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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, 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 having 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 chose to present 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.

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 recurrent crime, executed with a sophistication that has tainted the reputation of respected institutions

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."

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"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-Mutawa 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."

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"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



KUNA photo  
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

Kuwait's new ambassador to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Jamal Al-Ghunaim submitted on Wednesday a copy of his credentials to President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, citing the proximity shared between the Gulf Arab

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.**

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 General Traffic Department 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.

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**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



Al-Anba photo  
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 case.

## 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

House of the People Om Birla. In the cables, the Kuwaiti parliament speaker voiced heartfelt and sincere condolences over the victims of recent floods that swept away different areas of India and caused multiple casualties.

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.

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**180 persons held:** The Public Morals Protection Department of the Ministry of Interior has recently arrested 31 persons of different nationalities from Mahboubia, 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 from 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.

## 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.

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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 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.

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

## 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, reports 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 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."



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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 presented 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 solemn 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 on 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 For-

eign 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.

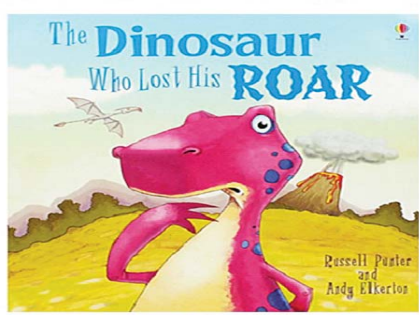
In his speech, H.E. Major General Md Ashikuzzaman, ndc,afwc,psc,G,

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. Bang-

abandhu'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.

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## Goan Strikers and Five Star bag runners-up trophies

# Magic Hornets lift PBAK 2023 GCC-OFW Cup

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.

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.

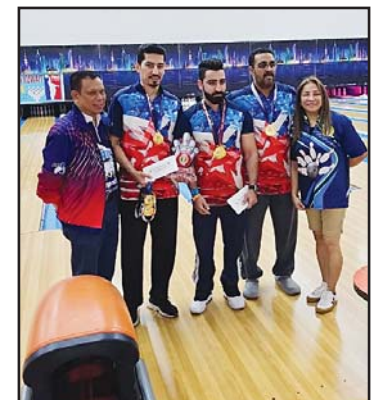
In the final game, the Hornets team easily demolished the Five Star team and infallible to take home the championship trophy while Five Star slide to 3rd place. X-Warriors murdered the X-Terminators team 951-948 and the win-lose result was favorable for X-Warriors Men snatching the 4th spot. The final standing, scores and finals' team members were as follows: 1. Magic Hornets (6269), Rudy de Lima, Rashid Akher Ali, Nasser Ali Siraj, Neveen Wasel, Mousa Abdullah, Fahal Abul, Ahmad Fadi 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 Khaled, Ahmed El Badri, and Khaled Al Shatti; 5. X-Terminators (5678), Sonia Mathews,



Magic Hornets, the league champion



Goan Strikers, first runners-up



Five Star Strikers, 2nd Runners-up

Ronell Valencia, Aga Cuadrado, Vernie Villaruel, Noe Mahayag, Jhun Hosmillo, Alma Turley, Aqel 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 -

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 in front of Carrefour Supermarket and nearby Al Mowasat hospital. For any enquiry and further details, please contact administrator 67709667.

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A flyer of the event.

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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 extend-

ed 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.





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

Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the name of the winner of its Al 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-Kharyef, Assistant General Manager of the Retail Banking Department at KIB, said: "We are pleased to continue announcing the new winners of the draws

and prizes of this distinctive campaign, which contributes 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-Kharyef 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 seg-

ments. 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 provides 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-Kharyef,  
AGM of RBD at KIB

## Exclusive offers from local, worldwide hotels and brands

# KFH: 40% off for credit, prepaid card holders

KUWAIT 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 retail 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

BEIRUT, Aug 17, (AP): Syria's president has doubled public sector wages and pensions as the war-torn 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 year, Syrian 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 opposition-

linked 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 north-western 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.

# 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 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 Tech 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."

Glhassan 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 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. Mohamad 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

as food, fresh produce, non-food 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-

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.

to lead digital transformation, both within its organisation and across the industry, and deliver cutting-edge 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

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."







The Conversation

Model organism useful to blood development study

# Zebrafish a scientist's favorite for early-stage research

By Gabrielle Dubansky and Raquel Espin-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 Espin 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.

Zebrafish 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, 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 gets FDA clearance for wireless monitoring device

# GEHC 'Portrait Mobile' aids early detection of patient deterioration

Event to showcase latest tech

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

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 stay.

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 30-day mortality after surgery representing the 3rd leading cause of death globally. 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.



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.

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

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.

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-

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 Suite™, and its integrated stroke solution, Heuron StroCare Suite™, to engage in global collaborations 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.

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Sentence draws criticism from American director Scorsese and others

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.

Film

Variety



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

Film

Features

ARABO TIMES  
FRIDAY-SATURDAY, AUGUST 18-19, 2023

**LOS ANGELES:** Britney Spears' 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.

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 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

New DC film is 'light, lively and sincere'

Superhero 'Blue Beetle' is more than a bug

By Jake Coyle

Frank 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 metamorphosing.

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 Angel 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 Miami-like fictional metropolis of Palmyra 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

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.

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.

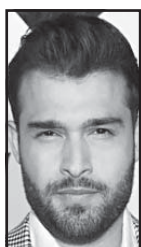
"Blue Beetle," a Warner Bros. release is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for sequences of action and violence, language, and some suggestive references. Running time: 127 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

**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)

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



Asghari



Spears

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)

## People &amp; Places

## Obits

## UK talk show host Parkinson dies

## Jerry Moss, A&amp;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 natural causes, his widow Tina told The Associated Press.

"They truly don't make them like him anymore and we will miss conversations with him about everything under the sun," the statement reads in part, "the twinkle in his eyes as he approached every moment ready for the next adventure."



Moss

## 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 Dinklage's "Frampton Comes Alive!" They were home to the Carpenters and Cat Stevens, Janet Jackson and Soundgarden, Joe Cocker and Suzanne Vega, the Gogols 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 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

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 six-month 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 **Muhammad 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 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**.



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)

## 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 way to understand how we can do a little 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.

## 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



British broadcaster, journalist and author Michael Parkinson poses for photographers as he arrives for the memorial of broadcaster Alan Whicker, in central London, Wednesday, May 28, 2014. Michael Parkinson, the renowned British broadcaster who interviewed everyone from Muhammad 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)

## 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 indication that anything was going on," he said.

Scotto maintained homes in **Italy** and **Armonk, 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 **Verona**, 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 Savona, 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 reimagining of the museum we have embarked upon," Osborne said.

The museum said legal action would be taken

## RECALL VEHICLES

**Model Name:** Hino 500  
**Model Year:** 2022  
**No. of Vehicles:** 54 units

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Gasdia



Scotto

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)



## 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 "immediate 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 happens 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 qualification.

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 being 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 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 28-8 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 outbounded 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 regular-season 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.

## 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 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 after 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.

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

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 recover from a foot injury in time.

Promising young forward Catarina 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.

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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 now-defunct 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 five-year 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 to Las Vegas Aces guard Kelsey Plum, right, during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Las Vegas. (AP)

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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)

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## 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

Pressure on Pochettino to deliver

**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."

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.

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City equalized through a header 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

## 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 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

tournament-leading eight goals at last year's World Cup, including three in the final against Argentina.

Ranked above Mbappé were Man City midfielders 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 moved to Saudi Arabia, got no votes from the UEFA panel, which included coaches from clubs

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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 in the French league, and David Moyes of Europa League Conference champion West Ham were among 10 coaches who got some votes.

need for more creativity and goal threat following the offseason departures of İlkay 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

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."



Manchester City's Nathan Ake, (left), duels for the ball with Sevilla's Marcos Acuna during the UEFA Super Cup Final soccer match between Manchester City and Sevilla at Georgios Karaiskakis stadium in Piraeus port, near Athens, Greece. (AP)

## 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 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 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 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-

cially now Caicedo is there to shore up the midfield.

A central midfield of Caicedo, Enzo Fernandez 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 schedule 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

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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.



Pochettino