or two fully.

Syria's uprising turned-civil war, now in its 13th year, and Western-led sanctions have pulverized the country's economy. In February a deadly 7.8 magnitude earthquake further devastated its already damaged homes, water, and electricity infrastructure, especially in the ruined city of Aleppo. Experts say that the Syrian government's rampant corruption and mismanagement of public funds have worsened matters.

The United Nations estimates that 90% of Syrians in government-held areas live in poverty. More than half the population some 12 million people - struggle to put food on the table, the U.N. estimates.

The figure is similar for a northwestern enclave still held by the opposition.

In recent months, Arab governments that once endorsed Assad's removal have restored relations with Damascus. Syria was welcomed back to the Arab League in May, after a suspension lasting more than a decade for its crackdown on protesters.

While there have been some early talks about a political solution that could lead to investment and aid from oil-rich Gulf monarchies, Western-led sanctions remain a key obstacle should any deals come to fruition.

API Management Platform (Apigee), with Tech Mahindra as implementation partner, Ooredoo's IT operations will be modernised by deploying a digital platform-based approach, which will greatly enhance performance and the digital offering, resulting in a significant upgrade in customer experience.

Strategy

Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdulla Al Thani, Deputy Group CEO & Ooredoo Kuwait Chairman, , said: "As a part of our corporate strategy, we actively seek out and foster partnerships with like-minded entities that share our dedication to innovation and technology. Through these collaborations, we aim to elevate our offerings and unleash the full potential of our APIs, enabling us to provide unparalleled digital services to our customers. We are thrilled to join forces with Google Cloud and Tech Mahindra for this transformative project, as it will accelerate our digital transformation, elevate the customer experience, and strengthen our digital ecosystem across our operating companies.'

The integral role of API in the development of open innovation, ecosystem expansion, mobile app development, Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence and data-driven insights will vastly expand opportunities for growth across the Group's global footprint.

Ram Ramachandran, Head Middle East and Africa at Tech Mahindra, said: "A seismic shift has taken place in the telecom industry, moving it from the hardware to the software arena, mostly driven by API. Businesses are using APIs to deliver digital capabilities and data in a consumable manner. Bringing together Tech Mahindra, Ooredoo, and Google's Cloud Apigee marks a significant milestone in revolutionising the telecoms industry and delivering unparalleled digital services with APIs at its core. The partnership exemplifies our collective efforts to create a more connected, agile, and customer-centric ecosystem, while unlocking new opportunities for growth and innovation.

Ghassan Kosta, Qatar Country

Thailand Embassy and Lulu officials pose together.

Strengthening bilateral business ties

Lulu collaborates with Thai Embassy officials

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: In a as food, fresh produce, non-food significant step towards enhancing economic relations, officials from the Thailand Embassy in Kuwait visited the regional office of Lulu Hypermarket on August 14th, 2023. The purpose of the visit was to bolster bilateral business connections between Kuwait and Thailand, spotlighting Lulu Hypermarket's pivotal role in advancing Thai products within the Kuwaiti market.

Welcoming the delegation, Mr. Mohmad Haris, Director of Lulu Hypermarket Kuwait, along with representatives from both sides, engaged in productive discussions. The talks centered around the substantial trade partnership between Kuwait and Thailand, with particular emphasis on the expansive assortment of Thai goods featured within Lulu Hypermarket's diverse product range.

Lulu Group's establishment of product sourcing centers in Thailand underscores its unwavering commitment to bringing premium Thai merchandise to Kuwaiti consumers. Notably, Lulu Hypermarket in Kuwait stands as a cornerstone of the economic alliance, importing a diverse array of over 1,000 products from Thailand. These encompass a wide spectrum of categories such

Manager, Google Cloud added: "The joint expertise of Google Cloud as a global tech leader and Tech Mahindra's deep understanding of the telecoms market will ensure Ooredoo is well-positioned to lead digital transformation, both within its organisation and across the industry, and deliver cutting-edge digital services to its customers.

The joint expertise of Google Cloud as a global tech leader and Tech Mahindra's deep understanding of the telecoms market will ensure Ooredoo is well-positioned items, garments, accessories, and more.

The meeting provided an opportune platform for the exchange of ideas and visions. The embassy officials expressed their admiration for the flourishing partnership between Lulu Hypermarket and Thailand, stressing the significance of such collaborations in fostering cultural exchange and bolstering economic ties between the two nations. They highlighted Thailand's steadfast dedication to providing top-notch products tailored to the preferences of Kuwaiti consumers.

Appreciation

Mr. Haris extended his appreciation for the pivotal role played by Thai products in enriching Lulu Hypermarket's offerings. He reiterated Lulu Hypermarket's unwavering commitment to sustaining the import of an eclectic range of Thai goods, thereby enriching the shopping experience for Kuwaiti residents.

Amidst discussions, a momentous decision was made to host a dedicated Thailand Promotion Festival at the end of September 2023, in collaboration with the Thailand Embassy in Kuwait. This initiative aims to celebrate the richness of Thai culture and products, with the embassy pro-

to lead digital transformation, both within its organisation and across the industry, and deliver cuttingedge digital services to its customers.

Ooredoo Group's new partnerships with Google Cloud and Tech Mahindra serve as a concrete illustration of its commitment to offering the most enhanced digital experience possible, and to providing superior customer service, a stronger partner ecosystem and an effective roll-out of new and creative

viding a Thai chef to prepare authentic dishes for the public during the promotional period. The festivities align with Thailand's national day celebrations in December, where Lulu Hypermarket will host events across its hypermarkets, spotlighting Thai fresh items such as fruits, vegetables, groceries, and fresh juices etc.

In line with its commitment to cultural diversity, Lulu Hypermarket traditionally conducts an annual ASEAN Festival, highlighting the products and culture of ASEAN member countries. This year, the festival is planned for the month of September, showcasing the vibrant tapestry of ASEAN nations and further enhancing cultural exchange.

The meeting concluded on a note of optimism, underlining the shared commitment of both parties to nurturing mutual growth and cooperation. It marks the beginning of a strengthened relationship that not only fosters economic ties but also celebrates the cultural tapestry shared by Kuwait and Thailand. The collaborative efforts between Lulu Hypermarket and the Thailand Embassy in Kuwait are set to invigorate the market and provide Kuwaiti residents with an enhanced selection of superior Thai products.

services through the implementation of APIs at every level of its organization.

Sheikh Mohammed concluded: "These partnerships not only signify our commitment to staying competitive in the ever-evolving telecommunications landscape but also underscore our confidence in the value that collaboration with Google Cloud and Tech Mahindra will bring to our customers and stakeholders through the implementation of API management strategies."

Walmart shines in Q2

BUSINESS

Dutch economy slids into recession

The Netherlands has fallen into a recession after exports and household spending fell back amid rising interest rates intended to rein in inflation, the country's statistics office reported Wednesday.

The economy declined by 0.3% in the second quarter after shrinking 0.4% in the first three months of the year, Statistics Netherlands reported. The Netherlands, a small nation that has

long punched above its weight in global trade, is now treading water after its robust rebound following the global COVID-19 pandemic, said the statistics office's chief economist, Peter Hein van Mulligen.

"After the coronavirus dip, the Dutch economy recovered much quicker and stronger than the rest of Europe. In the last year that has turned around," he said. (AP)

Norway raises key interest rate again

Norway's central bank said Thursday that it is raising its key interest rate by a quarter-percentage point to combat high inflation.

Norges Bank is hiking the rate to 4%, the highest level since 2008. It says inflation - which reached 5.4% in July - "has edged down but remains high and markedly above the target" of 2%

"A somewhat higher policy

rate is needed to bring inflation back to target," according to the central bank.

Bank Gov. Ida Wolden Bache said "the future policy rate path will depend on economic developments" and added that the rate would most likely be raised again next month. "If the economy evolves as currently anticipated, the policy rate will be raised further in September," she said in a statement. (AP)

Walmart reported strong second-quarter sales results as the retailer's low-price model continues to attract budget conscious consumers in a tough economic environment. The nation's largest retailer

boosted its annual outlook again, sending shares up 2% before the opening bell Thursday. Walmart, based in Benton-earned \$7.89 ville, Arkansas, earned \$7.89

billion, or \$2.92 per share, for the three-month period ended July 31. Adjusted results were \$1.84 per share, or 13 cents better than Wall Street had expected, according to a survey of industry analysts by Fact-Set. It was also up from last year's quarterly profit of \$5.15 billion.

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Sale rose nearly 6% to \$161.63 billion, a shade better than expected. (AP)

'Access to safe water remains a fundamental human right'

Zayed Sustainability Prize's Beyond2020 initiative secures clean water for Ethiopians

ABU DHABI, UAE, Aug 17, (AP): Beyond2020, the UAE-driven humanitarian initiative launched by the Zayed Sustainability Prize and its partners, has improved access to safe drinking water for 9,000 people in the rural villages of Walessa, Holte, and Gato in Dirashe District, Ethiopia. Six shallow wells with solar pumps have been installed in the villages, reducing the incidence of waterborne diseases and improving overall health.

The Beyond2020 deployment in Ethiopia was implemented by the Zayed Sustainability Prize finalist Solarkiosk Solutions, a German based company that provides rural, off-grid communities electricity, benefitting five million people todate.

H.E. Dr. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, UAE Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, Director General of the Zayed Sustainability Prize, and COP28 President-Designate, "As we continue to push tosaid: wards a more sustainable and equitable world, access to safe water remains a fundamental human right. Beyond2020 and its partners are delighted to have been able to improve the livelihoods of three communities in Ethiopia by providing them with access to this essential resource. As the UAE prepares to host COP28 - a COP aimed at accelerating inclusive sustainable development, particularly in the Global South - this deployment in Ethiopia is a perfect example of how we can create meaningful change and address the urgent issues posed by climate change when we come together. We must continue acting in solidarity as we strive towards a future where safe water is accessible to all."

The people of Dirashe District are primarily farmers who practice sustainable agriculture, a type of farming method that seeks to protect the environment and improve the productivity of agricultural systems. The villages of Walessa, Holte, and



Rural Ethiopians benefit from easy access to safe drinking water, thanks to six solar water pumps deployed by Beyond2020.

Tourism in Lebanon thrives relieving economy temporarily

BEIRUT, Aug 17, (KUNA): Tourism in Lebanon this summer noticeably thrived with entertainment parks and restaurants and hotels working at full swing, bringing in badly needed money that may relieve the ailing economy, temporarily though

Hundreds of thousands of Arab, foreign tourists and Lebanese emigrants flocked to the Mediterranean country, thus giving a revival injection to the ailing economy -- marked with virtually valueless national currency, with one USD is traded at approximately 100,000 pounds.

Minister of Tourism in the caretaking government, Walid Nassar, said in an interview with KUNA that the tourists and emigrants have been providing the local monetary and finan-

Gato are in the low land areas where drinking water is scarce. A growing population, rising demand for irrigacial markets with substantial funds. Some 430,000 visitors came to the country, and according to statistics that figure grew in July and the current month August, he said, predicting that it would soar to 1.8 million by the summer end.

Up to 75 percent of the incomers are Lebanese emigrants and 25 percent are Arabs and foreigners, minister Nassar added in the interview with Kuwait News Agency.

Promotion campaigns by the ministry has contributed to luring the tourists and the emigrants, he said, adding that the "stable security situation" also encouraged them to come.

Meanwhile, the dean of the hotels' owners, Pierre Al-Ashqar, affirmed that the largest proportion of the visitors are Lebanese in diaspora,

tion, and climate change - which is causing increasing levels of algae in the local rivers, making the wa-

including 450,000 who work in the Gulf, 300,000 in Africa and 400,000 in Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States of America.

Ninety percent of the visiting Lebanese reside in their own houses, or rent furnished apartments and only 10 percent of them settle in hotels, he said, affirming that the hotels and guesthouses have been working at full swing.

For his part, Jassem Ajaqa, a financial expert, said in remarks to KUNA that the money spent by the tourists does not reach the banking sector that can invest them in ventures, adding that the benefiters in this respect are the merchants, retail services and ordinary citizens who keep the money at their homes due to their distrust of the banks.

ter turbid and unsafe to drink - are increasing the pressure on the area's limited water resources. Community

UK housing prices 'increased' 1.7 pct

LONDON, Aug 17, (KUNA): UK housing prices rose by 1.7% in the 12 months to June 2023, taking the average up to GBP 288,000 (approx. USD 376,500), official data showed on Wednesday.

The UK's land registry mentioned in a statement that house prices in London, on the other hand, fell back slightly by 0.6 percent compared to May, taking the average to GBP 528,000 (approx. USD 674,000).

The statement also explained that the average price of detached property or villas in the capital decreased by one percent to reach by the end of June GBP 1,068,000 (approx. more than USD 1.36 million).

Around 86,000 transactions were logged, mentioned the registry saying that this marks a 15.4 percent drop compared to June 2022.

members in all three villages were dependent on unsafe water sources, including surface water harvested from rain and nearby open rivers to meet their drinking, cleaning and cooking needs, which led to high rates of waterborne diseases.

To address the water shortage issue, several shallow hand-pump wells were drilled in the villages in 2014. Due to the mechanical operation of the hand pumps, however, the pumps were maintenance intensive, and the wells frequently became inoperable, leaving the community once again without any access to safe drinking water.

Now, those water wells have been retrofitted with solar pumps, with each well supplying 20,000-25,000 litres of clean drinking water every day, which is enough to meet the village's drinking, sanitation, and agricultural needs.

H.E. Habtamu Itefa Geleta, Minister of the Ministry of Water and Energy of Ethiopia, said: "We would like to thank the Beyond2020 initiative, its partners, and the UAE government for supporting the efficient installation of a clean water source to improve the lives of thousands of people in these rural Ethiopian villages. Providing communifies with their own local clean water source is key to improving health and wellbeing, as it reduces the risk of waterborne diseases, reduces the time and physical effort required to collect water, and supports good hygiene practices.

The Beyond2020 deployment in the Dirashe District of Ethiopia has significantly reduced the burden of traveling long distances to fetch water - a burden which fell primarily on women and children, who spent several hours each day traveling as far as five kilometres to collect water from neighbouring water sources like open rivers and ponds during the dry seasons. This was a time-consuming and demanding task, which exposed the women and children to risks, including diseases and physical danger. Now, women and children can fetch water for their families in under ten minutes, allowing them time to pursue education, incomegenerating activities, and other productive activities.

Beyond2020 brings together a leading number of partners, which include Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, Mubadala Energy and Masdar.

As part of the Beyond2020's impact to-date, a total of 15 deployments have been rolled out, including energy, health, water and food-related solutions in Nepal, Tanzania, Uganda, Jordan, Egypt, Cambodia, Madagascar, Indonesia, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Rwanda, Peru, Lebanon and Sudan. In addition to Ethiopia, another five countries have been identified as deployment grounds going forward.

Japan sank into a trade deficit last month

TOKYO, Aug 17, (AP): Japan suffered a trade deficit last month as exports sank for the first time in more than two years, dragged down by a slowdown overseas.

Japan's trade deficit totaled 78.7 billion yen (\$539 million), the Finance Ministry said Thursday, the first trade deficit for the world's third largest economy in two months.

Exports shrank most markedly for the rest of Asia, including China, Singapore and Taiwan, declining 0.3% from the same month the previous year to 8.73 trillion yen (\$60 billion). Exports recovered in autos and auto parts, as the social restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, which had crimped production, eased gradually.

But that was not enough to offset the drop in exports in computers, computer chips, machinery and other manufactured goods.

Imports fell in various sectors, including food, machinery and energy, slipping 13.5% from the previous year to 8.8 trillion yea (\$60 billion), according to the ministry.

Imports to Japan dipped not only from Asia but many other nations, including the U.S., Mexico, the countries in the Middle East, as well as Russia.

July's trade deficit was still far smaller last month than what Japan racked up in the same month the previous year, or about half.

Import costs ballooned last year on the back of surging fuel costs, as well as the weakening Japanese yen, which raises the value of overseas spending when converted into yen.

The yen continues to be weak, trading at about 146 yen to the U.S. dollar lately. That likely means worries will persist about the strength of Japan's economic recovery.

A key factor for Japan is the

strength of the Chinese economic rebound from the damage related to the pandemic. Some analysts say China's rebound is shaky.

The relatively pessimistic read on Japan's trade follows a bit of brighter news that came earlier this week, in which the government said that Japan's economy grew at an annual pace of 6% in April-June, marking the third straight quarter of growth as exports and inbound tourism recovered.

Japan's marking a trade surplus in June had set off hopes that the economy may be headed toward a recovery from the strain of the coronavirus pandemic

"I sense the export decline to China is worse than the worldwide decline, although they are related. We also need to assess the impact U.S.-China tensions may be having on trade," Sayuri Shirai, professor of policy management at Keio University, said in a commentary in the Nikkei newspaper.

US accuses Russia of undermining global food security

AL chief urges Black Sea grain deal extension

CAIRO, Aug 17, (KUNA): Secretary-General of the Arab League Ahmad Abul-Gheit has underscored the significance of extending the Black Sea grain deal.

He made the remark in a phone conversation with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, during which they focused on the latest developments of Ukraine and international efforts being exerted in order to end it, the Cairo-based bloc said in a press release.

They also discussed the difficulties Ukraine is facing to export its products, mainly grains, after the Russian side had declined to extend the Black Sea grain initiative, it added.

The league's chief said he looks forward to setting priorities for ensuring stable food prices as the global food market is witnessing a shortage of foodstuff, let alone unstable world production due to a set of factors, primarily drought and climate change.

He reiterated the league's backing to the initiative since it was launched in July 2022, given its paramount significance to providing grains to many countries, including Arab ones

Russia had declined to extend the Black Sea grain deal, delaying the export of Ukrainian grain to the rest of the world.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative, which was brokered between Russia and Ukraine by the United Nations and Turkiye, has allowed 32.9 million metric tons of food to be exported from war-torn Ukraine since August.

Meanwhile, the US Department of State reiterated condemnation of Russia's continued attacks on Ukrainian grain infrastructure and called for Russia "to immediately return to the Black Sea Grain Initiative."

Speaking to reporters on Wednesday, the Department's Principal Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel said, "Today, we are learning that multiple Russian drone attacks damaged warehouses and granaries in a Ukrainian port on the Danube near the Romanian border."

"This is in addition to previous Russian attacks on Ukrainian port infrastructure in Odessa, Rini and Ismail," he recalled.

"This escalation demonstrate Moscow continues to prevent grain and foodstuffs from reaching those who need it most throughout the world. It is unacceptable," Patel stressed, adding that Russian President Vladimir Putin "simply does not care about global food security.'

China says it would welcome a visit by US commerce secretary

Xi calls for patience, gov't tries to reverse economic slump

BEIJING, Aug 17, (AP): Chinese leader Xi Jinping has called for patience in a speech released as the ruling Communist Party tries to reverse a deepening economic slump and said Western countries are "increasingly in trouble" because of their materialism and "spiritual poverty.

Xi's speech was published by Qiushi, the party's top theoretical journal, hours after data Tuesday showed consumer and factory activity weakened further in July despite official promises to support struggling entrepreneurs. The government skipped giving an update on a politically sensitive spike in unemployment among young people.

Xi, the country's most powerful leader in decades, called for China to "build a socialist ideology with strong cohesion" and to focus on long-term goals of improving education, health care and food supplies for China's 1.4 billion people instead of only pursuing short-term material wealth.

Since taking power in 2012, Xi has called for restoring the ruling party's role as an economic and social leader and has tightened control over business and society since taking power in 2012. Some changes come at a rising cost as successful Chinese companies

are pressured to divert money into political initiatives including processor chip development. The party tightened control over tech industries by launching data security and anti-monopoly crackdowns that wiped out billions of dollars of their stock market value.

"We must maintain historic patience and insist on making steady, step-bystep progress," Xi said in the speech. Qiushi said it was delivered in February in the southwestern city of Chongqing. It is common for Qiushi journal to publish speeches months after they are delivered.

Economic growth slid to 0.8% in the three months ending in June compared with the previous month, down from 2.2% in January-March. That is equivalent to a 3.2% annual rate, which would



A street vendor selling birds and crickets cycles on the road in Beijing, Tuesday, Aug. 15, 2023. (AP)

be among China's weakest in decades. A survey in June found unemployment among urban workers aged 16 to 24 spiked to a record 21.3%. The statistics bureau said this week it would withhold updates while it refined its measurement.

Western-style modernization "pursues the maximization of capital interests instead of serving the interests of the vast majority of people," Xi said.

"Today, Western countries are in-creasingly in trouble," Xi said. "They cannot curb the greedy nature of capital and cannot solve chronic diseases such as materialism and spiritual pov-

erty." China says it would welcome a visit by U.S. Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo following the imposition of foreign investment controls by her agency that have stung numerous Chinese companies.

Chinese Commerce Ministry spokesperson Shu Jueting did not offer a date, but said the countries are in "close communication on arrangements," according to reports Thursday.

Media have speculated that a visit could come as early as later this month. Raimondo last met her Chinese counterpart, Wang Wentao, in Washington in May to discuss trade.

Foulath Subsidiary signs an LOI for iron ore pellet supply to Green Steel project

MANAMA, Bahrain, Aug 17, (AP): Foulath Subsidiary, Bahrain Steel, a leading producer, and global supplier of high-grade iron-ore pellets, has partnered with multinational conglomerate Essar Group in the supply of iron ore pellets to the Green Steel Arabia (GSA) project. The Letter of Intent (LOI) signing ceremony was held on Wednesday, 16th August 2023, in Jubail, KSA.

Through this partnership, Bahrain Steel will deliver 4 million tonnes of DR-grade pellets per annum (mtpa) to Essar Group. Bahrain Steel is the only GCC-owned pellet producer and leading supplier of high-quality DR grade pellets to all integrated steel producers in the region.

Commenting on the partnership, Mr. Dilip George, Group CEO of Foulath Holding, said: "Bahrain Steel's LOI with Essar for the supply of 4 million tonnes of DR grade pellets annually is a testament to our commitment to meet the growing demand for DR pellets by the steel industry in the GCC. We are proud to collaborate with Essar Group to support their pioneering project for setting up the first green steel project in Saudi Arabia, where there is

a growing focus on sustainable development.'

On his end, Mr. Naushad Ansari, Country Head for Essar Group in KSA, commented: "Essar is looking at investing about USD 4.5 billion in setting up an integrated steel plant in Ras Al Khair, Saudi Arabia. This LOI, post final contracts being agreed and signed, will secure 50% raw material supply of iron ore pellets for the Saudi Steel Plant. If all goes as planned, we expect commercial production to begin from the year 2027.'

The Essar project is set to be the region's first Green Steel project aiming to set the global benchmark in the reduction of CO2. The project will have a direct reduced iron (DRI) capacity of 5.0 mtpa, comprising of two modules of 2.50 mtpa each, and 4.0 mtpa hot strip capacity, as well as 1.0 million tonnes of cold rolling capacity along with galvanizing and tin plate lines. In line with the Kingdom's ongoing demand for steel products and the targets set by the Vision 2030, the facility will cater to all major steel consuming industries including: Construction, Oil & Gas, Automotive, Packaging & General Engineering.

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The Conversation

'World where music is plentiful, but musicians get cast aside'

3 ways AI transforming music with voice resurrection and more

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

Each fall, I begin my course on the intersection of music and artificial intelli-gence by asking my students if they're concerned about AI's role in composing or producing music.

So far, the question has always elicited a resounding "yes."

Their fears can be summed up in a sentence: AI will create a world where music is plentiful, but musicians get cast aside

In the upcoming semester, I'm anticipating a discussion about Paul McCartney, who in June 2023 announced that he and a team of audio engineers had used machine learning to uncover a "lost" vocal track of John Lennon by separating the instruments from a demo recording.

But resurrecting the voices of long-dead artists is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of what's possible - and what's already being done.

In an interview, McCartney admitted that AI represents a "scary" but "exciting" future for music. To me, his mix of consternation and exhilaration is spot on.

Here are three ways AI is changing the way music gets made - each of which could threaten human musicians in various ways:

1. Song composition

Many programs can already generate music with a simple prompt from the user, such as "Electronic Dance with a Warehouse Groove."

Fully generative apps train AI models on extensive databases of existing music. This enables them to learn musical structures, harmonies, melodies, rhythms, dynamics, timbres and form, and generate new content that stylistically matches the material in the database.

There are many examples of these kinds of apps. But the most successful ones, like Boomy, allow nonmusicians to generate music and then post the AI-generated results on Spotify to earn money. Spotify recently removed many of these Boomygenerated tracks, claiming that this would protect human artists' rights and royalties.

The two companies quickly came to an agreement that allowed Boomy to reupload the tracks. But the algorithms powering these apps still have a troubling ability to infringe upon existing copyright, which might go unnoticed to most users. After all, basing new music on a data set of existing music is bound to cause

By Jason Palamara

Indiana University

noticeable similarities between the music in the data set and the generated content. Furthermore, streaming services like Spotify and Amazon Music are naturally incentivized to develop their own AI music-generation technology. Spotify, for instance, pays 70% of the revenue of each stream to the artist who created it. If the company could generate that music with its own algorithms, it could cut human artists out of the equation altogether.

Over time, this could mean more money for giant streaming services, less money for musicians - and a less human approach to making music.

2. Mixing and mastering

Machine-learning-enabled apps that help musicians balance all of the instruments and clean up the audio in a song - what's known as mixing and mastering - are valuable tools for those who lack the experience, skill or resources to pull off professional-sounding tracks.

Over the past decade, AI's integration into music production has revolutionized how music is mixed and mastered. AI-driven apps like Landr, Cryo Mix and iZotope's Neutron can automatically analyze tracks, balance audio levels and remove noise.

These technologies streamline the production process, allowing musicians and producers to focus on the creative aspects of their work and leave some of the technical drudgery to AI.

While these apps undoubtedly take some work away from professional mixers and producers, they also allow professionals to quickly complete less lucrative jobs, such as mixing or mastering for a local band, and focus on high-paying commissions that require more finesse. These apps also allow musicians to produce more professional-sounding work without involving an audio engineer they can't afford

3. Instrumental and vocal reproduction

Using "tone transfer" algorithms via apps like Mawf, musicians can transform the sound of one instrument into another.

Thai musician and engineer Yaboi Hanoi's song "Enter Demons & Gods," which won the third international AI Song Contest in 2022, was unique in that it was influenced not only by Thai mythology, but also by the sounds of native Thai musical instruments, which have a non-Western system of intonation. One of the most technically exciting aspects of Yaboi Hanoi's entry was the reproduction of a traditional Thai woodwind instrument - the pi nai - which was resynthesized to perform the track

A variant of this technology lies at the core of the Vocaloid voice synthesis software, which allows users to produce convincingly human vocal tracks with swappable voices.

Unsavory applications of this technique are popping up outside of the musi-cal realm. For example, AI voice swapping has been used to scam people out of money

But musicians and producers can already use it to realistically reproduce the sound of any instrument or voice imaginable. The downside, of course, is that this technology can rob instrumentalists of the opportunity to perform on a recorded track.

While I applaud Yaboi Hanoi's victory, I have to wonder if it will encourage musicians to use AI to fake a cultural connection where none exists

In 2021, Capitol Music Group made headlines by signing an "AI rapper" that had been given the avatar of a Black male cyborg, but which was really the work of Factory New non-Black software engineers. The backlash was swift, with the record label roundly excoriated for blatant cultural appropriation.

But AI musical cultural appropriation is easier to stumble into than you might think. With the extraordinary size of songs and samples that comprise the data sets used by apps like Boomy - see the open source "Million Song Dataset" for a sense of the scale - there's a good chance that a user may unwittingly upload a newly generated track that pulls from a culture that isn't their own, or cribs from an artist in a way that too closely mimics the original. Worse still, it won't always be clear who is to blame for the offense, and current U.S. copyright laws are contradictory and woefully inadequate to the task of regulating these issues.

These are all topics that have come up in my own class, which has allowed me to at least inform my students of the dangers of unchecked AI and how to best avoid these pitfalls.

At the same time, at the end of each fall semester, I'll again ask my students if they're concerned about an AI takeover of music. At that point, and with a whole semester's experience investigating these technologies, most of them say they're excited to see how the technology will evolve and where the field will go.

Some dark possibilities do lie ahead for humanity and AI. Still, at least in the realm of musical AI, there is cause for some optimism - assuming the pitfalls are avoided (AP)

App to revolutionize creative expression

DatChat has announced that it has launched a series of novel AI-powered pets

Virtual pets need daily care

DatChat launches AI pets in its Habytat virtual world

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J., Aug 17: into significant revenue growth from DatChat (Nasdaq: DATS), has announced that it has launched a series of ments," stated Darin Myman, CEO of ered pets - called Haby Pets - in its Habytat metaverse. The release of the pets marks a significant milestone in Habytat's mission to bring the metaverse to life in a more accessible and innovative way via AI technology and machine learning. The initial breeds launching on Habytat include the Shiba Inu, German Shepherd, Golden Retriever, and Schnauzer, with plans to introduce additional breeds and cats in the near future. Once adopted, these virtual pets require daily care and training to keep them healthy, growing, and happy. Underpinned by Habytat's proprietary AI and machine learning engine, Haby-Pets grow over time from playful companions to mature adult pets. Similar to real-life pets, these AI pets can be trained by users via a range of behavioral commands, replicating the natural progression of real pets over time. These include, but are not limited to, catching frisbees, playing with toys, engaging in tug of war, and even participating in thrilling races with other pets at the park.

both advertisements and product place-DatChat of digital pets, we believe this presents a tremendous opportunity for our users to be entertained while also utilizing our platform to create unique digital assets for their furry friends. Leveraging AI and cutting-edge technology, we're bringing the nostalgia of beloved vintage gaming communities such as Tamagotchi and Neopets into 2023."

Adobe Express with Firefly brings generative AI to creators globally

SAN JOSE, Calif., Aug 17: Adobe (Nasdaq:ADBE) showcased the exciting momentum of the all-new Adobe Express, announcing the general availability for desktop web. The latest version of the AI-first, all-in-one content creation app with Firefly beta generative AI capabilities is revolutionizing creative expression, making it fast, easy and fun for users of all skill levels to design and share standout content.

The groundbreaking innovations in Express bring the power and precision of Adobe's popular photo, design, video, document and generative AI tools into a new AI-first, all-in-one editor, making tasks like creating stunning social video content, touching up images, importing, editing and decorating PDFs and laying out amazing designs, fast and easy.

Express is being used by millions of users globally - spanning all skill

Tech empowers organizations

Phenom AI Day to explore data models and AI innovations for human resources

PHILADELPHIA, Aug 17: Phenom is hosting AI Day - setting the HR industry's direction for AI's role in empowering organizations to hire faster, develop better and retain longer, while reaching new levels of efficiency. Domain experts will dive deep into the types of AI, including generative AI, the data models that power AI for HR, and its impact on candidates, employees, recruiters, managers, HR and

HRIS teams.

plexity and fear surrounding AI, and learn about explainable and defensible approaches to navigate local and global regulations.

Integrations that Streamline Data into Models: Uncover the extent of integrations available for HRIS teams to centralize data, and the controls that can be used to fine-tune how AI is applied.

"Understanding today's application of AI solutions, and where innovation which includes:

Changing the way talent acquisition and talent management hire, grow and retain with AI

Achieving constant monitoring and qualitative analysis of talent lifecycle performance with automation

Equipping organizations to take a skills-based approach to engage employees with personalization, succession planning and skills gap analyses with workforce intelligence

Behaviors

As the AI database expands, the pets' behaviors will too, creating a dynamic experience that evolves and adapts over time. Just like with real pets, Habytat users will assume the role of caretakers for their HabyPets, which will include tasks such as feeding, cleaning up after them, petting, and playing with them. By actively engaging with their pets, users can establish a genuine connection and provide proper care for their virtual companions, fostering a realistic experience within the Habytat metaverse.

"HabyPets are the first in a series of planned product releases designed to create an engaging, fun, and useful customer experience in the Habytat, that we anticipate that this will translate

Network

Habytat by SmarterVerse, a sub-sidiary of DatChat Inc., is a metaverse platform and privacy-first social network. By dramatically lowering the financial and technical barriers to entry to the metaverse, Habytat is democratizing access to the digital realm and giving users a remarkable opportunity to co-create community, business and life together. Built on SmarterVerse Holding's patented privacy technology, Habytat grants users complete control over their data, creating a social network users can trust.

DatChat Inc. is a secure messaging, metaverse, and social media company that not only focuses on protecting privacy on personal devices, but also protects user information after it is shared with others. The DatChat Messenger & Private Social Network presents technology that allows users to change how long their messages can be viewed before or after users send them, prevents screenshots, and hides encrypted photos in plain sight on camera rolls. Dat-Chat's patented technology offers users a traditional texting experience while providing control and security for their messages. With the DatChat Messenger, a user can decide how long their messages last on a recipient's device, while feeling secure that at any time, they can delete individual messages or entire message threads, making it like the conversation never happened.

levels - to create captivating social content, compelling videos, visually stunning PDFs, digital cards and flyers, engaging book reports and resumes, and much more. Available globally and with Firefly generative AI now supporting prompts in 100+ languages, it's even easier for Express users to generate high-quality images, create stunning text effects, streamline workflows and improve productivity in their language of choice, all within Express. These new AI-driven features are available now on desktop web, with plans to bring the latest version of Express to mobile soon.

With groundbreaking innovations and generative AI at the core of Express, we're empowering an everexpanding user base with an AI-first, all-in-one tool that makes content creation fast, easy and fun," said Govind Balakrishnan, senior vice president, Adobe Express and Digital Media Services at Adobe. "The all-new Express is revolutionizing how people turn ideas into stunning content and we're just getting started with exciting innovations across image creation, design, video, audio, PDFs and more still to come.

Express for Creative Cloud mem-

bers Whether you're a student, creative professional, communicator, small business or enterprise, Express is right for you. Creative Cloud memberships include the full paid version of Express Premium. CC members can easily access, edit and work with creative assets from Photoshop and Illustrator directly, or add linked files into Express that always stay in sync across apps. Users can also import and enhance PDFs quickly and easily in Express, adding eye-catching text, images, backgrounds, brand logos and more to

On September 14, AI Day attendees will receive an exclusive look at the latest AI advancements, the challenges they solve and the innovations that lie ahead, including:

The Data Models Powering HR Technology: Discover the ensemble of Foundational, Specialized, and Contextual models that are delivering unparalleled levels of personalization, precision and experience.

Impact and Use Cases Across Industries: Reimagine the impact of AI on efficiency, productivity and personalization when used by candidates, employees, recruiters, managers, HR and HRIS teams.

Bias, Ethics and Regulatory Compliance: Overcome the ambiguity, com-

uplevel any document. Express enables users to collaborate in real-time, and quickly create content for social media or concept approval, all while empowering teams to stay on brand. Express in enterprises

For enterprises, Express bridges workflows between creative professionals and marketers through integrations into Creative Cloud applications as well as Experience Manager, Adobe's world-class CMS solution in Adobe Experience Cloud. Seamless integrations democratize creativity beyond design teams, and enable organizations to create, collaborate and deliver content velocity at scale. With Express and Firefly for Enterprise, any employee across an organization can generate beautiful, ready-to-share content.

"Adobe Express has empowered our creatives to focus on high-impact, high-value work while equipping other teams with a powerful but easy-to-use design tool. We can bypass repetitive, manual tasks and save time without compromising our brand or creative

is headed, is essential to the success of every company," said Mahe Bayireddi, CEO and co-founder of Phenom. "AI enables the work-altering automation, personalization and experience for addressing organizations' hiring, development and retention needs."

Phenom has spent over a decade carefully developing, implementing and iterating on the appropriate foundations, models and approaches for AI by interpreting billions of events and human interactions. Through its Intelligent Talent Experience platform, Phenom delivers personalization, conversation, insights and automation throughout the entire talent journey. Phenom helps customers overcome critical hiring and retention challenges,

output," said Bridget Esposito, vice president and group creative director at Prudential Financial.

"Ensuring that our brand is represented correctly and coherently in the digital world is paramount, and a task that is distributed across many of our global teams. With Adobe Express, we're creating outstanding and brand uniform content in a way that's scalable," said Christina Lehnert, digital brand experience manager at Carl Zeiss AG.

Creativity for all

Small and medium business owners, solopreneurs, social media influencers, students and more can now easily plan, schedule, preview and publish standout content, all from one place. More than 56M students and educators around the world already have access to Express to collaborate in real-time to create stunning digital portfolios, shared projects, flyers, flashcards, animated videos and more

Latest innovations in express

New all-in-one editor gives users

With Phenom, candidates find and choose the right job faster, employees develop their skills and evolve, recruiters become wildly productive, managers build stronger-performing teams, HR aligns employee development with company goals, and HRIS creates a holistic tech infrastructure through seamless integrations.

Phenom has a purpose of helping a billion people find the right job. Through AI-powered talent experiences, employers are using Phenom to hire employees faster, develop them to their full potential, and retain them longer. The Phenom Intelligent Talent Experience platform seamlessly connects candidates, employees, recruiters, hiring managers, HR and HRIS.

the ability to make high-impact design elements, engaging videos and images, stunning PDFs, animation and standout content ready for Instagram, TikTok and other social channels and platforms.

Firefly integrated into Express makes it possible to quickly generate custom images and text effects from text prompts in over 100 languages and designed to be safe for commercial use.

Deep workflows with Creative Cloud apps allow users to easily access, edit and work with creative assets from Photoshop and Illustrator directly within Express, or add linked files that always stay in sync across apps.

New video, multiple page templates and design elements bring even more inspiration to the largest collection of beautiful, high-quality content, now with nearly 200 million assets including video and design templates, royalty-free Adobe Stock images, video and audio assets, almost 22,000 fonts, plus more icons, backgrounds and shapes.

NTT's SCARF to prevent information leakage due to cache attacks

Cache random function to enable fast, secure data access between CPUs

TOKYO, Aug 17: NTT Corporation (NTT) in collaboration with the Research Institute of Electrical Communication, Tohoku University and CASA (Cyber Security in the Age of Large-Scale Adversaries) at Ruhr University Bochum has developed a dedicated cache random function to eliminate the vulnerability caused by delay differences with the cache which is generated in the event of acquiring and updating data between CPU memories. This research contributes to the realization of a highly secure CPU that prevents information leakage due to cache attacks.

NTT designed and proposed a Secure Cache Randomization Function (SCARF) for randomization of cache index and formulated what type of function is suitable for randomizing of cache index by providing design guidelines for randomization of cache function which formulated appropriate random function.

Key points:

Modeling attackers to perform cache attacks

Design of a concrete function SCARF dedicated to cache index randomization

An efficient and secure design theory against modeled attackers is realized

using a tweakable block cipher2

Background of Research:

Current CPU introduces cache memory to reduce impact of delay required to transfer data between CPU memories by accelerating on subsequence references by placing used data near the CPU. Although data referred once can be referred at high speed from the next time which also makes it available to attackers. These attacks that exploit information are called a cache attack which causes a real vulnerability and countermeasures are needed. Among other things, contention-typed cache attacks resulting from a cache scramble between the target program and the attack program are recognized as a real threat with fewer prerequisites for attackers.

Randomization of cache index is a promising way for countermeasure of contention-based cache attacks. The randomization is thought to be impossible for an attacker to exploit the cache by not being able to determine the target's cache index used by an address, but it has not been known what level of implementation is necessary and sufficient to achieve randomization.

For example, encryption with block ciphers, a type of symmetric-key ciphers, is

considered as a candidate for a random function. However, block ciphers are originally a technique to ensure confidentiality. To be specific, block ciphers strive to be secure in an environment where an attacker can observe and manipulate all of the input and output and are overqualified for use in cache random function where the output cannot be observed.

Research results:

In this research, NTT first investigated what the attacker can actually do with a cache random function, and then worked on a design attack model for specified cache randomization function that reflected the attacker's capabilities appropriately. Specifically, NTT introduced a model of Enc-then-Dec that encrypts with the adjustment value t1 and then decrypts with the adjustment value t2, using a collision model that makes the corresponding input pair observable when part of the output collides, and tweakable block cipher instead of block cipher. Among other things, the latter model has a high affinity with existing symmetric-key ciphers design theories, and with proper design, it is possible to reduce the delay by half compared to conventional methods.

The Conversation

Model organism useful to blood development study

Zebrafish a scientist's favorite for early-stage research

By Gabrielle Dubansky and Raquel Espín-Palazón

Iowa State University

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

Scientists have relied on animal models as an alternative to testing on human tissues and cells for decades. But not just any organism can adequately model how human cells behave. Researchers take into account how quickly the organism can mature, how many offspring it can produce and how often it can reproduce. When studying genetics and developmental biology, one of the most important qualities to consider is how similar the model organism's genes are to human genes.

Although humans and fish certainly look very different, the zebrafish has proved to be an excellent model organism for scientists studying hematopoiesis, or the development of blood cells.

In the Espín Lab at Iowa State University, we study the early stages of blood development, particularly the birth of blood stem cells, which happens only once during embryonic development. We focus on a specific set of genes that play a significant but somewhat elusive role in the molecular pathways involved in this process. Although we want to understand how these genes work in the context of human blood development, testing on human embryos is obviously ethically impossible. To circumvent these challenges, we use zebrafish instead.

Zebrafish as a model organism

Zebrafish have several traits that make them excellent model organisms.

For one, one female zebrafish can produce hundreds of embryos per week. This is important to scientists because having larger sample numbers strengthens the accuracy of the data they collect in their experiments.

Żebrafish embryos are also able to develop quickly. One day of development in zebrafish is equivalent to approximately 90 days of human development. This means that researchers can save time and observe the different stages of development much sooner than with other organisms.

Another useful quality of zebrafish is that they are translucent during early development. As soon as their embryos are fertilized, scientists can observe cells and tissues form and clearly see the effects of modifying different genes.

Perhaps the most important feature of zebrafish for scientists is their genetic makeup. Approximately 70% of zebrafish genes have similar analogs in people, allowing researchers to study how certain genes work.

Studying blood disorders

Beyond sharing a significant percentage of genes with people, zebrafish are especially useful to blood development research because they produce the same types of blood cells. Just like people, zebrafish have erythroid, lymphoid and myeloid cell types that are responsible for numerous roles in the body, like circulating oxygen and regulating inflammation and immunity. Mature blood cells are derived from blood stem cells. Therefore, studying how these stem cells are made would aid in developing treatment for numerous blood disorders that rely on blood stem cell therapies, such as leukemia, lymphoma and anemia.

Labs like ours use zebrafish to study how specific cell signaling pathways contribute to the birth, development and maturation of these blood stem cells. This knowledge provides context for how healthy cells work and communicate, because cells rely on signals from other cells to know which genes they need to turn on to produce specific proteins and molecules.

For example, we have previously shown how inflammatory signaling pathways are needed for zebrafish to properly develop the hematopoietic stem cells that produce multiple kinds of blood cells. We are currently exploring how these inflammatory pathways produce human blood stem cells. While most cells receive certain signals that trigger them to express certain genes, stem cells are capable of developing into multiple types of cells in an organism. Stem cells are undifferentiated, meaning that they are not yet limited to expressing or following only certain parts of the DNA like more mature, differentiated cells.

For patients with blood-related disorders like leukemia

GE gets FDA clearance for wireless monitoring device

GEHC 'Portrait Mobile' aids early detection of patient deterioration

CHICAGO, Aug 17: GE HealthCare (Nasdaq: GEHC) has announced it has received 510(k) clearance from the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for its Portrait Mobile wireless and wearable monitoring solution. The Portrait Mobile platform enables real-time continuous monitoring with a personalized view of the patient's vitals while keeping patients mobile during critical recovery periods, especially after surgery or discharge from the intensive care unit. Continuously monitoring patients and having a real time view of data can help clinicians recognize deterioration earlier than traditional spot check methods, which typically occur only every 4-6 hours. The wireless patient-worn sensors combined with the smart phone-sized monitor eliminate all traditional tethers, allowing patients to move about the ward

freely, key to helping improve outcomes and reduce length of stay3. Portrait Mobile draws on GE HealthCare's track record in parameter excellence to modernize respiration rate measurement through novel wireless sensor technology. The system's dual-vector respiration rate measurement technology leverages an innovative algorithm designed for mobile patients, better capturing continuous respiratory rate through optimized electrode placement even with changing breathing patterns.

Recovering

"Patients recovering from major surgery are fragile. Most patients currently have vital signs monitored every 4-6 hours. We have shown that vital sign abnormalities are common – and sometimes profound and prolonged," shares Dr. Daniel Sessler, Michael Cudahy Professor and Chair of Outcomes Research at Cleveland Clinic, as well as the Principal Investigator for a joint trial currently evaluating Portrait Mobile. "Many potentially serious episodes of instability are missed with intermittent vital sign assessments. Continuous vital sign monitoring might help clinicians identify patients who are having difficulty so they can provide help quickly."

Undetected patient deterioration, particularly post-surgery, can lead to hazardous yet preventable consequences, with 30day mortality after surgery representing the 3rd leading cause of death globally4. The uninterrupted flow of data and continuous measurement of vital signs, such as respiration rate, oxygen saturation and pulse rate, can help healthcare providers detect patient decline as it is happening, enabling timely intervention before a patient deteriorates.

Event to showcase latest tech

Abu Dhabi's DoH announces inaugural ADGHW in May '24

ABU DHABI, UAE, Aug 17: Under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Chairman of Abu Dhabi Executive Council, the Department of Health – Abu Dhabi (DoH) will organise the inaugural Abu Dhabi Global Healthcare Week (ADGHW) from May 13-15, 2024, at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre in the UAE.

ADGHW aims to welcome international heads of state, government ministers and trade delegations, policymakers, and medical practitioners to address the world's most critical healthcare needs on the theme of 'Transforming the Future of Global Healthcare' and fostering a comprehensive healthcare ecosystem.

Reflecting the UAE capital's position as a leading global hub for healthcare, the event aims to provide a platform to foster dialogue, share knowledge, and drive investment - focused on healthcare for all. Centred on four key pillars, including reimagining healthcare, diverse and inclusive health, trailblazing medical breakthroughs and disruptive healthcare, the conference will provide a forum for the fields of genomics, digital and mental health, biotech, pharmaceuticals, research, innovation, investment, startup ecosystems, and more.

"It's important for recovery that patients be able to move around freely while their vital signs are being monitored," said Neal Sandy, general manager, monitoring solutions, GE HealthCare. "Until Portrait Mobile, patient monitoring required that patients be tethered to their beds, limiting mobility. GE HealthCare designed Portrait Mobile with this need in mind – the advent of a small wearable, wireless inpatient

His Excellency Mansoor Ibrahim Al Mansouri, Chairman of the Department of Health - Abu Dhabi, said: "Under the directives of our wise leadership, we continue to strengthen Abu Dhabi's position as a key player in healthcare globally. Stemming from our core belief in the power of global collaboration in saving and improving people's lives everywhere, we look forward to hosting strategists, futurologists, philanthropists, decision-makers and those who make a positive contribution to global healthcare in a holistic platform that contributes to the development and advancement of the healthcare ecosystems.

Healthcare

We believe that ADGHW will be an ideal platform for the global healthcare community to discuss the industry's future at a time when the UAE is driving transformation and opportunities on a fast track towards the future."

"We welcome the global healthcare industry, including the most thoughtprovoking disruptors, influencers and strategists to join us at Abu Dhabi Global Healthcare Week in 2024 to improve global healthcare delivery, build future preparedness, and form a vision of what end-to-end healthcare will look like in a changing geopolitical, technical, and en-

monitoring solution that provides reliable monitoring to the patient's care team, while allowing for more patient freedom and flexibility during recovery, is an important advancement in acute care."

Portrait Mobile is part of GE HealthCare's FlexAcuity monitoring solutions that combine hardware and software engineered to adapt to rapidly changing patient needs and builds on a well-established history of clinical advancements. It was this deep understanding of patient needs combined with a commitment to providing caregivers with actionable insights that led GE HealthCare's global engineers to develop this next evolution in patient monitoring technology. GE HealthCare's technology has been recognized globally for its design, receiving the iF Design Gold Award for Product Design in 2022 for Portrait Mobile and an iF Design Award in 2023 for CARESCAPE Canvas.

vironmental landscape."

Managed by dmg events, Abu Dhabi Global Healthcare Week will elevate the narrative around future-proofing a sustainable healthcare sector locally, regionally, and globally. It will also serve as a catalyst for start-ups and established businesses across the healthcare sector to form partnerships that will have long lasting, positive healthcare outcomes. The event will also host two awards programmes: The Philanthropy Awards and the Healthcare Innovation Awards to recognise individuals and organisations pushing the boundaries of global healthcare.

ADGHW will also feature a dedicated trade exhibition, with global healthcare providers showcasing the latest technologies across health-tech innovation, finance, information exchange, genomics, and patient engagement featuring over 20,000 attendees, 300 exhibitors, 200 thought leaders and speakers, facilitating knowledge transfer for 1,900 conference delegates.

Salman Abou Hamzeh, Vice President of DMG Events, said: "While Abu Dhabi has demonstrated its readiness to tackle healthcare challenges with its internationally acclaimed healthcare infrastructure and successful strategic alliances, the global healthcare industry still grapples with new and unforeseen challenges."

ian Society of Neuroradiology, gathering over a thousand medical professionals from Asia, Oceania, North America, Europe, and the rest of the world.

During this event, Heuron will showcase its neurodegenerative disease AI solution such as Heuron AgingCare SuiteTM, and its integrated stroke solution, Heuron StroCare SuiteTM, to engage in global collaborations and partnerships

there are currently limited treatment options. Bone marrow transplants are among these options. But there is a shortage of matching donors, and the procedure can be risky because of graft-versus-host disease, in which the donor's healthy immune cells attack the recipient's body cells.

A possible solution is to use a special kind of stem cell called an induced pluripotent stem cell. To make these cells, scientists use a special set of proteins called Yamanaka factors to turn on specific genes that revert a mature, differentiated cell into an immature, undifferentiated cell. From this point, the cells can be manipulated to express certain genes at specific times, told which part of their DNA to read or which signals to follow.

However, to properly direct these stem cells, researchers need a more complete understanding of the molecular signals involved and how they contribute to early blood development. To bridge these gaps, labs like ours rely on zebrafish to test their theories about the roles that certain genes and proteins play in development. Model organisms like zebrafish are what allow scientists to get one step closer to solving real-world problems every day. (AP)





GE HealthCare's Portrait[™] Mobile wearable, wireless continuous monitoring solution provides a real-time personalized view of your patient and encourages mobility while monitoring dual vector respiration rate, SpO2 and pulse rate continuously.

Heuron, a medical artificial intelligence (AI) solution company (**Donghoon Shin**, CEO), announced its participation in the Asian-Oceanian Congress of Neuroradiology 2023 (AOCNR 2023), which will be held in Singapore from August 18th.

AOCNR is an international academic conference organized by the Asian Ocean-

and partnerships.

Heuron AgingCare Suite[™] includes neurodegenerative diseases solutions for Parkinson's disease (Heuron IPD and Heuron NI), and Alzheimer's disease (Heuron AD and Heuron Brain PET). Utilizing MRI-based technology, it offers visual and quantitative information by aiding the early detection of neurodegenerative diseases and formulating an initial treatment plan.

Heuron StroCare Suite[™] is an integrated AI solution that enables one-stop classification of patients with cerebral hemorrhage and cerebral infarction with non-contrast CT. Without the need for contrast agents, it analyzes and identifies emergent stroke patients with conditions ranging from cerebral hemorrhage to emergent large vessel occlusion and calculates ASPECT score, ensuring a fast medical decision-making for patients requiring urgent procedures to reduce treatment time.



Iranian filmmaker, his producer face prison for showing film at Cannes

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates, Aug 17, (AP): An Iranian filmmaker and his producer reportedly face prison time and being barred from filmmaking after they showcased a movie at the Cannes Film Festival without government approval, drawing immediate criticism internationally from leading American director Martin Scorsese and others.

Director Saeed Roustayi and producer Javad Norouzbeigi traveled to Cannes last year to show "Leila's Brothers," competing for the festival's grand Palme d'Or prize. The film focuses on a family struggling to make ends meet as Iran faces international sanctions and includes sequences showing protests in the Islamic Republic as a series of nationwide demonstrations shook the nation.

The film also depicts security forces beating demonstrators protesting Iran's ailing economy, which has already sparked mass protests and bloody security force crackdowns killing hundreds. The family in it loses all its savings over the rapid depreciation of Iran's rial currency, something Iranians across the country have lived with for years.

Additionally, the aging patriarch, hoarding his family's wealth and forcing them into squalor for a chance at personal glory, can be seen as an allegory to Iran's theocracy.

"Leila's Brothers" didn't take the coveted Palme d'Or but ended up winning two other awards at Cannes. However, authorities in Tehran did not nominate the film for the Oscars despite its success at the renowned French film festival, something Roustayi later criticized in published remarks.



On Tuesday, Etemad newspaper reported that Tehran's Revolutionary Court sentenced the two men to six months in prison over creating "propaganda against the system."

The men showcased the film "in line with the counterrevolutionary movement ... with the aim of fame-seeking in order to prepare fodder and intensify the media battle against Iran's religious sovereignty," the court decision read, according to Etemad, a Tehran-based newspaper run by reformists.

The judge suspended all but 10-odd days of the prison sentence for the next five years, the newspaper said. However, the men will also be banned from filmmaking and communicating with those in the field during that period, as well as must attend a mandatory filmmaking course while "maintaining national and moral interests." The sentence is appealable.

Threats

No other major media outlet in Iran reported the sentencing and Etemad did not explain how it came about its information. Iran's Revolutionary Courts conduct closed-door hearings over alleged threats to Iran's government, taking nearly every case involving a suspect with Western ties or facing accusations of espionage.

The international reaction against the sentence was swift. Scorsese, known for his films "Goodfellas," "Casino" and the upcoming "Killers of the Flower Moon," asked people online to sign a petition to protest the men's sentence "so they can continue to be a force of good in the world." The Biarritz International Film Festival, at which Roustayi chaired the jury this year, immediately criticized the sentence as well and asked it be quashed by Iran's judiciary.

"His only crime is being a free-spirited filmmaker," the festival said. "Although he's not even 35, his sharp take on society makes him one of today's major international filmmakers."

Even inside Iran, there's been anger over the sentencing. The Iranian Cinema Directors Association issued an online statement, saying that "the race to issue insulting verdicts, which at the same time undermines the judiciary itself, has entered a new stage."

"If you think that by issuing such humiliating rulings, you are helping to solve problems, bring people together, create joy and hope and strengthen national security, then you have not been successful," the statement said.

Iran's mission to the United Nations did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Iranian filmmakers, though applauded internationally, long have faced government pressure back home. The same goes for actors, particularly after the September 2022 death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini after being detained by the country's morality police over not properly wearing a mandatory headscarf. Her death sparked nationwide protests and saw a security force crackdown that killed over 500 people and saw more than 22,000 others arrested.



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Xolo Maridueña in a scene from 'Blue Beetle.' (AP)

Film

LOS ANGELES: Britney Spea-

rs' husband, **Sam Asghari**, has filed for divorce from the superstar 14 months after they were married, a person familiar with the filing said late Wednesday.

The person, who is close to Asghari but not authorized to speak publicly, confirmed the filing happened Wednesday, hours after several outlets including TMZ and People magazine reported the couple had separated.

An email sent to a Spears representative was not immediately returned. Court records in Los Angeles and **Ventura** counties did not show where the case had been filed.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY, AUGUST 18-19, 2023

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Spears married Asghari at her home in **Thousand Oaks**, **California**, on June 9, 2022 in front of guests including **Selena Gomez**, **Drew Barrymore**, **Paris Hilton** and **Madonna**, in a wedding seen as a milestone in her newly reclaimed life after the dissolution just six months earlier of the court conservatorship that controlled her life for more than 13 years.

The pop superstar met and began dating Asghari, a model and actor, when he appeared in her video for the song "Slumber Party" in 2016.

She cited her desire to marry Asghari as among the reasons she wanted an end to the constraining conservatorship, which she said was preventing it. The two announced their engagement in September of 2021 as it became clear she would be freed from the conservatorship - which was ended that November.

Spears said she and Asghari lost a baby early in her pregnancy in May 2022, about a month before they married.

Reports of the couple's struggles had increased in recent months.

Their marriage is the first for the 29-year-old Asghari and the third for the 41-year-old singer. She was married for less than three days in 2004 to childhood friend **Jason Alexander**, who attempted to crash her wedding to Asghari and was later convicted of misdemeanor trespassing and battery. (AP)

CHARLESTON, W.Va: The executive director of West Virginia Public Broadcasting has stepped

By Jake Coyle

Franz Kafka never realized how close he came to kickstarting a superhero franchise.

Ever since Gregor Samsa awoke in his bed to find himself transformed into a monstrous dung beetle in "The Metamorphosis," we've had spider-men, wasps, ant-men, crime-fighting ticks and mighty mantises - such a super swarm of insectoids that you might be tempted to reach for a fly swatter.

We're now back to the beetle with the new DC Comics film "Blue Beetle," which was to open in theaters Thursday. But what distinguishes "Blue Beetle" isn't its place in the bug brigade but the person doing the metamorphosizing.

Jaime Reyes (Xolo Maridueña) is the first Latino superhero in a leading role in a DC film. It's not just token casting, either. "Blue Beetle," directed by Ángel Manuel Soto and written by Gareth Dunnet-Alcocer, is firmly rooted in the experience of the Reyes clan, a close-knit Mexican-American family scraping by in the shadow of the gleaming Miamilike fictional metropolis of Palmera City.

like fictional metropolis of Palmera City. Jaime is their first college graduate - "And last!" cheerfully chimes his sister, Milagro (the very funny, scene-stealing Belissa Escobedo). The parents, Alberto (Damián Alcázar) and Rocio (Elpidia Carrillo) are broke and on the cusp of losing their home to the encroaching, all-powerful Kord Industries. Also living with them are Jaime's grandmother (Adriana Barraza) and his truck-driving uncle (George Lopez, having a ball).

"We used to have the other side of the tracks,' says Milagro. "Now they want that, too."

Despite big post-college ambitions, Jaime is stuck cleaning hotel rooms with his sister. Given what his family has sacrificed for him, he's saddled with guilt. So after a chance encounter with Jenny Kord (the Brazilian actress Bruna Marquezine), niece of the company's imperial chief executive Victoria (Susan Sarandon), Jaime jumps at the chance of a job opportunity.

He happens to turn up at Kord headquarters just

down after one year on the job, the latest sign of upheaval at a news outlet recently shaken by a reporter's allegation that she was fired for writing an unfavorable story about a division of the state health department. **Butch Antolini**, former com-

munications director for Gov **Jim Justice** and the state Depart-



Spears

Asghar

as Jenny is fleeing with Victoria's prized discovery: a blue metallic scarab from outer space called the Khaji da that she's using to create an privatized robotic army. It's admittedly quite a jump from the real estate business, but, well, interest rates are sky high.

New DC film is 'light, lively and sincere'

Superhero 'Blue Beetle' is more than a bug

Before you know it, Jaime, tasked with hiding the beetle by Jenny, is looking down at the thing when it sinks itself onto his face and quickly seeps into his body. Gregor's initial response to changing into a beetle was simply to turn over ("How about if I sleep a little bit longer and forget all this nonsense"), but Jaime is afforded no such chance. He's immediately rocketed through the roof and into space.

In the broadly sketched but spirited "Blue Beetle," much of what follows is as you'd expect. There's getting used to the new outfit (and the sentient being that communicates Venom-style within Jaime). A recent past to uncover. The inevitable climactic battle between two hunks of CGI.

Empowerment

But "Blue Beetle," the final entry in a now defunct wave of DC films, distinguishes itself in other ways. Jaime's family is continually along for the ride, making up his supporting cast when the big fight comes. (The grandmother's younger days as a revolutionary emerge, comically.) Superheroes are ultimately empowerment fantasies, though they've often got away from that. "Blue Beetle" manages to come closer than most in evoking the thrill of the powerless suddenly handed cosmic strength.

Soto plays it fast and loose, mixing in a little lewdness ("Activate bug fart" is a new addition to the often solemn DC universe) and shades of neon blue and purple along the way. "Blue Beetle" doesn't have much originality going for itself and Maridueña doesn't make a significant impression. But the film crucially gets that superhero movies don't need to be self-serious to make a serious point.

"Blue Beetle," light, lively and sincere, is a tribute to the tenacity and indomitability of Mexican-American families that have clawed their way into an often inhospitable society. Family members, usually plot points of some animating trauma in superhero movies, are here a central part of the action. (Lopez gets countless cracks in, and most of them land.)

It's a time of self-inquiry for the superhero movie after hints of a new downward trend (despite some notable exceptions like the blistering "Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse," with its Afro-Latino protagonist). "Blue Beetle," which had at one point been destined to go straight to streaming, falls in the middle of this new uncertain terrain. After a string of disappointments, future DC installments will take the comic book franchise in new directions. So it remains to be seen if "Blue Beetle" can be much more than a bug in the system amid larger industry shifts.

But I'd wager there will be plenty of moviegoers - especially young Hispanic ones not accustomed to seeing reflections of themselves in Hollywood comic book spectacles - who'll grin all the way through the breezy "Blue Beetle." If even a low-stakes, fairly derivative superhero movie like this can charm thanks to its warm Hispanic perspective and winning supporting cast, there's plenty of hope yet for the genre - bugs and all.

"Blue Beetle," a Warner Bros. release is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for sequences of action and violence, language, and some suggestive references. Running time: 127 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: Gal Gadot gets her "Mission: Impossible"-style action film in the international espionage thriller "Heart of Stone." The film, debuted last Friday on Netflix, stars the "Wonder Woman" actor as a superspy for a shadowy global peacekeeping agency called the Charter. "Heart of Stone," directed by **Tom Harper**, boasts plenty of stunt sequences and international locales, with Gadot starring alongside **Jamie Dornan**, **Alia Bhatt**, **Keya Dhawan** and **Sophie Okonedo**. (AP)

ment of Agriculture, didn't give a reason for his resignation in a brief letter submitted to the board chairman of the West Virginia Educational Broadcasting Authority on Friday. The EBA, which comprises 11 voting members, including Justice and seven Justice appointees, accepted the resignation at a

meeting Monday.

The board then appointed Eddie Isom, Public Broadcasting's chief operating officer and director of programming, as interim director, according to a recording of the meeting aired on YouTube.

Antolini joined Public Broadcasting in October 2021 as the interim chief. He was appointed to the job permanently in May 2022, at a time when Justice was critical of the way all news media covered his failed attempt a year earlier to lower income taxes and increase sales taxes. Justice led a shake-up of the department, replacing five of the EBA's eight appointed positions. (AP)

NEWS/FEATURES

People & Places

Obits

UK talk show host Parkinson dies

Jerry Moss, A&M Records co-founder, dies aged 88

LOS ANGELES, Aug 17, (AP): Jerry Moss, a music industry giant who co-founded A&M Records with Herb Alpert and rose from a Los Angeles garage to the heights of success with hits by Alpert, the Police, the Carpenters and hundreds of other performers, has died at 88.

Moss, inducted with Alpert into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2006, died Wednesday at his home in Bel Air, California, according to a statement released by his family. He died of natu-

ral causes, his widow told The Associated Press.

don't

"They truly make them like him anymore and we will miss conversations with him about everything un-der the sun,"

the statement reads in part, "the twinkle in his eyes as he approached every moment ready for the next adventure.

Resource

For more than 25 years, Alpert and Moss presided over one of the industry's most successful independent labels, releasing such blockbuster albums as Alpert's "Whipped Cream & Other Delights," Carole King's "Tapestry" and Peter Frampton's "Frampton Comes Alive!" They were home to the Carpenters and Cat Stevens, Janet Jackson and Soundgarden, Joe Cocker and Suzanne Vega, the Go-Gos and Sheryl Crow.

Among the label's singles: Alpert's "A Taste of Honey," the Captain and Tennille's "Love Will Keep Us Together," Frampton's "Show Me the Way" and "Every Breath You Take," by the Police.

"Every once in a while a record would come through us and Herbie would look at me and say, 'What did we do to deserve this, that this amazing thing is going to come out on our label?" Moss told Artist House Music, an archive and resource center, in 2007

His music connections also led to a lucrative horse racing business that he owned with his second wife, Ann Holbrook. In 1962, record manufacturer Nate Duroff lent Alpert and Moss \$35,000 so they could print 350,000 copies of Alpert's instrumental "The Lonely Bull," the label's for Horse of the Year in 2008 and 2009 and won the following year. A hit single by Sting gave Moss the name for another profitable horse, Set Them Free.

Moss made one of his last public appearances in January when he was honored with a tribute concert at the Mark Taper Forum in downtown Los Angeles. Among the performers were Frampton, Amy Grant and Dionne Warwick, who wasn't an A&M artist but had been close to Moss from the time he helped promote her music in the early 1960s. While Moss didn't speak at the ceremony, many others praised him.

"Herb was the artist and Jerry had the vision. It just changed the face of the record industry," singer Rita Coolidge said on the event's red carpet. "Certainly A&M made such a difference and it's where everybody wanted to be.'

Moss' survivors include his second wife, Tina Morse, and three children.

Born in New York City and an English major at Brooklyn College, Moss had wanted to work in show business since waiting tables in his 20s and noticing that the entertainment industry patrons seemed to be having so much fun. After a sixmonth Army stint, he found work as a promoter for Coed Records and eventually moved to Los Angeles, where he met and befriended Alpert, a trumpeter, songwriter and entrepreneur.

With an investment of \$100 each, they formed Carnival Records and had a local hit with "Tell It to the Birds," an Alpert ballad released under the name of his son, Dore Alpert.

Also:

LONDON: Michael Parkinson, a renowned broadcaster widely considered Britain's talk show king has died at age 88.

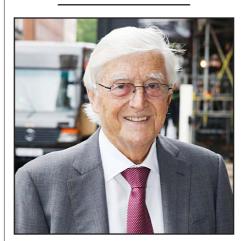
His family said in a statement to the BBC on Thursday that Parkinson died "peacefully at home last night" after a brief illness.

Parkinson's career included interviews with celebrities such as Muhammed Ali, David Bowie and John **Lennon**. His talk show, which was called "Parkinson," first aired on the BBC in June 1971 and enjoyed a successful run until 1982. In 1998, the show was revived on the BBC and proved an instant hit. It then switched to commercial rival ITV in 2004 and ran until 2007.

Parkinson, who was commonly known as Parky, was knighted by the late Queen Elizabeth II in 2008 and



American singer and songwriter Billie Eilish performs during her concert at the 29th Sziget (Island) Festival on Shipyard Island, Northern Budapest, Hungary, Tuesday, Aug. 15, 2023. The festival is one of the biggest cultural events of Europe offering art exhibitions, theatrical and circus performances and above all music concerts. (AP)



British broadcaster, journalist and author Michael Parkinson poses for photographers as Alan Whicker, in central London, Wednes-day, May 28, 2014. Michael Parkinson, the renowned British broadcaster who interviewed everyone from Muhammed Ali, David Bowie and Miss Piggy, has died. He was 88. In a statement Thursday, Aug. 17, 2023 to the BBC, his family said Parkinson died 'peacefully at home last night in the

company of his family.' (AP)

Media

'No publishable content with ChatGPT' News outlets set rules for AI use

NEW YORK, Aug 17, (AP): The Associated Press has issued guidelines on artificial intelligence, saying the tool cannot be used to create publishable content and images for the news service while encouraging staff members to become familiar with the technology.

AP is one of a handful of news organizations that have begun to set rules on how to integrate fast-developing tech tools like ChatGPT into their work. The service will couple this on Thursday with a chapter in its influential Stylebook that advises journalists how to cover the story, complete with a glossary of terminology.

"Our goal is to give people a good ay to understand how w experimentation but also be safe," said Amanda Barrett, vice president of news standards and inclusion at AP. The journalism think tank Poynter Institute, saying it was a "transformational moment," urged news organizations this spring to create standards for AI's use, and share the policies with readers and viewers.

up with possible questions for an interview.

AP has experimented with simpler forms of artificial intelligence for a decade, using it to create short news stories out of sports box scores or corporate earnings reports. That's important experience, Barrett said, but "we still want to enter this new phase cautiously, making sure we protect our journalism and protect our credibility.

ChatGPT-maker OpenAI and The Associated Press last month announced a deal for the artificial intelligence company to license AP's archive of news stories that it uses for training purposes.

vizations are concerned about their material being used by AI

companies without permission or pay-

ment. The News Media Alliance, repre-

senting hundreds of publishers, issued a

statement of principles designed to pro-

tect its members' intellectual property

ry that artificial intelligence could even-

tually replace jobs done by humans and

is a matter of keen interest, for example,

in contract talks between AP and its un-

ion, the News Media Guild. The guild

hasn't had the chance to fully analyze

what they mean, said Vin Cherwoo, the

visions and have questions on others,"

"We were encouraged by some pro-

With safeguards in place, AP wants

its journalists to become familiar with

the technology, since they will need to

report stories about it in coming years,

Technology

Some journalists have expressed wor-

Tina



first major hit. A decade later, Duroff convinced Moss to invest in horses.

The Mosses' Giacomo, named for the son of A&M artist Sting, won the Kentucky Derby in 2005. Zenyatta, in honor of the Police album "Zenyatta Mondatta," was runner-up said of the accolade, "I never expected to be knighted - I thought there was more chance of me turning into a Martian really."

The celebrities he interviewed also included Fred Astaire, Jimmy Cagney and Orson Welles.

Variety

ROME: Renata Scotto, a soprano of uncommon intensity who became a successful director after her singing career, died Wednesday in her hometown of **Savona**, **Italy**. She was 89

Scotto's New York-based manager, Robert Lombardo, said he was called by her family and informed of her death. "I had spoken to her several weeks ago and I didn't get any any indication that anything was going on," he said. Scotto maintained homes in Italy and Ar-

monk, New York.

"Renata Scotto is a true artist and profound connoisseur of voice and repertoire, gifted with technique, musicality, a personality of a rare power, always at the service of the composer, and able to emotionally stir the public in all the world in every phase of her long career," soprano **Cecilia Gasdia**, superintendent of the Fondazione Arena in Verono, said in a statement.

Scotto made 314 appearances at the Metropolitan Opera from her debut in Puccini's "Madama Butterfly" on Oct. 13, 1965, to her finale, also as Cio-Cio-San, on Jan. 18, 1987. She also directed during her final run, and that became her new profession.

"I like to live in the present," she said in a 2007 interview with The Associated Press. "Of course, I watch my DVDs. I enjoyed every second of my career. Now I live with the young singers. I love them so much."

Born Feb. 24, 1934, in Sovona, Scotto debuted there in 1952 as Violetta in Verdi's "La Traviata" and sang the role the next day at Milan's Teatro Nuovo

She debuted at Milan's Teatro alla Scala on Dec. 7, 1957, the opening night of the season, in the title role of Catalani's "La Wally" alongside Mario Del Monaco with Carlo Maria Giulini conducting.

When Scotto made her Met debut, The New York Times headlined her as a new star. (AP)

LONDON: The British Museum said Wednesday that a member of its staff has been dismissed after items dating back as far as the 15th century B.C. were found to be missing, stolen or damaged.

The museum said it has also ordered an independent review of security and a "vigorous program to recover the missing items."

The stolen artifacts include gold jewelry and gems of semi-precious stones and glass dating from the 15th century B.C. to the 19th century A.D. Most were small items kept in a storeroom and none had been on display recently, the museum said.

"Our priority is now threefold: first, to recover the stolen items; second, to find out what, if anything, could have been done to stop this; and third, to do whatever it takes, with investment in security and collection records, to make sure this doesn't happen again," said George Osborne, the museum's chair.

"This incident only reinforces the case for the reimagination of the museum we have embarked upon," Osborne said.

The museum said legal action would be taken

Written

Generative AI has the ability to create text, images, audio and video on command, but isn't yet fully capable of distinguishing between fact and fiction

As a result, AP said material produced by artificial intelligence should be vetted carefully, just like material from any other news source. Similarly, AP said a photo, video or audio segment generated by AI should not be used, unless the altered material is itself the subject of a story.

That's in line with the tech magazine Wired, which said it does not publish stories generated by AI, "except when the fact that it's AI-generated is the point of the whole story.

"Your stories must be completely written by you," Nicholas Carlson, Insider editor-in-chief, wrote in a note to employees that was shared with readers. "You are responsible for the accuracy, fairness, originality and quality of every word in your stories.

Highly-publicized cases of AI-generated "hallucinations," or made-up facts, make it important that consumers know that standards are in place to "make sure the content they're reading, watching and listening to is verified, credible and as fair as possible," Poynter said in an editorial.

News organizations have outlined ways that generative AI can be useful short of publishing. It can help editors at AP, for example, put together digests of stories in the works that are sent to its subscribers. It could help editors create headlines or generate story ideas, Wired said. Carlson said AI could be asked to suggest possible edits to make a story concise and more readable, or to come

AP's Stylebook - a roadmap of journalistic practices and rules for use of terminology in stories - will explain in the chapter due to be released Thursday many of the factors that journalists should consider when writing about the technology.

Barrett said.

rights.

union's president.

Cherwoo said.

"The artificial intelligence story goes far beyond business and technology," the AP says. "It is also about politics, entertainment, education, sports, human rights, the economy, equality and inequality, international law, and many other issues. Successful AI stories show how these tools are affecting many areas of our lives."

The chapter includes a glossary of terminology, including machine learning, training data, face recognition and algorithmic bias.

Little of it should be considered the final word on the topic. A committee exploring guidance on the topic meets monthly, Barrett said.

"I fully expect we'll have to update the guidance every three months because the landscape is shifting," she said.

against the dismissed staff member and that the matter was under investigation by London's Metropolitan Police Service.

The 264-year-old British Museum is a major London tourist attraction, drawing visitors from around the world who come to see a vast collection of artifacts ranging from the Rosetta Stone that unlocked the language of ancient **Egypt** to scrolls bearing 12th century Chinese poetry and masks created by the indigenous people of Canada. (AP)

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SCIENCE

Climate

Poor & vulnerable hit

Study reports far more hurricane deaths in US

NEW YORK, Aug 17, (AP): Hurricanes in the US the last few decades killed thousands more people than meteorologists traditionally calculate and a disproportionate number of those victims are poor, vulnerable and minorities, according to a new epidemiological study.

A team of public health and storm experts calculated that from 1988 to 2019 more than 18,000 people likely died, mostly indirectly, because of hurricanes and lesser tropical cyclones in the continental United States. That's 13 times more than the 1,385 people directly killed by storms that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration figures, but the study authors said those numbers aren't directly comparable.

Instead of just looking at people who drowned, were hit by debris or killed directly by the storm, the study in Wednes-



day's journal Science Advances examines changes in a storm-hit county's overall number of deaths just before, during and after a hurricane and compared those to normal years. Researchers attributed the excess deaths to the storm, using a standard public health technique.

Parks

"It's the difference between how many people died and how many people would have died on a normal day' with no hurricane, said study lead author Robbie Parks, an environmental epidemiologist at Columbia Univer-

sity's Mailman School of Public Health.

After a storm, deaths spike because of heart and lung problems, infections, injury and mental health issues, Parks said. It's a stressful time with clean-up and rebuilding.

Parks said meteorologists do an admirable job counting people killed during the height of the storm, but so many people die indirectly and especially after the storm, he said "it does seem to be an undercount" that misses the poorest and most vulnerable Americans.

"People who have the least means suffer the most," said study lead author Robbie Parks, an environmental epidemiologist at Mailman. "It's a good opportunity to put a number on that.'

Communities

Using the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention's social vulnerability index, Parks divided American counties into the least vulnerable third, the most vulnerable third and the middle, categories that often correlate with the richest, poorest and middle income people. In the case of the heaviest hurricane winds, the most vulnerable third had 57% of the excess deaths and least vulnerable had 6%.

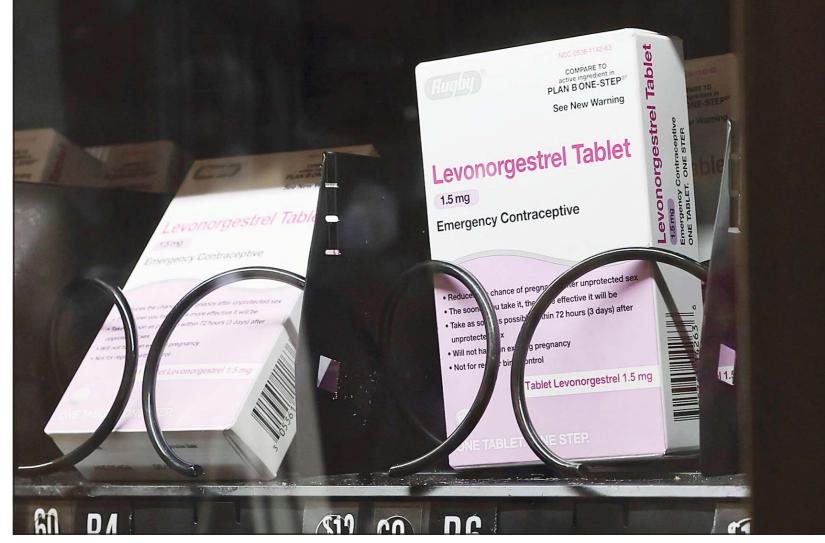
'Conceptually the results of the study make sense, as tropical cyclones often leave communities vulnerable for long periods of time after impact," National Hurricane Center Director Michael Brennan said in an email.

The hurricane center has noticed this when their experts study storm sites, so the center is trying to increase community engagement to more socially vulnerable populations and expand translation of storm warnings into other languages, Brennan said.

"It does not surprise me, but deeply saddens me that excess mortality is largest among the most vulnerable segments of our population," said MIT hurricane scientist Kerry Emanuel, who wasn't part of the study. "It is the poorer people with fewer places to evacuate to and fewer means to get out

who take the brunt of the suffering." After a storm, people need to have money "to do more than just survive from day to day," which is why the poorer, more vulnerable survive less, said former NOAA hurricane scientist Jim Kossin of the climate risk nonprofit First Street Foundation, who also was not part of the study.

Finding out how many people are really killed because of a storm is much more challenging to quantify than merely counting direct deaths reported in the media, Kossin said.



The emergency contraceptive levonorgestrel is displayed for sale in a vending machine on the campus of the University of Washington in Seattle on Friday, June 2, 2023. Taking piroxicam, which is typically prescribed for arthritis, together with the morning-after pill levonorgestrel could boost its effectiveness when taken up to three days after unprotected sex, according to new research published Wednesday, Aug. 16. (AP)

Health

More effective emergency contraceptive option

Arthritis drug ups Plan B effectiveness

LONDON, Aug 17, (AP): Taking a common arthritis drug together with the morning-after pill Plan B could boost the contraceptive's effectiveness, according to new research published Wednesday.

Levonorgestrel, often called Plan B, is the most widely available type of emergency contraception. It works by preventing or delaying ovulation.

Scientists estimate that it is about 95% effective when taken within a day after unprotected sex, dropping to 58% or lower within three days. The new study, published by the medical journal Lancet, suggests levonorgestrel can remain highly effective up to three days after unprotected sex when it is taken with piroxicam, an anti-inflammatory pain medication typically prescribed for arthritis.

"It's really exciting and very timely that we could have a more effective emergency contraceptive option," said Kelly Cleland, executive director for the American Society for Emergency Contraception, who was not part of the Lancet study.

US appeals court backs some restrictions on abortion drug

NEW ORLEANS, Aug 17, (AP): Mail-order access to a drug used in the most common form of abortion in the US would end under a federal appeals court ruling issued Wednesday that cannot take effect until the Supreme Court weighs in.

The decision by three judges on the 5th US Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans overturned part of a lower court ruling that would have revoked the Food and Drug Administration's 23-year-old approval of mifepristone. But it left intact part of the ruling that would end the availability of the drug by mail, allow it to be used through only the seventh week of pregnancy rather than the 10th, and require that it be administered in the presence of a

about whether the drug would be safe for the women who use it," Judge Jennifer Walker Elrod wrote for the panel. She was joined by Judge Cory Wilson. Judge James Ho dissented, arguing to fully uphold a Texas-based federal judge's April ruling that would revoke the drug's approval, which the FDA granted in 2000.

President Joe Biden's adminis-tration said it would appeal, with Vice President Kamala Harris decrying the potential effect on abor-tion rights, as well as on the avail-ability of other medications.

"It endangers our entire system of drug approval and regulation by undermining the independent, ex-pert judgment of the FDA," Harris'



A patient prepares to take the first of two combination pills, mifepristone, for a medication abortion during a visit to a clinic in Kansas City, Kan., on, Oct. 12, 2022. New restrictions on access to the drug used in the most common form of abortion would be imposed under a federal appeals court ruling issued Wednesday, Aug. 16, 2023, but the Supreme Court will have the final say. (AP)

For example, the National Hurricane Center estimates that 1,200 people died in 2005's Hurricane Katrina, but using deaths before, during and after and comparing them to 30 years of normal death rates for those places at that time of year, Parks and colleagues figured a death count of 1,491.

Parks' team found bigger gaps between official death counts and what they calculated for 2012's Superstorm Sandy, where the hurricane center said 147 people died. Parks put the death toll at 1,193. And the largest gap was for 2017's Irma, where NOAA said 92 people died directly or indirectly in the United States, while Parks counted 1.202

The National Hurricane Center's Brennan said his agency writes official reports on storms that use fatality statistics based on information from government officials, medical examiners and the media within several months of landfall. The center doesn't have access to the longer-term statistical studies used to calculate "indirect" deaths, but tries to bring them in when able, such as in the case of 2005's Katrina and 2017's Maria.

In a separate report for the American Meteorological Society, the National Hurricane Center analyzed how people died in direct hurricane deaths the last 10 years and compared them to earlier. It found that a much lower percentage of people are being killed by storm surge, but a higher percentage of Americans are dying in freshwater flooding.

From 1963 to 2012, storm surge was responsible for almost half of the hurricane deaths. NOAA has made a concerted effort to improve storm surge forecasts, warning and education of residents on the coast. Since 2013, only 11% of the hurricane deaths were storm-surge related, the hurricane center said.

But freshwater flooding deaths went from 27% of the deaths to 57% of all hurricane deaths, a figure that may be skewed by 2017's Hurricane Harvey, when there 65 freshwater flooding deaths. Rip current and surf deaths went from 6% of the hurricane deaths to 15%.

Also:

NEW DELHI: Days of relentless rain in India's Himalayan region have killed at least 72 people this week, a government official said Thursday, as a heavy monsoon triggered landslides and flash floods that have submerged roads, washed away buildings and left residents scrambling for safety.

Rescuers in the mountainous Himachal Pradesh state have been working through challenging weather conditions to save people trapped under mud and debris from the rains that struck over the weekend. India's weather department has put the state on high alert and expects the downpours to continue over the next few days.

Vikram Singh, an operator at the state's emergency operation center, said on Thursday that the 72 deaths occurred over the previous five days and that rescue work was ongoing.

Hundreds of roads remain blocked and schools in the capital city of Shimla have been ordered shut as the Indian Air Force and disaster response teams help evacuate people from low-lying, vulnerable areas. The state's chief minister, Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, said over 2,000 people have been rescued using helicopters and motor boats and are now safe in relief camps.

Visuals on social media showed trees falling apart as homes, built atop the hills, collapsed in succession. In the background, people can be heard crying out in horror, as they shouted "get out from here" and "get back."

In Shimla, a Hindu temple collapsed on Monday amid deadly landslides, and authorities feared that people are still buried under the debris. Authorities said the temple was crowded with devotees, raising fears that the death toll could rise as rescue work carries on.



Discovery

Ship to retrace Darwin's voyage: A

schooner set sail Tuesday from the south coast of England to train and inspire a new generation of naturalists by retracing the voyage taken by a young Charles Darwin nearly 200 years ago that led to his theory of evolution.

The Dutch ship Oosterschelde was cheered as it left Plymouth on a two-year mission to work with future scientists who will study species discovered by Darwin and develop projects to save them.

The boat will serve as a floating laboratory on the sea and in port, where some 200 young naturalists and conservationists from around the world will meet along the way to take part in the project called Darwin200.

"This is about hope, it's about future and it's about changing the world," said leader Stewart McPherson.

McPherson said a group of mostly 18- to 25-year-olds "won't let animals or plants fall off the cliff of extinction.'

Darwin set sail aboard the HMS Beagle in 1831 on a five-year voyage that passed around South America and went to Australia and New Zealand.

The ship will make its first landing in the Canary Islands and then cross the Atlantic to Brazil. It will sail down South America's east coast and up its west coast and out to the Galapagos Islands where Darwin made some of his most important discoveries.

Sarah Darwin, a botanist, said she supports the mission for using her greatgreat-grandfather's voyage to highlight environmental change. She said Charles Darwin's greatest legacy was recognizing the place of humans in nature.

The boat will go to Australia and New Zealand before returning to South America and then crossing the Atlantic again to South Africa before returning to England. (AP)

'Beavers' nature's helper: For years, beavers have been treated as an annoyance for chewing down trees and shrubs and blocking up streams, leading to flooding in neighborhoods and farms. But the animal is increasingly being seen as nature's helper in the midst of climate change.

California recently changed its tune and is embracing the animals that can create lush habitats that lure species back into now-urban areas, enhance groundwater supplies and buffer against the threat of wildfires.

A new policy that went into effect last month encourages landowners and agencies dealing with beaver damage to seek solutions such as putting flow devices in streams or protective wrap on trees before seeking permission from the state to kill

Scientists tracked 836 women at a Hong Kong clinic between 2018 and 2022 who had unprotected sex and requested emergency contraception within three days. Half the women

the legal fight. received a dose of levonorgestrel and piroxicam while the other half got the contraceptive pill plus a placebo.

Combination

Doctors calculated that 95% of pregnancies among the women who got the combination with piroxicam were prevented, compared with 63% of those who got the placebo combination.

The most common side effects in both groups were fatigue, nausea, abdominal pain, dizziness and headache. No funding was provided for the study. The researchers used a Hong Kong brand of the contraceptive that it is sold over-the-counter in the US under several names, including Plan B One-Step.

The authors acknowledged that because the research was done in mostly Asian women weighing less than 70 kilograms (154 pounds), it was unclear if the results could be extrapolated to other populations. There is some evidence levonorgestrel doesn't work as well in heavier women.

Piroxicam is in the same class of anti-inflammatories as ibuprofen and paracetamol. It requires a prescription in many countries, including the US and the UK.

the animals. The state is also running pilot projects to relocate beavers to places

where they can be more beneficial. The aim is to preserve more beavers, along with their nature-friendly behav-



Homes remain surrounded by floodwaters in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Sept. 11, 2005, in New Orleans. Hurricanes in the US over last few decades killed thousands more people than meteorologists traditionally calculate and a disproportionate number of those victims are poor, vulnerable and minorities, according to a new epidemiological study released Wednesday, Aug. 16. (AP)

physician. Those restrictions won't take effect right away because the Supreme Court previously intervened to keep the drug available during

The panel's ruling would reverse changes the FDA made in 2016 and 2021 that eased some conditions for administering the drug.

"In loosening mifepristone's safety restrictions, FDA failed to address several important concerns

"It's fascinating that they found this already existing medication really increases the efficacy of Plan B," said Dr. Beverly Gray, a Duke University associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology who was not part of the new study. "But any medication that requires a prescription is going to be one more barrier, so what we really need is an over-the-counter medication that people can use in conjunction with Plan B.

Dr. Kristina Gemzell Danielsson, head of Women and Children's Health at Sweden's Karolinska Institute and one of the Lancet study authors, said similar anti-inflammatory drugs could have the same effect. She said there would be no risk to women who took over-the-counter ibuprofen with Plan B, though it might not prove as effective as longer-acting piroxicam.

Piroxicam can cause bleeding in the

iors. "There's been this major paradigm shift throughout the West where people have really transitioned from viewing beavers strictly as a nuisance species, and recogceptive pill, ellaOne. She recommended that women keep some form of emergency contraception at home, especially in places with highly restrictive abortion policies. "It is a simple, effective and really smart solution to have," Gemzell-Dan-

ielsson said. "You don't buy (Band-Aids) because you plan to cut yourself, but you have it because you think it might happen.'

nizing them for the ecological benefits that they have," said Valerie Cook, beaver restoration program manager for California's Department of Fish and Wildlife. The program was funded by Gov. Gavin Newsom's administration last year.

The push follows similar efforts in other Western states including Washington, which has a pilot beaver relocation program, Cook said. It marks a new chapter in Californians' lengthy history with the animals, which experts say used to be everywhere, but after years of trapping, attempts at reintroduction, and then removal under depredation permits, are found in much smaller numbers than they once were - largely in the Central Valley and northern part of the state.

It is unknown how many beavers live in California, but hundreds of permits are sought by landowners each year that typically allowed them to kill the animals. According to the state's Department of Fish and Wildlife, the beaver population in North America used to range between 100 million and 200 million but now totals between 10 million and 15 million.

Kate Lundquist, director of the WA-TER Institute at the Occidental Arts & Ecology Center, said she expects California's changes will lead to fewer beavers killed in the state and a growth in wetland spaces. She said she believes the past three years of drought and devastating wildfires contributed to the state's shift on beavers. (AP)

statement said. Abortion rights advocates said the ruling poses a major threat to abortion availability following last year's Supreme Court ruling that overturned Roe v. Wade and the

"If the Supreme Court affirms this decision, it will prevent patients from receiving their medication in the mail in all 50 states in the nation," Jennifer Dalven of the American Civil Liberties Union said during an online news conference.

stomach or severe skin reactions and

increases the risk of heart or kidney

disease in people susceptible to those

conditions. Still, experts said using the drug once would be less likely to

cause harm, particularly for the mostly

vounger women who would be most

likely to use emergency contraception.

studies could examine whether anti-

inflammatories boost the effectiveness

of the other main emergency contra-

Gemzell-Danielsson said further

SPORTS

Union defying expectations in Bundesliga and relishing chance to rattle CL

Kane set for first start at Bayern against Werder Bremen

MUNICH, Aug 17, (AP): Harry Kane has had an "immedi-ate effect" on Bayern Munich's locker-room atmosphere and is expected to make his first start for the German champions against Werder Bremen on Friday, Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel said Thursday.

Hours after being announced as a Bayern player, the England captain came on as a 64th-minute substitute in Bayern's 3-0 loss to Leipzig in the German Super Cup on Saturday. Kane indicated Sunday that he might need time to adapt to Bayern after 19 years at Tottenham.

Tuchel said Kane will start Friday's game "if nothing hap-pens today, nothing extraordinary," and said he was fitting in well with the rest of the Bayern team.

"My first impressions of Harry are fantastic. He is a top professional, the quality is outstanding and he's a fantastic human being, he is very open, he's first on the training pitch, he is open in the dressing room," Tuchel said. "I think he has immediate effect in the dressing room with his personality, with his approach to football, his love for the game, you feel it every day. You feel it in every little exercise.

Tuchel added that injured first-choice goalkeeper Manuel Neuer is further along in his recovery than expected after recent surgery and could return to training with the rest of the team in a matter of weeks.

"The development with Manu is extremely positive," Tuchel said. "I saw him training myself the last couple of days. I'm no recovery expert, obviously, but what I saw was very impressive. It looked very good and so we are counting on a return to team training in the coming weeks, and that obviously has effects on our planning."

SOCCER

Tuchel added that "the priority in any planning is basically to give Manu time and rest to get healthy and get back into the goal, and at the same time we obviously want to be competitive at a very high level."

Union Berlin surprised itself last season when it prospered in the Bundesliga and clinched Champions League qualifica-

The players had a hard time believing their success as they soared past their preseason target of mere survival to finish fourth and reach Europe's premier competition for the first time

"It's surreal," Union coach Urs Fischer said after the last game of the season.

"We can really be happy about finishing fourth, but it's important we stay true to ourselves," Fischer said in typical manner. "Yeah, Champions League, it can change things a little bit. But I believe we have to keep this humility and stay modest.

With Union in the Champions League, few know what to expect from a club that has been exceeding expectations and improving every year since Fischer's team won a playoff for Union's first ever Bundesliga promotion in 2019.

But excitement is building in the German capital, where Union is the only team playing top-flight soccer following city rival Hertha Berlin's relegation.

Union's own stadium, Stadion An der Alten Försterei (Stadium at the Old Forester's House), holds only 22,000 fans, so the club opted to play its Champions League games in the 75,000-capacity Olympiastadion traditionally used by Hertha.

Union's website crashed and all 40,000 season tickets for the group stage were sold out in a day, long before anyone knows which opponents the team will face. The Champions League draw takes place on Aug. 31. Members who didn't get a season ticket will be able to get individual match tickets after this date. Demand is again likely to exceed supply.

Union is the only team in Germany's top division to have played in the DDR-Oberliga, East Germany's Bundesliga



New York Liberty players, coaches and staff pose for a group photo after defeating the Las Vegas Aces in a basketball game for the WNBA Commissioner's Cup championship in Las Vegas. (AP)

equivalent. Its biggest achievement before promotion was winning the East German Cup in 1968.

The Köpenick-based club has thrived since reaching the Bundesliga. It finished 11th in the 18-team league in its first season in 2020, then seventh in 2021, fifth in 2022, and fourth last season, when it was leading up until the 13th round. It also reached the last 16 in the Europa League and the quarterfinals of the German Cup.

While Union was been trying - and failing - to keep expectations down despite its success on the field, managing director Oliver Ruhnert's transfer dealings reveal an ambition that appears beyond the club's modest resources.

Ruhnert saw off competition from Eintracht Frankfurt and Wolfsburg to sign Germany international Robin Gosens in a club-record transfer from Inter Milan on Tuesday.

Among others this summer, Union signed American international Brenden Aaronson on loan from Leeds, Ivorian forward David Datro Fofana on loan from Chelsea, French midfielder Lucas Toussart from city rival Hertha Berlin, and Czech midfielder Alex Kral from Schalke. The club was expected to complete the signing of former Bayer Leverkusen forward Kevin Volland on Thursday.

Liberty dominate Aces to win Commissioner's Cup

Jones named MVP

LAS VEGAS, Aug 17, (AP): Marine Johannes scored 17 points with five **3-pointers**, Jonquel Jones had 16 points and 15 rebounds, and the New York Liberty beat the Las Vegas Aces 82-63 to win the third WNBA Commissioner's Cup championship.

New York handed Las Vegas its first home loss of the season - in 16 games - after holding the Aces below 65 points for the second time

US women's national team coach Vlatko resigns after early WC exit

WASHINGTON, Aug 17, (AP): U.S. women's national team coach Vlatko Andonovski has resigned, a person familiar with the decision told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

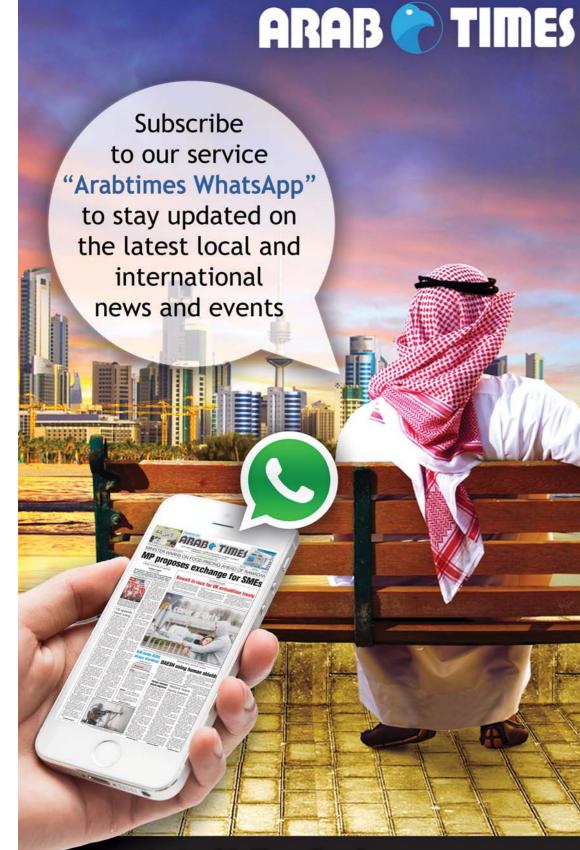
The move comes less than two weeks after the Americans were knocked out of the Women's

World Cup earlier than ever before. The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because

the World Cup. Some of the players who emerged were Sophia Smith, last year's U.S. Soccer player of the year, and Trinity Rodman.

The United States was bitten by injuries in the run-up to the tournament, losing key players. Mallory Swanson injured her knee during a friendly in April, and captain Becky Sauerbrunn couldn't recov-

er from a foot injury in time. Promising young forward Cata



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in nine days.

New York closed the third quarter on a 15-5 run to take a 56-48 lead - capped by back-to-back 3-pointers by Kayla Thornton. Sabrina Ionescu added consecutive 3-pointers early in the fourth quarter to extend it to 66-52

The Liberty finished 15 of 35 from 3-point range, while the Aces made just 5 of 26. New York also held A'ja Wilson, the Aces' leading scorer at 21.2 points per game, to just nine points - all in the first half.

Breanna Stewart scored 13 points, Ionescu added 12 and Courtney Vandersloot had 11 points and 10 assists for New York. Jones was named the MVP of the championship game after securing her 11th double-double of the season. Thornton finished with eight points to help the Liberty have a $28-\hat{8}$ edge in bench points.

BASKETBALL

Jackie Young scored 16 points, and Chelsea Gray and Kelsey Plum each added 15 points for Las Vegas. The Aces shot just 33% from the field and were outrebounded 49-28.

The game got off to a slow start as each team missed its first seven field goals until Stewart put New York ahead 3-2 with 6:12 remaining in the first quarter. Las Vegas made just one of its first 16 field goals, including 0 of 8 from distance. New York led 32-23 with 3:57

left before halftime but didn't score again as Las Vegas scored the final 11 points for a 34-32 lead at the break. Gray tied it at 32-all with 41.1 seconds left after converting a three-point play and Young added a fast-break layup. Gray had 11 points at the break. The Aces shot just 30% from the field in the first half, including 2 of 15 from 3-point range.

The in-season tournament saw New York and Las Vegas finish as the top teams in the Eastern and Western Conferences. Each member of the Liberty will receive around \$30,000. Players on the Aces each get about \$10,000.

The Aces (27-3) and Liberty (24-6) also are 1-2 in the WNBA regularseason standings and have secured playoff spots. The two teams play each other in a regular-season game on Thursday. New York has won six straight regular-season games.

The first-place Aces won both the Commissioner's Cup and the WNBA title last season.

the move had not been officially announced. An announcement was expected Thursday.

The four-time champion struggled through the World Cup. A victory over Vietnam to kick off the group stage was followed by draws against Netherlands and Portugal - barely enough to get the team into the knockout stage.

The Americans played well in the round of 16 against Sweden but ultimately fell on penalties af-ter a scoreless tie. The U.S. scored just four goals over the course of the tournament.

The United States had never finished worse than third at previous World Cups.

World Cups. The 46-year-old Andonovski was named coach of the United States in October 2019, taking over for Jill Ellis, who led the United States to back-to-back World Cup titles. He finished 51-5-9 during his time with the team, and was 3-2-5 in major tournaments.

Following the match against Sweden, Andonovski said he wasn't thinking about his future with the team - only his young players. Fourteen players on the roster were appearing in their first World Cup, and 12 of them had never played in a major tournament.

"We spent four years together. They got their first caps with me, they got their first national team call-ups with me," Andonovski said. "We spent tough times, good times. I don't want to see them like that. That's all I think about."

The United States also finished with a disappointing bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics. Afterward, Andonovski turned his attention on developing young players ahead of rina Macario tore her ACL playing for her club team Lyon last year and also wasn't ready to play in the World Cup.

The World Cup was challenging for many elite teams because of the ever-growing parity in the women's game. Germany, Brazil and Canada, the winners in Tokyo, also got knocked out early. Sunday's final between England and Spain in Sydney will give the tournament a first-time winner.

SOCCER

Andonovski was head coach of Seattle's OL Reign in the National Women's Soccer League when he was hired. During his seven years in the NWSL, he led the nowdefunct FC Kansas City from the league's inception in 2013 until the club folded in 2017, winning two league titles.

Andonovski, a native of Skopje, Macedonia, played for several teams in Europe before embarking on a professional indoor soccer career in the United States.

His predecessor on the U.S. team, Ellis, led the Americans to World Cup titles in 2015 and 2019. Over the course of her fiveyear tenure, they lost just seven matches.

"What I would hope in this (hiring) process (is) that it's robust, it's diverse. It has to be," Ellis said Thursday in Sydney. "This is a critical hire. And I think it has to be the right person.'

The timeline to find a replacement is relatively short. The United States has already qualified for the 2024 Olympics in France.



New York Liberty guard Courtney Vandersloot (22) shoots next ton Las Vegas Aces guard Kelsey Plum, right, during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Las Vegas. (AP)

SPORTS

Braves complete sweep of struggling Yankees

Tigers edge AL Central-leading Twins

MINNEAPOLIS, Aug 17, (AP): Spencer Torkelson homered twice against Minnesota for the second time in a week, and the Detroit Tigers beat the Twins 8-7 on Wednesday.

Torkelson lifted Griffin Jax's 1-1 sweeper into the left-field seats to give the Tigers a 6-4 lead in the top of the seventh for his fourth career multi-homer game. His previous was last Wednesday against the Twins in Detroit.

Relievers Beau Brieske, Tyler Holton, Alex Lange and Will Vest combined for 5 1/3 innings of scoreless relief. Holton (2-2) earned the win by striking out five in 2 1/3 perfect innings

Max Kepler and Jorge Polanco homered for the Twins. Kerry Carpenter added a solo shot for Detroit.

Jax (5-7) took the loss, surrendering four earned runs on three hits.

Braves 2, Yankees 0

In Atlanta, Charlie Morton recorded 10 strikeouts in six innings, Eddie Rosario hit a two-run homer and Atlanta beat New York to complete a threegame sweep and give the struggling Yankees their first losing record of the season.

BASEBALL

New York (60-61) was left with a five-game losing streak after being outscored 18-3 in the sweep, capped by back-to-back shutouts. The Braves (78-42) have thrown four shutouts in their last seven games to boost the majors' best record.

Morton (12-10) allowed four hits with one walk as he struck out at least 10 batters for the 26th time in his career. His only previous double-digit strikeout game this season came with 10 in a 12-0 win at Texas on May 15.

Padres 5, Orioles 2

In San Diego, Fernando Tatis Jr. stole home in the seventh inning to electrify a sellout crowd at Petco Park and big league ERA leader Blake Snell pitched six strong innings as San Diego beat Baltimore to take two of three from the best team in the AL.

Two batters after Trent Grisham homered to give the Padres a 4-2 lead, Tatis singled, stole second and took third on pitcher Cionel Perez's throwing error. With Juan Soto batting, the left-handed Perez had his back turned and Tatis took a few steps, began jogging and then broke into a sprint to easily steal home. Perez was so surprised he didn't attempt to throw home.

Snell (10-8) saw his ERA tick up from 2.63 to 2.65 as he allowed two runs and just three hits while striking out five and walking two. Josh Hader pitched the ninth for his 27th save.

Dodgers 7, Brewers 1

Except home isn't what it used to be. Barcelona will play its first official

game in its temporary home against

Cadiz while Camp Nou undergoes an

extensive makeover, and coach Xavi

Hernández will be watching from the

complaining about the decisions of

the referee during his team's 0-0

draw at Getafe in their season opener

last week. The former midfielder was

handed a two-game suspension for his

The hosts will also be missing for-

ward Raphinha, who earned a red card

against Getafe when he elbowed an op-

posing player. That leaves Barcelona

without a pure winger, after Ousmane

Dembélé left for Paris Saint-Germain

in the offseason. The empty spot in

the starting lineup could be filled by

forwards Ferran Torres or Ansu Fati,

or another midfielder like Gavi Páez.

Xavi was sent off for excessively

average and an MLB-high 1,138 hits, was held scoreless for the ninth time.

Ohtani, the designated hitter whose turn in the starting rotation this week was skipped because of arm fatigue, went the opposite way for a 437-foot homer to left-center in the first inning off Jon Gray (8-6).

Rays 6, Giants 1

In San Francisco, Luke Raley had the first pinch-hit, inside-the-park home run in Tampa Bay history and Aaron Civale (6-3) pitched six strong innings for his first victory since being acquired at the trade deadline.

Isaac Paredes had three hits and seven other starters had at least one. Josh Lowe hit his 15th home run leading off the fourth, while Brandon Lowe connected for his 16th as part of a threerun fifth.

Joc Pederson and Johan Camargo had two hits apiece for San Francisco, which has lost six of its last eight games.

Astros 12, Marlins 5

In Miami, Alex Bregman, Kyle Tucker and Chas McCormick homered in the first inning, and Houston built a huge early lead in beating Miami.

Astros slugger Yordan Alvarez hit his fourth career triple, and Mauricio In Los Angeles, Mookie Betts went tered the game with .273 team batting Dubón had two hits and two RBIs as Mariners ended up needing. Cal Ra-

letic Bilbao. England midfielder Jude Bellingham had an excellent debut for

Madrid, impressing with his dribbling skills and scoring his team's second goal.

Almeria lost its opener 2-0 to Rayo

Atletico visits Real Betis on Sun-

day in the top matchup of the weekend

after they finished third and sixth, re-

spectively, in the standings last season.

Granada at home thanks to goals from

Memphis Depay, Álvaro Morata and

on Monday seeking to bounce back

from back-to-back losses to start the

season, including a defeat to Manches-

ter City in a penalty shootout in the

Also, Sevilla is at promoted Alaves

Marcos Llorente in its opener.

UEFA Super Cup.

Atletico eased to a 3-1 victory over

Vallecano.

Houston banged out 12 hits and took

nings of five-run ball. He gave up nine

hits, walked two and struck out two in

his third start since he rejoined the As-

Phillies 9, Blue Jays 4

solo home runs, Aaron Nola pitched

five innings and snapped a four-start

winless streak and Philadelphia won

Jake Cave added a solo homer and

Nick Castellanos had two hits and an

RBI as the Phillies hammered out 11

hits and avoided a sweep in the two-

his 25th career multi-homer game and

first this season. Nola (10-8) allowed

four runs and four hits, including a

two-run home run by Daulton Varsho.

Nola struck out seven and walked four.

Mariners 6, Royals 5

hit a tiebreaking sacrifice fly in the

eighth inning and Seattle beat Kansas

City

In Kansas City, Teoscar Hernandez

Julio Rodriguez had four hits for

Seattle, including a ninth-inning single

that provided an insurance run the

Harper went 3 for 4 with a walk in

In Toronto, Bryce Harper hit two

tros at the trade deadline Aug. 1.

for the first time in four games.

game series north of the border.

leigh added a home run and a double. two of three games from Miami. Luis Castillo (9-7) allowed four Justin Verlander (8-6) threw five in-

runs on nine hits in seven innings. He walked one and struck out three. Matt Brash picked up his third save

despite allowing Nelson Velazquez's homer in the ninth.

Nationals 6, Red Sox 2

In Washington, Keibert Ruiz hit a tiebreaking three-run homer in the eighth inning, Stone Garrett homered twice for the first time in his career, and Washington beat Boston.

After Lane Thomas singled and Joey Meneses was hit by a pitch leading off the eighth, Ruiz drove an 0-1 changeup from Garrett Whitlock (5-4) to right-center to make it 5-2. Two pitches later, Garrett hit a no-doubt, 442-foot liner to center, his ninth of the season. Garrett also homered leading off the fourth.

MacKenzie Gore allowed one hit while pitching into the seventh inning for Washington. The second-year lefty appeared to have some discomfort on his pitching hand after throwing a firstpitch ball to Trevor Story with one out.

Jordan Weems came in and retired Story on a double-play grounder but gave up a tying, two-run homer to Pablo Reyes in the eighth. Jose A. Ferrer (2-0) got the final two outs of the

AC Milan midfielder Ruben Ira

Loftus-Cheek (8) controls the

ball during a Soccer Champions

Tour exhibition match against Real Madrid FC in Pasadena,

Calif. (AP)

hold of forward Victor Osimhen

despite reports of the lure of the

cash-rich Saudi clubs. Osimhen

helped Napoli to glory last season,

with 26 league goals, and will again

spearhead the attack along with last

season's revelation: winger Khvicha

However, the Serie A champi-

ons saw another one of their key

players - South Korea defender

Kim Min-jae - leave for Bayern

SOCCER

Kim was Serie A's best defend-

In an attempt to fill the gaping

er last season and played all but

three of Napoli's 38 league games.

hole left in the defense, Napoli has

signed Natan from Brazilian club

Bragantino. At 22, Natan is rela-

tively unknown and still has room

for improvement but little was

known about Kim when he arrived

last year as a replacement for Kali-

and Sweden midfielder Jens Ca-

juste, Napoli has seen little action

in the transfer market. That might

in part be due to the departure of

sporting director Cristiano Giun-

toli - the man who signed "Kvara"

and Kim and a host of other in-

fluential players like Giacomo

Raspadori and Giovanni Simeone.

Apart from the arrivals of Natan

dou Koulibaly.

Kvaratskhelia.

Munich.

MLB Results/Standings

15

			_					
		7 (40)						
WASHINGTON, Au standings from MLB	g i aam	7, (AP)	: Kesu	its and				
Detroit	9a111 8	Minnes	eunesu ota	ay. 7				
Tampa Bay	6		ancisco					
Oakland	8	St Loui		o l				
Cincinnati	7	Clevela	2					
Atlanta 2		NY Ya	0					
Houston 12		Miami	5 2					
Washington 6 Philadelphia 9		Boston	2					
Chicago Cubs 4		Chicag						
LA Angels	A Angels 2		Texas					
Seattle	Seattle 6		Kansas City					
San Diego	5		Baltimore					
NY Mets	8	Pittsbu	3					
Tampa Bay Arizona	6 9		San Francisco Colorado					
LA Dodgers	7 Milwaukee		7					
American League								
East Division								
	W 74	L 47	Pct .612	GB				
	74 73	47 50	.593	2				
	67	55	.549	7-1/2				
	63	57	.525	10-1/2				
	60	61	.496	14				
		Division	Pct	CD				
	W 63	L 59	.516	GB				
	58	63	.479	4-1/2				
Detroit	54	66	.450	8				
	48	73	.397	14-1/2				
	39	83 ivision	.320	24				
	W	L	Pct	GB				
	72	49	.595	_				
	70	52	.574	2-1/2				
	65	55	.542	6-1/2				
	60	62	.492	12-1/2				
Oakland 34 87 .281 38 National League								
Eas	st Di	vision						
	W	L	Pct	GB				
	78	42	.650					
	66 63	55 59	.545 .516	12-1/2 16				
	55	66	.455	23-1/2				
Washington	54	67	.446	24-1/2				
Cent		Division						
	W 65	L 56	Pct .537	GB				
	65 62	56 58	.537 .517	2-1/2				
	63	59	.516	2-1/2				
Pittsburgh	54	67	.446	11				
	54	67	.446	11				
West Division W L Pct GB								
	73	46	.613	_				
San Francisco	64	57	.529	10				
	61	60	.504	13				
	58	63	.479	16				
Colorado	46	75	.380	28				
Cube 4 White Soy 3								

Cubs 4, White Sox 3

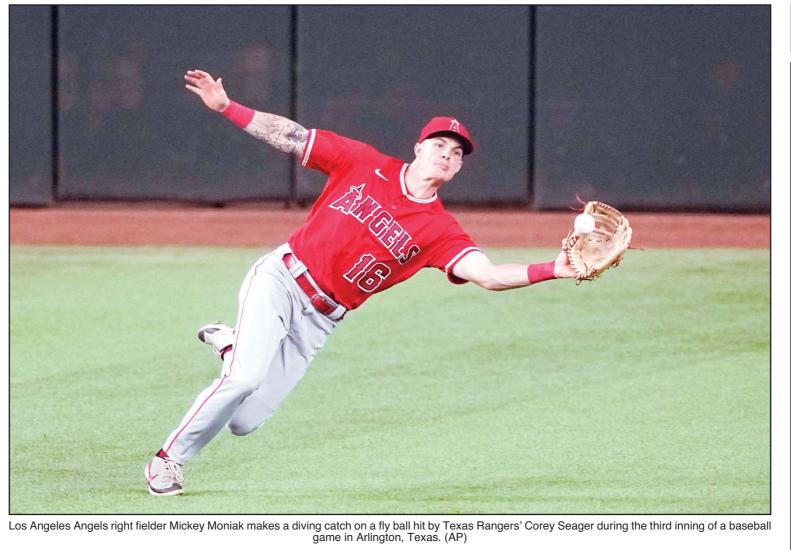
In Chicago, Christopher Morel hit a dramatic three-run homer off Gregory Santos in the ninth inning, and the Chicago Cubs beat the Chicago White Sox.

Cody Bellinger sparked the winning rally with a leadoff double. Dansby Swanson then walked before Morel drove a 1-2 pitch from Santos (2-1) over the wall in right-center for his 19th homer.

Morel's first career game-ending homer was the Cubs' first hit with runners in scoring position all night. They were looking at a frustrating shutout loss before Nick Madrigal's pinch-hit homer against Aaron Bummer in the eighth set the stage for Morel's big swing in the ninth.

Drew Smyly (9-8) pitched a scoreless inning for the win.

Reds 7, Guardians 2



on Sunday at home.

stands.

behavior.

Detmers (3-9).

3 for 4 and scored four runs, and Los

Angeles Dodgers benefitted from two

catcher's interference calls to win their

10th in a row and increase their NL

West lead to 10 games over San Fran-

skid with a 3-for-5 performance to go

with stellar defense. Five of the Dodg-

ers' seven runs came with two outs, in-

cluding Chris Taylor's solo shot in the

one run and three hits in five innings,

struck out two and walked two. The

left-hander's 208th victory moved him

within one of tying Don Drysdale for

second on the franchise's all-time wins

Angels 2, Rangers 0

mers took a no-hitter into the eighth in-

ning and two-way star Shohei Ohtani

hit his 42nd home run as Los Angeles

Marcus Semien lined a double into

the left-center gap with one out in the eighth on the 108th and final pitch by

Reynaldo Lopez and Carlos Estevez

then finished off the Angels' eighth

shutout this season. Texas, which en-

Madrid visit Almeria

Barca host Cadiz at temporary home stadium

The Rangers got their first hit when

beat the AL West-leading Texas.

In Arlington, left-hander Reid Det-

Clayton Kershaw (11-4) allowed

seventh. Miguel Rojas also homered.

Freddie Freeman ended an 0-for-14

cisco.

list.

Champs play Frosinone

Napoli set to kick off title defense with a new coach but same spirit

MILAN, Aug 17, (AP): Napoli fans are getting ready to start where they left off three months ago

The southern city of Naples has barely stopped celebrating since the team ended a 33-year wait for the Italian league title and the streets are still festooned with the club's colors.

Chants of "champions" rung out at Napoli's final few matches last season after the club clinched the Serie A title with five matches to spare and those same chants will be joyously sung when the team opens this season at newly-promoted Frosinone on Saturday.

But it will be something of a new-look Napoli that takes to the field, not least because there will be a new face in the dugout.

Luciano Spalletti - the coach whose attacking tactics garnered plaudits from all over Europe left the team, saying he needed a break, and was replaced by Rudi Garcia.

The 59-year-old Garcia has bucked a trend by leaving Saudi Arabia. The French coach left Al Nassr by mutual agreement in April, not long after it signed Cristiano Ronaldo and before the country's clubs began signing some of Europe's top players en masse.

Garcia is familiar with Italian soccer, having coached Roma for twoand-a-half years, but the only trophies in his managerial career came 12 years ago when he steered Lille to the French league and cup double. However, Spalletti's trophy cabinet was also relatively bare when he arrived at Napoli and the

team didn't fare too badly under him. In Garcia's favor is the fact that

Napoli remains largely unchanged from the team that stormed to the Serie A title last season, impressing in Europe, too.

"We are ready to start the season," Garcia said after the team's final friendly match - a 2-0 win over Apollon Limassol. "What matters is being in the best condition for the match at Frosinone. We need to put on a good performance because we are facing a fighting opponent."

Napoli's biggest boost of the offseason is that it managed to keep

In Cincinnati. Stuart Fairchild and Matt McLain hit two-run homers in the fourth inning and Cincinnati handed Cleveland's Noah Syndergaard his first loss in 10 career starts against the Reds.

TJ Friedl had three hits, scored three runs and made two spectacular catches in center field to back rookie left-hander Andrew Abbott (8-3) and help the Reds split the two-game Ohio Cup series.

Åbbott didn't walk anybody while giving up six hits and two runs with five strikeouts in five innings.

Reds relievers Fernando Cruz, Sam Moll, Derek Law and Alan Busenitz combined to allow three hits in four shutout innings.

Diamondbacks 9, Rockies 7

In Denver, Christian Walker hit a pair of two-run homers, the second in the eighth inning lifting Arizona past Colorado.

Tommy Pham singled off Tyler Kinley (0-1) to open the eighth inning and Walker followed with a 425-foot homer to right-center for an 8-7 lead. Walker, who has 28 homers, also homered in the first two games of the series. He has 22 career homers against Colorado, 13 at Coors Field.

Walker had three hits and four RBIs. Nick Ahmed had a three-run triple and Corbin Carroll had two hits and his 37th stolen base after replacing Lourdes Gurriel in the fifth inning. Gurriel left because of a strained left hip.

Mets 8, Pirates 3

In New York, DJ Stewart had his first multi-homer game in two years, leading New York over Pittsburgh.

Stewart, who also homered as a pinch-hitter in Tuesday's 7-4 loss, hit a solo shot in the second inning off Johan Oviedo (6-13) and had a two-run homer in the fifth off Ryan Borucki. The two-homer game was the third of Stewart's career and his first since Aug. 12, 2021, when he went deep twice for the Baltimore Orioles.

Pete Alonso hit his 36th homer, a solo shot that moved him into the Mets' top 10 list in RBIs with 469, snapping a tie with Keith Hernandez.

Tylor Megill (7-6) earned his first win in exactly two months after giving up two runs in five innings.

Athletics 8, Cardinals 0 In St. Louis, Zack Gelof had four hits and Paul Blackburn pitched seven scoreless inning as Oakland beat St. Louis and snapped a nine-game road losing streak.

Gelof had his second career four-hit game - and the second this week - after getting four against Washington on Sunday.

Blackburn (3-3) turned in the longest outing of his season, allowing six hits, with eight strikeouts and one walk.

BARCELONA, Spain, Aug 17, (AP): After having both its coach and best Former Manchester City midfielder Il-kay Gundogan debuted for Barcelona winger sent off last week, Barcelona in the opening match. will try to jump start its Spanish season Barcelona wants to avoid another

slip after both Real Madrid and Atlético Madrid won their openers. Cadiz barely avoided relegation last season and is considered among the most modest of the teams in the top division. It beat Alaves 1-0 in its opener.

This will be the first competitive match that Barcelona plays at Lluis Companys Olympic Stadium. The main stadium for the 1992 Barcelona Olympics can hold 49,000 people - compared to the 99,000-strong Camp Nou, Europe's largest soccer stadium. Camp Nou is undergoing a long-delayed overhaul to improve its facilities and add even more seats.

Madrid will go for a second victory to start the season when it plays at Almeria on Saturday.

It will do so without central defender



Manchester City's Mateo Kovacic (left), challenges for the ball with Sevilla's Oliver Torres during the UEFA Super Cup final soccer match between Manchester City and Sevilla at Georgios Karaiskakis stadium in Piraeus port, near Athens, Greece. (AP)

The injury to Militão came days after Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois also tore a knee ligament. An-driy Lunin, Courtois' backup, started against Bilbao, and Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti has said that Lunin would be his first-choice goalkeeper. But the club signed Kepa Arrizabalaga on loan SOCCER from Chelsea this week.

Éder Militão after he tore a ligament in his left knee during the 2-0 win at Ath-



Chicago Bears wide receiver Dante Pettis (86) drops a pass in front of Indianapolis Colts safety Michael Tutsie (35) during an NFL football joint practice at the Colts' training camp in Westfield, Ind. (AP)



Latest sports scores at — http://sports.arabtimesonline.com **City edge Sevilla to win UEFA Super Cup**



Manchester City players celebrate after winning the UEFA Super Cup Final soccer match between Manchester City and Sevilla at Georgios Karaiskakis stadium in Piraeus port, near Athens, Greece. (AP)

15th trophy won by Citizens in Guardiola's reign

ATHENS, Greece, Aug 17. (AP): Manchester City marked its first appearance in the UEFA Super Cup by beating Sevilla 5-4 in a penalty shootout to add another piece of silverware to its vast haul under manager **Pep Guardiola.**

After a 1-1 draw in regulation time and then nine successful spot kicks in the shootout. Nemanja Gudelj struck his attempt against the crossbar to hand City victory inside Stadio Georgios Karaiskakis. It was a 15th trophy won by City in Guardiola's reign that started in 2016 and made up for the loss to Arsenal in a penalty shootout in the Community Shield 10 days ago. "The manager made it so clear to us before the game how much he wants to win this trophy," City midfielder Jack Grealish said about the annual match between last season's winners of the Champions League (City) and Europa League (Sevilla). "You want to win everything anyway but that gave us more of an urge. This club has never won it. It's a brilliant feeling."

De Bruyne and Haaland included

Messi makes shortlist for UEFA award

NYON, Switzerland, Aug 17, (AP): Lionel Messi made the three-man shortlist announced Thursday for the UEFA award as the best player in Europe last season.

The World Cup-winning captain from Argentina, who has left Europe to play for Inter Miami, is up against Manchester City teammates Kevin De Bruyne and Erling Haaland. Messi won the UEFA award twice in its 12-year history, both in years when Barcelona was European champion. Man City

tournament-leading eight goals at last year's World Cup, including three in the final against Argentina. Ranked above Mbappé were Man City midfield-

ers İlkay Gündoğan and Rodri, whose goal decided the Champions League final. The only Inter player getting votes was Marcelo Brozović in eighth place. The Croatia midfielder

has since moved to the Saudi league. Cristiano Ronaldo and Neymar, others who have noved to Saudi Arabia, got no votes from the UEFA panel, which included coaches from clubs

Pressure on Pochettino to deliver

After taking spending spree to \$1b, Chelsea head to West Ham LONDON, Aug 17, (AP): So, after a change of ownership, two managerial firings, three wild transfer windows the midfield. A central midfield of Caicedo, Enzo

and the arrival of 23 players - and counting - at a staggering cost of around \$1 billion, is new-look Chelsea ready to compete for the English Premier League title again? Not yet, most would say.

However, there are signs that good things might be around the corner for a club which, for the past two years, has been consumed by chaos on and off cially now Caicedo is there to shore up

Fernandes and either Lavia or Conor Gallagher has wing backs Reece James and Ben Chilwell in front of a defense containing Thiago Silva and Levi Colwill - one of English soccer's most promising center backs. That has the makings of a strong team with plenty of youth on its side, not counting the 38-year-old Silva of course.

Chelsea not being in Europe gives Pochettino a week between each league game to get his methods ingrained in the team. A kind-looking early fixture sched-ule helps, too, with West Ham up next away on Sunday, followed by matches against Luton, Nottingham Forest, Bournemouth, Aston Villa, Fulham and Burnley. By then, Chelsea should have plenty of points and a team working the way Pochettino wants. There are some concerns, though. In Sanchez, Chelsea has a starter who finished last season as Brighton's second-choice goalkeeper and isn't the ball-playing goalie many top teams have. In attack, Jackson is somehow the only real out-and-out striker in the squad and might have to shoulder the burden up front until December while Nkunku recovers from a knee injury

Youssef En-Nesyri's towering header gave Sevilla the lead in the 25th minute of a match played in stifling heat and humidity in Athens.

City equalized through a header

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by winger Cole Palmer in the 63rd as the European champions dominated the second half, with star striker Erling Haaland staying on the field for the whole game despite a big Premier League match against Newcastle coming up on Saturday

Guardiola became the second manager, after Carlo Ancelotti, to win the Super Cup four times and the first to win it with three different teams after doing so at Bayern Munich (2013) and Barcelona (2009, 2011).

Kyle Walker lifted the cup amid ticker tape and chants of "Champions" by his City teammates on the stage in the middle of the field. It is becoming a familiar sight, with the club having won the Premier League-FA Cup-Champions League treble last season for the first time.

This season might be tougher for Guardiola and City, with the match perhaps highlighting the team's

won the Champions League title last season.

Pep Guardiola is the favorite for the men's coaching award after leading Man City to the Champions League, Premier League and FA Cup titles. Also nominated were Simone Inzaghi of Inter Milan, who led his team to the Champions League final, and Luciano Spalletti, who led Napoli to the Italian league title.

The winners will be announced at the Champions League draw on Aug. 31 in Monaco.

The shortlists for the women's player and coaching awards will be announced next week after the Women's World Cup, UEFA said. England will face Spain on Sunday in the final in Australia. Kylian Mbappé, Messi's former teammate at

Paris Saint-Germain, was sixth in the player voting by Europe-based coaches and journalists despite his

need for more creativity and goal threat following the offseason departures of Ilkay Gundogan and Riyad Mahrez and an injury to Kevin De Bruyne that could sideline him for up to four months.

Palmer could be one answer, with the 21-year-old academy

product impressing as City's most dangerous player and nodding in from Rodri's cross to add to his goal in the Community Shield. He should get more game time this season on the right wing following Mahrez's move to Saudi Arabia.

"This guy is incredible and he's



Manchester City's Nathan Ake, (left), duels for the ball with Sevilla's Marcos Acuna during the UEFA Super Cup Final soccer match between Man-chester City and Sevilla at Georgios Karaiskakis stadium in Piraeus port, near Athens, Greece. (AP)

SOCCER

that played in the group stages of the three European competitions.

Roberto De Zerbi was fourth in the coaching vote despite his Brighton team not playing in a European competition.

Brighton will debut next month in the Europa League after finishing sixth in the Premier League. Franck Haise, who led Lens to second place the French league, and David Moyes of Europa League Conference champion West Ham were among 10 coaches who got some votes.

> got good players to learn off and the best manager in the world," Walker said of Palmer. "He needs to keep going, keep his feet on the floor like he has been and keep scoring goals. If he keeps improving, he'll be fine."

> Sevilla occasionally troubled City on the break and off one such foray forward, En-Nesyri got in between Nathan Ake and Josko Gvardiol - making his first start for City - and leaping high to power in a header from Marcos Acuña's left-wing cross.

City goalkeeper Ederson Moraes pulled off two saves from En-Nesyri in the second half, either side of Palmer's goal, and didn't need to make a save in the shootout.

Haaland, Julian Alvarez, Mateo Kovacic, Grealish and Walker converted City's penalties, while Lucas Ocampos, Rafa Mir, Ivan Rakitic and Gonzalo Montiel netted for Sevilla.

Sevilla, which won the Europa League for the seventh time last season, has won just won of its seven appearances in the Super Cup. That was back in 2006 on its debut.

"It's really frustrating for us, but I'm proud of my teammates,' Sevilla forward Erik Lamela said. "The team did a good job, we ran a lot against a very, very good team."

the field and rarely out of the spotlight because of its outrageously expensive squad overhaul.

The record signing of Moises Caicedo and the imminent arrival of another highly rated defensive midfielder, Romeo Lavia, are likely to put the seal on another busy transfer window for Chelsea that was as interesting because of the names leaving the club

as it was for those joining. Out has gone Edouard Mendy, Kepa Arrizabalaga, Cesar Azpilicueta, Kalidou Koulibaly, Mateo Kovacic, N'Golo Kante, Mason Mount, Christian Pulisic, Ruben Loftus-Cheek, Kai Havertz and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, among others.

Through the revolving door has arrived Christopher Nkunku, Axel Disasi, Nicolas Jackson, Robert Sanchez, Lesley Ugochukwu, Angelo and most recently Caicedo, who has signed a deal worth \$146 Pochettino

million - a record for a British team. Lavia is set to join imminently from Southampton for a fee approaching \$70 million to take Chelsea's spending in this window to more than \$400 million, after an outlay of \$280 million last summer and \$350 million in January.

Oh, and there is another new coach in place in Mauricio Pochettino, who looks to be the calm head needed in the madness around him at Stamford Bridge.

That's quite an upheaval in the first 15 months of the tenure of Todd Boehly and Clearlake Capital, following their purchase of Chelsea for \$2.5 billion in May 2022. At that time, Chelsea was still the European champion. Last season, the first under Boehly and Clearlake, the team plunged to a 12th-place finish in the Premier League.

Ultimately, all that most Chelsea fans really care about are results on the field. The season got off to an encouraging start.

Jumping to conclusions after one match is always dangerous, yet Chelsea's 1-1 draw with Liverpool contained enough positive moments particularly in the second half - to get excited about what is to come, espe-

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sustained in preseason. There are few senior attackers to help out, with Raheem Sterling perhaps not the force he once was and January signings Noni Madueke and Mykhailo Mudryk still raw talents.

The pressure is on Pochettino to deliver, and quickly. Given the remarkable outlay and with new players mostly on long contracts - seven or eight years - to spread "amortization" costs of transfer fees across the majority of the deals, Boehly and Clearlake are taking a risk with a strategy that could have long-term consequences. Any new signing who proves to be a dud could, in theory, hang around until the 2030s on a huge salary.

Chelsea's American ownership is likely banking on earning money from being in the Champions League, but a place in the top four - or top five if, as is likely, England earns an extra entry in a 36-team Champions League next season - is not guaranteed when up against state-owned clubs such as Manchester City and Newcastle, as well as Arsenal, Manchester United, Liverpool and Tottenham.

It's why the progress of Chelsea will be so interesting to watch over the next few seasons because of the gamble the owners are taking. In the short term, it's about getting a

first win of the season at West Ham, which opened with a 1-1 draw, too, at Bournemouth.



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