



Crown Prince in UK for Kuwait Investment Office 'versary



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah arrives in Britain on Monday to patronize and attend the 70th anniversary marking the establishment of the Kuwait Investment Office in London.

Key ministers on delegation

LONDON, Aug 28, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah arrived in Britain on Monday to attend and sponsor a ceremony marking the 70th anniversary of the inception of Kuwait Investment Office, the London branch of the country's sovereign wealth fund.

As per an invitation by British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, His Highness the Crown Prince was welcomed upon arrival by Kuwait's Ambassador to the United Kingdom Bader Al-Awadhi and Kuwait Investment Authority Managing Director Ghanem Al-Ghunaiman, in addition to a number of Kuwaiti and British diplomats and officials.

Earlier in Kuwait, His Highness the Crown Prince was seen off at the airport by Speaker of the National Assembly Ahmad Al-Saadoun, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Head of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior, and Acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, and senior state officials.

His Highness the Crown Prince's accompanying delegation comprises Deputy Prime Minister, Oil Minister, Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs, and Acting Finance Minister Dr. Saad Al-Barrak, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as well as senior state officials.

Protest on oil seizure

Tehran, Baghdad reach deal on Iran dissidents

BAGHDAD, Aug 28, (AP): Iran and Iraq have reached an agreement to disarm members of Iranian Kurdish dissident groups based in northern Iraq and relocate their members from their current bases, officials from the two countries said Monday.

Nasser Kanaani, the spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, said in a news briefing Monday that the Iraqi government had agreed "to disarm the armed terrorist groups stationed in Iraq's territory by September 19, and then, evacuate and transfer them from their military bases to camps designated by the Iraqi government."

He added that the deadline would not be extended and that while relations between the two countries are "entirely friendly and warm ... the presence of terrorists in the northern region of Iraq is an unpleasant stain on mutual ties."

Iran has periodically launched strikes targeting members of the Kurdistan Democratic Party in Iran, or KDPI, and other Iranian Kurdish dissident groups based in Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region near the border with Iran.

An Iraqi government official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media, confirmed the agreement was signed between the two countries and said the central government in Baghdad is "working as quickly as possible" to relocate the groups with the approval of authorities from the Kurdish regional government in Irbil and Sulaimaniyah.

He declined to give the exact location to which the disarmed militants would be moved, but said it will be within the Iraqi Kurdish region. He said they "will have a camp to live in and will be without arms."

Different Iranian dissident groups in Iraq are aligned with each of the two main Iraqi Kurdish parties - the Kurdistan Democratic Party, with its seat of power in Irbil, and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan party, whose stronghold is in Suleimaniyah - and are at odds with each other as well as with Iran.

"Previously Sulaimaniyah would accuse Irbil of working with these groups, and Erbil would accuse Sulaimaniyah of working with them, but as a central government we agreed to relocate them," the Iraqi official said. "We are trying as hard as possible for this to take place on Sept. 19."

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani came to power last year via a coalition of Iranian-

backed parties and is seen as close to Iran, although he has also attempted to build ties with the United States and Turkey.

Also:

TEHRAN: Iran has summoned a Swiss diplomat over the apparent U.S. seizure of Iranian crude oil from a ship that sat for months off Texas, an official said Monday, as the oil now appeared to be moored in Houston.

The remarks by Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani mark the latest twist in the saga of the oil once aboard the tanker Suez Rajan, which had become mired in the wider tensions between the U.S. and the Islamic Republic. That's even as Tehran and Washington work toward a trade of billions of dollars in frozen Iranian assets in South Korea for the release of five Iranian-Americans held in Tehran.

Iran has been trying to evade sanctions and continue selling its oil abroad, while the U.S. and its allies have been seizing cargoes since 2019 after the country's nuclear deal allowing the trade collapsed.

Speaking to journalists Monday, Kanaani said Tehran had summoned the chargé d'affaires of the Swiss Embassy in Iran to express a "strong objection" over the U.S. seizing the oil. Switzerland has looked out for America's interests in Iran since the 1979 U.S. Embassy hostage crisis.

Kanaani's comments also acknowledged the oil was Iranian.

"The subject of the seizure of an Iranian oil consignment by the U.S. ... is a completely unproductive action," Kanaani said. He said the U.S. government was on the one hand expressing interest in direct talks to pave the way for a renewed nuclear deal and on the other was imposing new sanctions and seizing oil.

The U.S. State Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The saga over the Suez Rajan began in February 2022, when the group United Against Nuclear Iran said it suspected the tanker carried oil from Iran's Khargh Island, its main oil distribution terminal in the Arabian Gulf.

For months, the ship sat in the South China Sea off the northeast coast of Singapore before suddenly sailing for the Gulf of Mexico without explanation. Analysts believe the vessel's cargo likely has been seized by American officials, though there still were no public court documents Monday involving the oil.

Government could reoffer projects to private sector

Bid to build strategic reserve

MoH to stockpile nemococcal vaccines

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: The Ministry of Health is planning to procure additional pneumococcal vaccines, also known as "nemococcal", for distribution to preventive government health centers and hospitals at a cost of 2.5 million dinars, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Reliable health sources said the intention of the ministry to import these vaccines, even though there is an existing stock is to establish a secure strategic reserve of vaccines, medications, supplies, and all essential medical equipment.

This measure is aimed at safeguarding the continuous provision of health services across centers and hospitals, ensuring there are no disruptions due to shortages. According to the sources, pneumococcal vaccines are typi-

cally administered to children at two months, four months, six months, and one and a half years old as part of routine childhood vaccinations.

These vaccines are also administered to individuals aged 19 to 64 years who haven't received them before, especially if they have underlying conditions such as kidney disease, diabetes, compromised immune systems, heart or lung issues, liver problems.

The sources emphasized the significance of individuals with chronic illnesses taking advantage of winter vaccinations, including the influenza vaccine and the "nemococcal" pneumonia vaccine, to mitigate the prevalence of winter-related illnesses.



KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: A large fire erupted at a warehouse in Shuwaikh Industrial Area. The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) said on Monday that firefighters were able to contain a blaze that erupted earlier at a warehouse used to store construction material and electric appliances. The incident occurred without any injuries reported amongst the involved firefighters, concluded the statement.

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: The Cabinet on Monday approved a draft law on conflict of interests, forwarding it to His Highness the Amir for ratification, the country's Cabinet Affairs minister said.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah noted, during the meeting, the law would contribute to fighting corruption, according to a statement by Deputy Premier and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Essa Al-Kanderi, after the weekly Cabinet meeting.

The Cabinet also approved a draft law on domestic violence before a presentation on a railway project; linking Kuwaiti City and Riyadh, was given by Minister of Public Works Dr. Amani Bugammaz. (KUNA)

BEIRUT: Clashes broke out Monday between two U.S.-backed groups in eastern Syria, leaving three gunmen dead and raising tensions in the region where hundreds of American troops are deployed, opposition activists said.

The clashes raise concerns of more divisions between U.S.-backed Kurdish and Arab fighters in eastern Syria that borders Iraq and where the Islamic State group once

enjoyed wide presence. U.S.-backed fighters play a major role in targeting sleeper cells of the Islamic State group that still carry out deadly attacks. (AP)

DAMASCUS: An Israeli airstrike hit the international airport in the city of Aleppo in northern Syria early on Monday, damaging a runway and putting it out of service, Syrian state media said.

State news agency SANA, citing a military official, said Israeli planes coming from the Mediterranean Sea carried out the attack at around 4:30 a.m. There were no casualties reported. (AP)

RAMALLAH: Israeli occupation forces Monday wounded four Palestinians with bullets at a military checkpoint in Ya'bad town, southwest of Jenin, and arrested several others in the West Bank.

One person, who was seriously injured by Israeli bullets in the abdomen and chest, was taken to the Ibn Sina Specialized Hospital in Jenin, Palestinian Ministry of Health said in a statement. (KUNA)

Options studied

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: The government is actively exploring ways to maximize the state's revenues which involves a comprehensive strategy to reinvest in and capitalize on various facilities and projects that have been developed, reports Al-Rai daily quoting sources. This comes in the aftermath of the termination of contractual arrangements with private sector companies in recent times.

These sources highlighted specific projects and lands encompassed by this initiative. Efforts are currently underway to formulate a holistic approach for their utilization. This approach aligns with the government's overarching objectives aimed at optimizing the state's resources and bolstering the general budget with supplementary income. The intention is to present suitable financial options that correspond with these objectives. It is worth noting that multiple avenues are being considered to exploit these assets, all in line with the pursuit of establishing a rejuvenated state economy.

Among the presented alternatives, one possibility involves reoffering these projects to the private sector. This would occur under well-defined and precise conditions, regulations, benchmarks, and responsibilities. These proposals would be accompanied by specific timelines, ensuring a gradual benefit for the state while adhering to evolving market norms.

As per the insights provided by the sources, various scenarios are being evaluated. These range from the potential of directly partnering for the operation of particular facilities to revisiting them through a competitive process for their advancement.

The insiders further elaborated that there are instances where the government will transition from being the operator of certain facilities to adopting an observer and supervisory role, all in the interest of public welfare. This shift emphasizes supporting the private sector and granting it ample opportunities for management and execution. It is expected that many projects will be overseen by local companies, domestic and foreign strategic alliances, reflecting the broader approach of liberalizing the national economy.

Scholarship proposal ensures equality: MP

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: MP Khalid Al-Tamar has submitted a proposal to allow citizens who graduated from religious institutes to obtain overseas scholarship like those who graduated from secondary schools.

He explained that his proposal is aimed at ensuring equality among students, indicating that some of those who graduated from religious institutions are excellent students; hence, they should be given a chance to obtain scholarship to pursue higher studies abroad.

On the other hand, National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun has forwarded queries to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahd, in the latter's capacity as head of the Secretariat General of the Higher Council for Development and Planning.

Continued on Page 5

Day by Day

TIME has acted as a cautionary tale, revealing the faces tinted with a yellow hue that lacks any ailment. These faces are marred by envy and stinginess, with the wellspring of bitterness surging within them. This internal turmoil manifests externally, painting their visages yellow, all devoid of any physical ailment. Alongside this transformation, a deep-seated agony of envy and resentment thrives.

These individuals are perturbed by the harmony shared among people. They possess a cunning knack for unearthing forgotten grievances, which hearts have long moved beyond. Their only recourse is to cast unfounded aspersions upon the honor and innocence of others.

Our duty lies in dismissing their presence, aligning our pure intentions, and allowing divine judgment to prevail. It is the devout who propagate goodwill, while the quivering lips engineered for malevolence hold no significance in our consideration.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



SPECIAL REPORT



The shops in Souk Tamar offer a wide range of dates and date related products, along with a range of dried fruits, nuts, and coffees. Inset: Abu Hassan with his assistant.

At summer's end
Life is sweet

Story and photos by Claudia Farkas Al Rashoud
Special to the Arab Times

Late summer in Kuwait is marked by high humidity, a slight shift in the angle of the sun, and palm trees hanging heavy with branches of ripening dates turning from green to red or gold under the scorching sun. One of nature's most perfect foods, fresh dates are so healthy and delicious that their arrival in the local market serves as some compensation for enduring the stifling heat of the season.

Whereas many in the West are only familiar with the date in its dried form, people in date growing regions particularly enjoy fresh dates with their combination of textures, consistencies, and varied flavors. While you can currently find fresh dates in just about any supermarket, if you want the best variety of dates and date products then head over to Souk Tamar, or the Date Market, next to Souk London on Third Ring Road in Shuwaikh.

Abu Hassan is one of the market's friendly and knowledgeable date merchants who generously dispenses information and free samples. He has worked in the date market for decades, greeting his customers in the time-honored way and selling the sticky fruits that have been an important crop in this region since ancient times. After I've been served a small cup of cardamom-flavored Arabian coffee and some berhi dates, Abu Hassan leads me around the shops to show me some of the intriguing wares on offer.

Abu Hassan begins naming some of the different varieties of dates piled high on big platters and packed into Styrofoam boxes. Some kinds of dates, like the red-coloured khanezi and the large pale yellow sakari, are easy to recognize. The name sakari comes from the word sugar as this type of date has a very sugary flavour. When dried they have a hard, chewy consistency and an even more sugary taste. As for the many other types of dates, only a true date connoisseur would be able to tell the difference between an erzeiz and a merzeban or a shibibi and a maktoumi.

In this part of the world most date consumers are very partial to dates that are traditionally grown in their region. Kuwaitis tend to favor the khlas variety of dates originally from the Al Hasa oasis in Saudi Arabia, and berhi, which used to be imported from the Mandalli area of Iraq. Adding to their popularity is the fact that both varieties can be eaten in all stages of ripeness.

Both types of dates, and also many other varieties, are now widely grown here. With the date harvest presently at its peak, both berhi and khlas dates are being sold for just one dinar a kilo.

Date palm cultivation has become widespread and sophisticated in Kuwait in recent years, but Kuwaitis were not traditionally date palm farmers. They owned date plantations around Basra and on the banks of the Shatt Al Arab River in Iran and Iraq. The central location of Kuwait in the middle of three large date-producing countries, namely Iraq, Iran, and Saudi Arabia, made Kuwait a major market for dates that were exported to Asian countries.

Abu Hassan notes that the shops of Souk Tamar sell dried as well as fresh dates. As dates ripen, they become softer and darker in color and the sweetness becomes more intense, with dried dates having the highest sugar concentration.

When still hard and crunchy and either all yellow or all red, depending upon the variety, fresh dates are known as khalaal. When the bottom half of the fruit is soft and the top is still hard, they're referred to as munasif, a term which comes from the Arabic word nus, meaning half. It is at this stage, with their contrasting textures and flavors, that many people enjoy fresh dates the most.

When dates are completely ripe they're called ratab, which in Arabic means moist or with humidity. Dried ripe dates are called tamar.

The fact that mature dried dates can be conveniently stored without refrigeration and are virtually non-perishable has long made them an invaluable source of sustenance for desert travelers as well

as seafarers. Furthermore, for these people, with their extremely restricted and meager diets, the date was a super food providing an important source of nutrition.

Dates are high in vitamins A and B6, folic acid, potassium, iron, calcium, thiamine, riboflavin, copper, phosphorous, and magnesium, as well as dietary fiber. So consuming a daily dose of dates is like taking a daily multivitamin. Studies have shown that the minerals contained in dates help maintain proper functioning of skeletal structures, tissues, body fluids, and vital organs like the heart and brain. In addition, dates are said to protect the stomach and intestinal tract from parasites and bacteria. The body also benefits from the date's high level of natural sugars. These sugars are converted into energy more quickly than any other nutrient and thus help relieve fatigue.

That's why, in days gone by, bedouins were able to exist, for the most part, on only a handful of dates a day washed down with camel's milk. Meat and rice were generally reserved for entertaining guests or for holidays and other special occasions. Kuwaiti pearl divers also consumed no more than a few dates and some glasses of strong black tea during their long, grueling working hours from dawn to dusk.

As a precious commodity, dates were transported and traded by Kuwaiti sailing ships traveling down the Arabian Gulf and over to India and Africa. Thus the date served as the basis for thriving international business empires long before the discovery of oil. The piles of Yemeni coffee beans and dried cardamom pods for sale alongside the dates are also age-old wares dating back to Kuwait's ancient maritime trade.

Many of the traditional date products found in Souk Tamar claim a variety of health benefits. Date vinegar, used by the ancient Babylonians as a flavoring agent and medicine, is the world's oldest recorded type of vinegar. Even today, some local people use it to treat a wide variety of ailments.

Date syrup, or dibs tamar, adds sweetness to foods without refined sugars. Like all date products, it has a high fiber content, is rich in vitamins and minerals, and is a good source of natural antioxidants. It's great for porridge, on pancakes, mixed into plain yoghurt, spread on bread with lebna, or even stirred into coffee. Date syrup is also commonly used to sweeten the rice for the traditional Kuwaiti dish called muhammar, consisting of a fish stew with spices and vegetables eaten with sweet rice.

Date coffee is made of ground date pits and is said to be good for diabetes and lowering cholesterol. Like the coconut palm, every part of the date palm tree has beneficial uses.

In Kuwait it has always been a tradition for those who own date palms to share their harvest with family, neighbours, and friends. In the old days the date harvest was eagerly awaited since dates were practically the only fruits grown in Kuwait. Nowadays, despite the variety and abundance of fresh fruit from all over the world, a gift of fresh dates is still enjoyed and appreciated.

Kuwait Helping Hands, a local non-profit organisation, is currently building on this tradition of generosity by receiving donations of fresh dates from people who have date palms at home, at beach chalets, or farms. The dates are then given away free to the needy at local mosques, workers' hostels, and other designated locations.

Since a single date palm can produce anywhere from seventy to one hundred and forty kilos of dates per season, one doesn't need to have many trees in order to have a surplus crop. To participate in this initiative send a WhatsApp message to 98080993 or 97805541.

Meanwhile, back at his shop in the market, Abu Hassan is tending to his customers in the age-old way, serving them Arabian coffee and dates and having a chat before they get down to the business of buying. Before I leave he insists on giving me a four-kilo box of berhi dates to take home, a generous gesture showing that traditional Kuwaiti hospitality is alive and well at Souk Tamar.



editor's choice



| Prayer Timings | | | |
|----------------|-------|------------|-------|
| Fajr | 04:00 | Asr | 15:23 |
| Sunrise .. | 05:23 | Maghrib .. | 18:15 |
| Zohr | 11:49 | Isha | 19:35 |

Local

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

UK ambassador hails strong, historic ties

HH Crown Prince’s UK visit reflects deep relations: Kuwait envoy

By Nusaiba Bin Shaiba/ Abdullah Al-Enezi/ Amna Al-Shimmari

LONDON, Aug 28, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Ambassador to Britain Bader Al-Awadhi affirmed that the historic visit of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Britain reflects the deep ties between the two countries.

In a statement to KUNA on Monday, Ambassador Al-Awadhi said that His Highness the Crown Prince’s visit comes at the invitation of the British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to mark the 70th anniversary of establishing the Kuwait Investment Office in London.

Al-Awadhi praised Britain’s interest in welcoming and receiving His Highness the Crown Prince and working together with the Kuwaiti side to achieve the desired results of this visit, which will undoubtedly contribute to strengthening the co-operation and strategic partnership relations between the two friendly countries.

The relations that linked them through the past eras and decades, leading to a historical stage that spanned more than 124 years.

“His Highness’s visit will strengthen the existing relations between Kuwait and Britain and will open new horizons for cooperation in the economic, security and cultural fields in a way that will reflect the reality of the strategic relations,” he said.

“The British government and people highly value the distinguished and important role played by His Highness the Crown Prince in strengthening the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the two countries, especially after his historic participation in the funeral ceremony held in Britain for the death of Queen Elizabeth II in October 2022 and the coronation ceremony of King Charles III as King of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland last May,” he added.

Meanwhile, the UK Ambassador to Kuwait while Lewis affirmed on Monday the strong and historic Kuwaiti-British relations at all levels, including defense, investment, cybersecurity and cultural cooperation.

In an interview with KUNA and Kuwait TV on Monday, ahead of the visit of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to London, Ambassador Lewis said that this was the third visit of His Highness to the UK within a year.

His Highness Sheikh Mishal would patronize and attend the ceremony of Kuwait Investment Office, celebrating the 70th anniversary of its establishment.

She added that His Highness the Crown

Prince had visited the UK as representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah last September, to convey condolences over the death of Queen Elizabeth II, while the second visit was last May, representing His Highness the Amir in the coronation of King Charles III.

Meanwhile, the Ambassador expressed her joy over the attendance of His Highness Sheikh Mishal at the office’s ceremony, noting that the office is still looking for new investment opportunities in the UK.

Kuwait has strong ties with the Bank of England (BoE), as some of the bank members played a big role in the establishment and growth of the office, said Lewis.

His Highness’ visit will cover several fields, mainly enhancing joint work in cybersecurity, as well as cultural cooperation.

The Ambassador added that the online travel permit to the UK, set to launch next February, would allow Kuwaiti citizens to have an idea on cultural, sport and commercial opportunities in the UK.

Next year, the UK will celebrate 125 years of diplomatic relations with Kuwait, which will include several cultural events, Lewis said.

Speaking on the history of official Kuwaiti visits to the UK, the Ambassador said that the first one was by late Amir Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in 1919. According to Lewis, he was the first Kuwaiti to visit the UK in a long tough journey through the sea.

Sheikh Ahmad had represented Kuwait’s late Amir Sheikh Salem Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah in his UK visit, aiming to congratulate King George V on winning World War I. He was part of many world delegations that came to congratulate the King, she noted.

Ambassador Lewis said that Sheikh Ahmad had gifted an Arabian horse to King George, which the King named ‘Sheikh’.

The visit by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the UK, to mark the 70th anniversary of the Kuwait Investment Office in London, would become another milestone in the 124 years of relations between the two countries.

Prior to the celebrations, the UK Foreign Minister James Cleverly as well as Minister of State in the Department for Business and Trade Lord Dominic Johnson visited Kuwait last July as part of the two countries’ efforts to bolster ties in all fields.

Last March, Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah visited London to launch the strategic dialogue meeting at the foreign affairs’ level, reflecting the keenness of both leaderships on further bettering relations.

The Kuwait Investment Office in London, part of the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), was established in 1953 as the world’s first sovereign wealth fund.

The office supervises funds -- on behalf of the State of Kuwait.

Historically, relations between Kuwait and the UK have been strongly intertwined since the signing of the Anglo-Kuwaiti Agreement of 1899 in the era of the Amir Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah and even prior to it.

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

By Day: Hot and relatively humid over coastal areas with moderate variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind with speeds of 08-32 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

Weather

By Night: Hot to rather hot and relatively humid specially over coastal areas with light to moderate south easterly wind, changing to northwesterly wind with speeds of 06-32 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

Station Max Exp Min Rec

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|----------------|----|----|
| Kuwait City | 47 | 35 |
| Kuwait Airport | 47 | 27 |
| Abdaly | 46 | 28 |
| Jahra | 47 | 31 |
| Salmiyah | 44 | 36 |
| Ahmadi | 45 | 36 |
| Nuwaib | 45 | 29 |
| Wafra | 47 | 28 |

No rise seen in ‘basmati’ price

‘Citizens rely on rice supplied by state’

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry sources said no artificial hike in rice prices is seen at the moment. However, several cooperatives have stated that the recent decision by the Indian government to set a minimum price for exported basmati rice will have limited impact, as citizens predominantly rely on rice supplied by the state, reports Al-Anba daily.

This decision is not expected to deter cooperatives from rejecting price hikes by suppliers without consulting the Union of Cooperative Societies. Conversely, wholesalers in the Shuwaikh area have conveyed that basmati rice prices have remained stable for six months. In contrast, the prices of white rice have recently surged by about 800 fils for a 20-kilogram bag due to India’s suspension of its export.

Despite India’s decision to impose a minimum export price of \$1,200 per ton for basmati rice, wholesalers expect the Ministry of Commerce and Industry’s vigilant market oversight will prevent a rise in basmati rice prices in Kuwait.

The representatives of the cooperative societies emphasize their substantial strategic stocks of basmati rice, with quantities sufficient for more than six months.

They assert their commitment to adhering to decisions made by the Federation of Cooperative Societies and reject any price hikes not authorized by an official circular. They highlight Kuwait’s substantial supply of locally grown subsidized basmati rice, underscoring the government’s past initiative to cultivate the staple food in India.

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Foreign athletes support: The Public Authority for Sports has obtained approval from the Finance Ministry for the proposal of its Board of Directors to increase the financial support for foreign athletes in sports clubs from KD20,000 to KD200,000 starting this season, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The daily obtained information that the financial support will be distributed to four group games – football, basketball, volleyball and handball; hence, KD50,000 for each game. The ministry also agreed to grant bonus to the teams that will win in team sports competitions.

This is part of the authority’s commitment to support the sports clubs, especially the athletes.

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New service added: The Ministry of Higher Education has added a new service on the unified government application for electronic services ‘Sahel’ – certificate equivalency request, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Official spokesperson for ‘Sahel’ Youssef Kazem revealed that it is now possible to request for higher education certificate equivalency through the application by simply clicking on the services menu and then follow the stated procedures.

‘Audit Bureau has no right to oversee ops’

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: A dispute has surfaced between the State Audit Bureau and the Health Insurance Hospitals Company (HIHC) regarding the Bureau’s jurisdiction to oversee the company’s operations based on the mandate granted to it by the Parliament, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Reliable sources said, according to the hospitals company the Bureau has no right to audit its business, since the government owns only 24 percent of the shares in the company, but according to the Bureau the government ownership is 74%.

In this regard numerous meetings and exchanges of opinion have taken place between the two parties since the mandate was issued, with both sides maintaining their stances and reaching an impasse.

It is noted that Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil, Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, and Acting Minister of Finance, Dr. Saad Al-Barra, has urged the Kuwait Investment Authority to direct the company to facilitate the Audit Bureau in carrying out its auditing duties as mandated by the National Assembly. However, the company remains resistant to this request.

The sources indicate that the Bureau will give the company a final opportunity, setting a deadline. Should the company fail to comply, the matter will be referred to the National Assembly. In such an event, a communication will be sent to the Assembly outlining the Bureau’s inability to fulfill its duties due to the company’s refusal to cooperate.

During a session held on July 11, a letter was unanimously approved by the Council, with participation from deputies and the government. This letter directed the Bureau to thoroughly examine and audit all administrative, financial, legal, investment, and technical aspects of the Health Insurance Hospitals Company. The directive required the Bureau to present its report within 3 months and provide a biannual status update on the company’s affairs.

It’s important to note that Clause Four of Article 5 in the Legislation Establishing the “Audit” confers on the Bureau the authority to exercise financial oversight over companies or institutions in which the state or another public legal entity holds a stake in the capital, amounting to no less than 50%, or guarantees a minimum level of profits for them.

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KU rector selection: The Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy and acting Minister of Education Dr. Jassim Al-Ostad, said the Kuwait University Rector Selection Committee has concluded adding that he has received the names of five names of prospective candidates to take over the position of the KU Rector, reports Al-Seyasah daily.

The five shortlisted candidates are -- Dr. Fahd Al-Rashidi from the College of Sharia and Islamic Studies, Dr. Adel Al-Waqayan from the College of Administrative Sciences, Dr. Adel Al-Adwani from the College of Administrative Sciences, Dr. Anwar Al-Yatami from the College of Engineering and Petroleum, and Dr. Yaqoub Al-Kandari from the College of Social Sciences. The final selection will then have to be approved by the Council of Ministers.

In the meantime, the minister rubbished rumors that there are no plans to postpone the academic 2023-2024 year.

He clarified that the reports suggesting a delay in the start of studies until October are baseless. This dispels any notions of postponement for the upcoming academic year.



KUNA photo
Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives the credentials of the Cuban ambassador to Kuwait.

Deputy FM receives Cuban envoy

Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Sunday Cuba’s Ambassador to Kuwait Jose Sanchez. The ambassador handed an invitation

from the President of Cuba to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to attend the G77-China summit to be held in September in Havana. (KUNA)

Mild temperatures to take over

Stars story in the Kuwaiti skies

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: The Al-Ujairi Scientific Center has highlighted a series of upcoming astronomical phenomena in Kuwait, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The center said the Suhail star will be visible in Kuwait on Monday, Sept 4, marking the onset of waning heat, heralding the arrival of mild temperatures and the onset of autumn and the return of the migratory birds in transition.

The center added the astronomical autumn solstice will take place on September 23 at precisely 9:51 am. The prominent star Suhail is situated at the forefront of the star constellation Al Safina.

It’s worth mentioning that Suhail is the second brightest star in the sky, after Sirius. This luminary holds a position as

one of the brilliant giant stars within the Milky Way.

As Suhail makes its appearance, a change in the ambiance of water temperature is anticipated. Simultaneously, there will be an equilibrium between daytime and nighttime hours. By September 30, a sensation of autumnal chilliness will also be experienced.

It’s worth highlighting that the Suhail season presents the advantage of cooler evening temperatures. It’s further noted for its place in the calendar of celestial houses of the sun and the moon, denoted as “Al-Tarfa,” lasting for a span of 13 days. During this period, the weather is typically relatively mild during the nighttime.

Benefit of retirees sought

MoH mulls better Afia service

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: The Ministry of Health (MoH) has invited officials from the insurance unit to offer their insights on the health insurance program that has been tailored especially for “Afia” retirees, reports Al-Rai daily.

The daily added, in this regard a meeting is anticipated between the two parties to discuss how best to enhance the services provided to retirees enrolled in the program.

The sources revealed that the Ministry of Health is seeking inputs from the insurance unit as outlined in the official document. This collaboration aims to incorporate any necessary amendments suggested by the unit, leveraging its specialized insurance expertise to enhance the document.

These enhancements may encompass specifying essential medical specialties for patients, identifying non-essential aspects, assessing whether the insurance card encompasses less critical services, and providing appropriate cost estimation for the proposed coverage.

Although the exact details of the requested technical input have not been disclosed by the Ministry of Health, these details are anticipated to be discussed in the upcoming meeting between the two parties. The sources surmise that the sought-after technical perspective will address the parameters established in line with government objectives, evaluate “Afia” conformity with potential legal requisites, and offer insights into the types and extent of coverage provided by the document.

Furthermore, the sources anticipate that the discussion will also explore the feasibility of incorporating new beneficiary categories under the “Afia” card, notably housewives.

They note that the insurance unit will deliver a comprehensive technical opinion to the Ministry, leveraging their specialists’ expertise to ensure that the “Afia” insurance policy facilitates optimal coverage and healthcare for beneficiaries, without imposing additional burdens on public funds.

Other Voices

Abu Mazen ... nostalgia, airport

By Ahmad alsarraf

Abu Husain’s business began to expand, courtesy of the inheritance he received from his father. Initially, he owned a modest enterprise that he managed alongside his trustworthy and astute employee, Abu Mazen.

For nearly three decades, Abu Mazen resided in a compact, three-room apartment belonging to Abu Husain’s aunt. He continued living there even after becoming a father of four, enduring the constraints of limited and modest accommodations.

In due course, with the assistance of Abu Mazen, Abu Husain struck a lucrative deal with a Turkish company, which ushered in substantial wealth. In recognition of Abu Mazen’s contributions, Abu Husain rewarded him with an opulent residence in an upscale residential enclave.

The house boasted four bedrooms, a garden, a swimming pool, a courtyard, an expansive rooftop, and quarters for domestic staff. This new reality presented Abu Mazen with privileges he never envisaged when residing in that small flat he thought would be his lifelong abode.

However, Abu Mazen found himself grappling with financial, social, and psychological challenges. He was torn between not wanting to exhaust his savings on furnishing the new spacious house and being unable to part with his old furniture; the same furniture that had become an integral part of his life over three decades.

This furniture witnessed his life’s milestones -- moments of relaxation, shisha smoking, television watching, his first marital experiences, and watching his eldest son grow.

Abandoning the flat and the old furniture was a formidable emotional struggle, laden with nostalgia. Moreover, adapting to the demands of the sophisticated neighborhood proved difficult for

his children; suppressing inappropriate language, smiling at neighbors, and interacting cordially with them as part of the elite class posed challenges, even though their origins were different.

Abu Mazen’s journey is akin to that of our international airport as we approach the transition to the new one, expected within two to three years. We may discover that we are inadequately prepared for this transition. An airport is not solely about well-designed physical structures; it is an integrated system. It embodies a culture of polite passenger interaction and respect.

An airport is more than just arrivals and departures; it encapsulates a fusion of a new ethos and advanced technology, unfamiliar to us. We have been accustomed to an airport lacking in nearly every aspect. Hence, a cultural shift is imperative before moving to the new airport. This transition necessitates substantial training, overseen by a new administration armed with a fresh vision.

The new airport cannot be efficiently managed by the same mindsets that have guided the Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

Multiple foreign passengers and a significant number of Kuwaiti witnesses, along with reports from international indices, attest to the fact that Kuwait International Airport is the weakest in the region, not only in terms of infrastructure but also in its harsh treatment of passengers, save for isolated instances.

My hope is that the new international airport is entrusted to a team of professionals for management. I wish for the overhaul of the current system, starting anew with the selection of individuals committed to unbiased and courteous passenger interactions, irrespective of their nationality.

My aspiration is to see the military ambiance of the airport fade, transforming it into a civilian institution with security protocols concealed behind the scenes. Modern airports rely on surveillance cameras and advanced technology to ensure security, rather than human interventions.

The question that remains: Will Abu Mazen’s nostalgia catch up with me?

□ □ □

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Yemen to chair council’s 112th session

Arab economic panel convenes, with Kuwait participation

CAIRO, Aug 28, (KUNA): The economic committee of the Arab Economic and Social Council convened on Monday in preparation for the council’s 112th session, set to be held next Thursday at the Arab League, chaired by Yemen.

The committee will discuss the agenda of the 112th session and the follow-up of the council’s decisions during its previous session.

The committee will also probe preparations for the Fifth session of the Arab

Economic and Social Development Summit, set to be held in Nouakchott in November, as well as the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA) and the progress achieved in establishing the Arab Customs Union.

Issues like supporting the Palestinian economy, the Arab food security report for 2021, as well as efforts exerted to salvage the agricultural season in Sudan, are scheduled on the agenda of the committee.

The meetings of the Social Committee of the Council were held on Sunday, to prepare for the work of this session, regarding the social file.

Kuwait is partaking in the meetings with a delegation headed by the acting assistant undersecretary for economic affairs Talal Al-Nimsh, the director of Gulf affairs and the Arab world at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Mansour Al-Hajri and several other officials.

5.75 mln criss-crossed Kuwait airport during summer holidays

Kuwaitis placed 9th in list of tourists visiting Istanbul in July

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28, (Agencies): The Directorate-General of Civil Aviation and Director of the Air Transport Department, Kuwait International Airport Abdullah Fadous Al-Rajhi said the KIA is poised to experience a 13 percent surge in passenger traffic and a 15 percent increase in aircraft movements during the current summer season, as compared to the previous year, reports Al-Anba daily.

This summer season has witnessed the transit of 5.75 million passengers, marking a rise from last year’s 5.07 million passengers. Additionally, the number of flights operated during this season has ascended to 45 thousand flights, compared to the 39 thousand flights recorded in the preceding season.

Destinations

Al-Rajhi’s statement, indicates that the projected passenger count for the entire 2023 stands at 15.5 million passengers, encompassing arrivals and departures. This estimate contrasts with the 12.46 million passengers recorded in 2022. Among the prominent destinations that exhibit heightened activity at Kuwait International Airport this summer season are Dubai, Istanbul, Cairo, Doha, Abu Dhabi, Jeddah, Riyadh, Bahrain, Amman, and Sohag.

As for most operating airlines, he said that Kuwait Airways comes first, followed by Jazeera Airways, IndiGo, Turkish Airlines, Fly Dubai, Qatar Airways,



KUNA photo

Scientific Progress Publishing launches the Science Bus with the aim of enriching the scientific culture of children.

Egypt Air, Emirates Airlines and Air Cairo.

Also:

ISTANBUL: Kuwaiti tourists have placed ninth in the list of the 2.87 million tourists that visited Istanbul in July, said official statistics on Monday.

According to the data from the directorate of tourism and culture in Istanbul, the city had hosted 8.514 million tourists in the first seven months of 2022 with

that number increasing by 15 percent in the same period this year with 9.77 million visitors.

In July, Russian tourists had placed first in the list with 185,636, followed by Germans with 135,568, while Saudis placed third with 69,006.

Kuwaitis placed ninth with 45,854 tourists visiting Istanbul.

Turkiye in general received 26.76 million tourists in the first seven months of 2023.

Initiative aims to enrich culture, education

ASPD launches ‘Al-Oloom Bus’ for children’s scientific culture

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28, (KUNA): Advancement of Sciences Publishing and Distribution (ASPD), one of the scientific centers under the umbrella of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), in cooperation with Sadu House Saturday launched a new phase of its scientific initiative “Al-Oloom Bus.”

The initiative will last until next September first, with the aim of enriching culture and education among children and young adults, encouraging them to read, acquire sciences, and be passionate about learning them.

CEO of ASPD Dr. Layla Al-Musawi said in a press statement that this collaboration with Sadu House comes within the efforts of ASPD to cooperate with all cultural and scientific forums in the country to educate children and adolescents to visit these forums.

Promote

This event aims to promote the dissemination of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), increase scientific knowledge and critical thinking, and allow children and adolescents to explore their passion for science, while exploring career opportunities in these fields, she explained.

“Al-Oloom Bus” is a continuous journey to fuel the passion for science and ignite the enthusiasm of children and young people in it, in addition to a community partner-

ship in which teachers, scientists, researchers, doctors, engineers, specialists in the skills of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and postgraduate students collaborate to deliver science in an entertaining framework to children and adolescents, she added.

It will present in its field visits to scientific and cultural forums, including libraries, schools, and associations, a series of lessons and activities designed specifically to promote reading, and to motivate children and adolescents to read scientific books, using the skills of education, Dr. Al-Musawi stated.

ASPD launched “Al-Oloom Bus” last February, coinciding with Kuwait’s celebrations of the 62nd anniversary of the National Day and the 32nd anniversary of its liberation, amid an atmosphere of pride in belonging to their homeland under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Sadu House was established in 1979 to preserve the traditional Al-Sadu industry, which includes weaving and knitting wool, making tents and poetry houses by preserving the traditional art from extinction, which was included on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

August
Room Promotion



Representatives of Diplomatic Missions in Kuwait, Embassy Officials, Officials of UNH GCC Regional Office, Members of the Bangladesh community in Kuwait pose for a group photo.



Group photo from the event.

August – Month of Mourning observed

Embassy of Bangladesh, UN-Habitat organize ‘Blood Donation Campaign’

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: The Embassy of Bangladesh in Kuwait and the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) in Kuwait jointly organized a “Blood Donation Campaign” on Saturday, 26 August 2023 at the Kuwaiti Blood Bank in Jabriya, Kuwait City, Kuwait, to observe the “August - Month of Mourning “ and to commemorate with the mission of UN-Habitat. Ambassador of Afghanistan, Indonesia, Turkey, Head of Mission of UNH GCC Regional Office, Representatives of Diplomatic Missions in Kuwait, Embassy Officials, Officials of UNH GCC Regional Office, Members of the Bangladesh community in Kuwait and Representatives of the Print and Electronic Media were present at the program.

The Blood Donation Campaign was inaugurated by H.E. Major General Md Ashikuzzaman, ndc, afwc, psc.G, Ambassador of Bangladesh in Kuwait and Ameera H. Al-Hassan (Ph.D), Head of Mission, UNH GCC Regional Office. In welcoming speech, the 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. This year marks the 48th Martyrdom Anniversary of Father of our Nation. 15th August is observed as “National Mourning Day” and whole month of August is observed as “Month of Mourning”. Among many other events, Blood Donation Campaign is one of the major initiative to pay tribute to our Father of the Nation both at home and abroad. In his speech, H.E. the Ambassador thanked the Esteemed Office of UN-Habitat for their support in jointly organizing Blood Donation Campaign. He also expressed sincere

gratitude to all the Ambassadors and their representatives for inspiring the blood donors of Bangladesh Community.H.E. the Ambassador also thanked the Authority of Kuwait Blood Bank for their whole hearted support in organizing this event. H.E. the Ambassador mentioned that this event will enhance the health and well-being of the urban and local communities in Kuwait. He thanked all the people who were presented at the program and requested all Bangladesh nationals in Kuwait to abide by the rules and regulations of the State of Kuwait.

Ameera H. Al-Hassan (Ph.D), Head of Mission, UNH GCC Regional Office, in her speech mentioned that the UN-Habitat, the program mandated by the General Assembly on cities, is proud to announce a landmark blood donation campaign, forming part of its ongoing efforts to achieve the concept of healthy and resilient cities. This blood donation program symbolized a powerful statement in embracing the values of solidarity, empathy, and care. This joint cooperation represented an essential step in our collective mission to build healthy and resilient cities that cater to the needs and aspirations of all their inhabitants.In collaboration with the Embassy of Bangladesh in the State of Kuwait and the Bangladeshi community, this initiative aims to foster a spirit of cooperation and compassion in service to humanity.More than two hundred members of Bangladesh community voluntarily donated blood at the Kuwaiti Blood Bank during the campaign. She expressed her sincere thanks to all the Ambassadors and their representatives, Authority of Kuwait Blood Bank and all the participants of Bangladesh Community in Kuwait.

‘Council’s inaction may pave way for biased and nepotistic appointments’

“IT’S well understood that holding a leadership position comes with substantial responsibilities, subjecting the holder to accountability before the Amir, the government, and the council. However, when exclusions are made collectively, based on suspicions, devoid of reasons, and without granting the right to defense, it resembles a new form of McCarthyism,” columnist **Ahmed Yaqoub Baqer** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

“During the initial session of the council, the issue of leadership positions was not addressed, even though unjust and imbalanced decisions are impacting certain individuals in Kuwait. Many leaders have been asked to resign prematurely without understanding the cause or their alleged mistake.

“Even judges have not been spared from this process, which blatantly violates the constitution. Consequently, numerous pivotal positions within government agencies remain vacant. Reports have surfaced, listing approximately a hundred vacant positions.

“The government has surpassed previous protocols regarding leadership appointments, disregarding factors such as specialization and affiliation with the appointing authority. Instead, appointments are now subject to ministerial discretion alone, leading to numerous external appointments, particularly from entities where these appointees never worked before.

“Such decisions are often justified under the pretext of a new era or presumed connections. Nonetheless, many of these individuals are recognized for their competence and integrity, having served their ministries diligently and even saved substantial state funds.

“The parliament’s failure to enact a law regulating these appointments during its initial session is evident through ministers’ announcements, setting a September 1 deadline for submitting nominations. Consequently, appointments may occur during the parliament’s recess.

“Despite these circumstances, deputies haven’t called for a special session to draft appointment regulations or requested the government halt appointments until such a law is established. The unchecked appointments and the council’s inaction may pave the way for biased and nepotistic appointments.

“Certain deputies might exploit this legislative gap to place their constituents in influential positions through agreements with ministers. The political groups had previously agreed on a law with general rules to regulate leadership appointments, making this a crucial priority to combat corruption.

“Some council members have proposed weighing the importance of personal interviews in appointment selections, yet the council has yet to endorse these proposals. Leadership positions undoubtedly carry significant responsibilities, requiring accountability before the Amir, the government, and the council.

“However, the practice of collective exclusion based on suspicions, without proper justification or the opportunity for defense, echoes a new form of McCarthyism. If these individuals are indeed corrupt or negligent, shouldn’t they be subject to due process? Is it feasible that all are so inadequate as to warrant collective exclusion? Furthermore, new appointments should adhere to transparent and published criteria to prevent injustice towards deserving candidates and those who vacate their roles due to loyalty.

“Brother Khalifa Al-Muzayen from the Democratic Forum delivered a candid speech characterized by the courage to express a distinct perspective on significant political events within the country. His analysis diverges from much of what certain parties disseminate, particularly in media outlets. Nevertheless, it aligns with the analyses of some seasoned experts. Whether agreeing or disagreeing with his viewpoints, brother Khalifa’s speech encourages those who might have overlooked a comprehensive view of political events to reevaluate their perspectives, devoid of bias and unfounded enthusiasm.

“A belated yet pertinent awakening, as discussed by brother Hassan Jowhar concerning salaries, government expenditures, and the necessity for sustainable financial resources. He rightly pointed to the Border Crossings and Public Warehouses Law No. 15 of 2008, which I was instrumental in during my tenure as the Finance Committee’s head. However, its implementation has been pending, and other economic laws share a similar fate. Now, it’s incumbent upon brother Jowhar and fellow deputies to expedite these implementations, linking expenditures with fresh sources of public revenue that promise new job opportunities and sustained livelihoods.

“I followed brother Bader Al-Rifai’s insightful piece, and I believe Bunaser’s statement warrants thorough scrutiny. Many writers subtly infuse their words with poison when challenging entities like America, but Kuwait isn’t a conduit for such agendas. Kuwait stands as a red line that mustn’t be crossed.”

Also:

“There are junctures in the history of nations and societies that remain irreversible, and the complexity deepens when such moments are shaped by intellectual, political, and social accumulations, progressing through various stages and becoming deeply rooted in the citizens’ consciousness, eventually becoming part of their culture,” columnist **Soud Fahad Al Mojil** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

“In Kuwait, the right to freedom of expression and speech stands as one of those indelible milestones that has consistently set Kuwait apart as a distinct state. The Kuwaiti Constitution further enshrined this

freedom by granting ample space for expression in speech, behavior, thought, attire, opinion, and belief.

“This constitutional move added a legal and official dimension to the historical landmarks, turning it into an intrinsic entitlement that cannot be forfeited or ignored while bearing the associated responsibilities. Unfortunately, the recent draft law proposed by the Ministry of Information starkly contradicts these well-established historical and constitutional foundations that have guided Kuwait’s political journey.

“While it’s understandable and acceptable that the draft law prohibits directing criticism toward the Crown Prince or Deputy Amir – given their positions and the constitutional provisions for the Crown Prince’s self-preservation – other restrictions included in the draft infringe upon the broader freedom of speech and the tools of criticism at large.

“Consequently, there has been a resolute opposition to the project, with members of the National Assembly and the entire Kuwaiti public expressing their disapproval. The draft law proposes that it’s impermissible to tarnish the private life of public employees, those in public service, or members of the National Assembly, nor attribute false statements or actions that amount to defamation or personal abuse. It’s crucial to note that public employees and deputies are public figures engaged in politics and administration.

“It’s therefore challenging to not scrutinize their actions or evaluate their performance within social dialogues, online communication, or through the media. Those who find this uncomfortable should consider stepping back from the responsibility and realm of political action.

“The proposed media regulation law in Kuwait is met with resistance across its primary elements. The nation is unlikely to embrace it, as the Kuwaiti public holds considerable influence in political decisions. This is evident from past incidents where popular will led to the ousting of governments and prime ministers, even thwarting similar laws. The reasons for such resistance hark back to Kuwait’s historical landmarks and the entrenched culture and inclination towards freedom. Curbing this freedom could lead to substantial losses for all stakeholders.

“Freedom in Kuwait has reached an almost sacred status, and dismantling such a certainty is difficult, if not impossible. However, this cherished freedom seems to be unsettling for certain entities, both internal and external, as it transcends geographical boundaries and transcends the need for identification. Hence, for some, it has become a regional concern.

“This calls for internal regulation, whether through laws or penalties, but this path entails blatant violation of Article 36 of the Constitution, which guarantees freedom of opinion and expression. The deputies, government, and authorities are sworn to uphold, respect, and implement this constitutional commitment.

“Consequently, the popular and parliamentary resistance against the media project that encroaches upon freedom of expression and contradicts constitutional principles is not only understandable but imperative. For those who believe they might face abuse, the judiciary stands as a refuge, and the Ministry of Information has no jurisdiction in this realm whatsoever.”

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“Kuwait has concluded security agreements on the extradition of convicts with many countries such as Iran, Egypt, Iraq, Pakistan, India, Ceylon and Bangladesh. Thus, the prisoners not sentenced to death or civilians involved in State security cases can complete the remainder of their prison sentence in their countries,” columnist **Tareq Hamada** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

“We are following up the appreciated efforts of the concerned sectors in the Ministry of Interior, especially the Criminal Security Sector, in implementing the directives of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled to combat drugs with strength and firmness in order to arrest dozens of the members of this corrupt group every week — dealers or promoters of narcotic poisons.

“It was announced last week that 21 individuals were arrested for trafficking or possession of drugs or alcohol — five are citizens and the rest are expatriates. This means that the citizens constitute less than 25 percent and the rest are of different nationalities, and we have extradition agreements with their countries.

“The cost of a prisoner’s stay in prison — food, drink and medication — ranges from KD10 to KD15, about KD450 per month or KD5,000 annually while the productivity of these people is zero.

“The amount spent on hundreds of expatriate prisoners is huge and a large segment of them were arrested for committing various crimes including drug trafficking. Extraditing the drug dealers is an important step, because it saves a lot of State budget. This step also reduces the number of inmates, thereby, preventing overcrowding in the Central Prison. It could also reduce the number of prison guards.

“Majority of the inmates are the nationals of countries that signed extradition treaties with Kuwait. Therefore, there is nothing wrong in activating the terms of such treaties.

“We know that drug dealers or promoters do not deserve sympathy, considering they deliberately and persistently planned to destroy our human wealth, spread their poison, and return the favor of this generous country with criminal practices and forbidden trade. Their stay in our prisons will not bring us any benefit, rather they are a burden. In the end, they will be deported to their countries upon completion of their punishment.”

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary

Scholarship proposal

Continued from Page 1

Al-Saadoun said several people, including former ministers, have been spreading information that a budget of KD37 billion was allocated for development projects and no one knows where this money went. He cited the minutes of the parliamentary session held on Feb 11, 2015; during which the bill on the budget for fiscal 2015/2016 was discussed. He added the information being spread include the amount earmarked for investments and expenditures in fiscals 2010/2011, 2011/2012, 2012/2013 and 2013/2014. Since the information does not show the KD37 billion allocation, he wants to know if this amount was added to the State bud-

get, year it was added and how the money was spent.

MP Osama Al-Zaid asked Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah to provide him with the list of countries which allow Kuwaitis to enter their territories without obtaining a visa, and those granting visa upon arrival or electronic visa.

He also inquired why the Foreign Affairs Ministry signed treaties with countries to exempt only the Kuwaiti diplomats and those who hold special passports from obtaining entry visa, excluding majority of the citizens who hold ordinary passports. He demanded for the list of countries which do not apply the principle of reciprocity in dealing with Kuwait. He inquired if the ministry has a website showing countries which exempt Kuwaitis from obtaining entry visa and those requiring

entry visa.

MP Marzouq Al-Hebeini asked Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and acting Minister of Education Jassem Al-Ostad to provide him with copies of ministerial decision number 74/2022 on forming a committee to follow up the registration of documents related to the reading of electricity meters and correspondences concerning the committee. He wants to know if the committee conducted a study on the assessment of its tasks, if the officials tasked to record the bills of consumers are subject to monitoring by the ministry or other institutions, if there are consumers billed for the water or power consumption of others, and measures taken in this regard. He also requested for the list of officials who have access to the automated system of the ministry.

Imam of Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq Mosque, Grand Mosque

‘Awqaf’ mourns Sheikh Khaled Al-Saeedi

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Sunday, expressed profound sorrow as it mourned the passing of Sheikh Khaled Al-Saeedi, the esteemed imam and preacher of both the Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq Mosque and the Grand Mosque, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

Salman Al-Kandari, the spokesman for the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, conveyed the condolences and sympathies of Abdul Rahman Al-Mutairi, the Minister of Information and

Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, to the family of the departed and to the entire Kuwaiti community. He beseeched the Almighty to grant the departed soul a place in the highest realms of heaven.

Al-Kandari



Sheikh Al-Saeedi

emphasized that the late Sheikh Khaled Al-Saeedi held a significant stature in the recitation of the Noble Qur’an within Kuwait and the broader Islamic world.

His melodious and moving recitations resonated deeply with worshippers at the Grand Mosque of the state and various mosques across the country. He also mentioned the impact of Sheikh Khaled’s lessons and sermons, invoking divine blessings upon the departed and invoking patience and strength for his family and loved ones.

Interior launches ‘Rasid’ app for traffic violations

Real estate trader banned from travel

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: The Ministry of Interior has launched the ‘Rasid’ (monitor) application for police and traffic officers, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.

While disclosing that this is the first stage of the project, the ministry affirmed it is part of ongoing steps towards digital transformation as per the directive of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

It explained that this application aims to organize the issuance of citations for traffic violations by making them digital, instead of paper. A traffic officer who monitors the violation records it and notify the violator immediately through the application, the ministry added.

The ministry revealed that the objectives of the project include ensuring transparency, tightening control over traffic violations and limiting recklessness on the road.

According to the ministry, motorists can inquire about their traffic violations through the unified government application for electronic services ‘Sahel’ or through its official website. It then called on citizens and expatriates to fully abide by traffic rules and police instructions to guarantee the safety of everyone.

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Travel ban issued: Security sources engaged in the ongoing investigations pertaining to the electricity billing manipulation network, which has resulted in the arrest of 7 individuals, have disclosed that the Public Prosecution has

Mol: Up security, traffic presence against any negative phenomena

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28, (KUNA): First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, stressed Sunday, the need to increase security and traffic presence around the clock throughout the country to deal immediately with any negative phenomena.

This came during Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled chairing a security meeting with a number of assistant undersecretaries, in the presence of Interior Undersecretary Lieutenant General Anwar Al-Barjas, the General Department of Relations and Security Media at the ministry said in a press statement.

The meeting tackled security and traffic plans that are being implemented and the results of the intensive security and traffic campaigns carried out by the ministry against violators and outlaws, the statement added.

issued a travel ban for a real estate trader, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

This action was taken subsequent to the investigations uncovering the trader’s involvement in manipulating bills for a substantial number of properties registered under his name.

The intent behind these manipulations was to absolve him from significant outstanding payments tied to his real estate holdings across various regions.

These sources have further revealed that inquiries have revealed a pattern of arrangements where the outstanding bills were pardoned, facilitated through

Sheikh Talal called for the need to concerted efforts among sectors, intensifying security follow-up and dealing firmly with anyone who might tamper with the security of the country. At the same time, he appreciated the ministry’s tireless efforts.

In another development, Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled has emphatically said that no individual is immune to law or above the law and those who believe otherwise are mistaken, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.


The minister said this when he went to offer his condolences to the family of one of the young men who died in a tragic accident on Thursday following a collision between two four-wheel drives. “Any person, regardless of their status or position, who assumes they are beyond the reach of the law is deluding himself/herself,” the minister asserted.

collaboration with a group of individuals acting as intermediaries on his behalf.


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62 violators held: The General Administration of Residence Affairs Investigations Department said the Ministry of Interior during a security campaign that targeted the “fish market” in the Sharq area 62 residence and labor laws violators of different nationalities have been arrested, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

All arrested violators have subsequently been handed over to the concerned authorities.



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Artificial intelligence has been the buzzword of 2023 ever since ChatGPT made its public debut earlier this year, with businesses, schools, universities and even non-profits looking for ways to integrate AI in their operations.

John Kim, chief product officer for PayPal, spoke with The Associated Press about how the company is using the early proliferation of artificial intelligence technologies in its business, as well as PayPal's future in payments when there's so much competition. The interview has

been edited for length and clarity.

Q: How have security issues changed since you've been in this role or similar roles? How much more complicated or sophisticated are threats or opportunities to protect customer data?

A: One way you you can put it is that the fraud is a pretty big business, it's growing and getting more sophisticated by the day. It used to be that you would get, let's say, an email sent to you and you'd find something off about it, right? Like there's a misspelling and you think

"Gosh, I don't see this person misspelling this common thing" or the email seems to imply that it doesn't have a deep understanding of who I am. Then it became voices over the phone trying to convince you to do something. Now people can create whole identities using AI.

Q: How are you integrating AI into the work you're doing? Where do you see the most promise for AI in payments?

A: We're planning on launching three new products with ties to AI in the next 120 days. For example, we have a check-

out feature we are rolling out that uses AI to keep track of all the permutations of your addresses and personal information that you might use, and use AI to predict the right one to use with the right merchant. We currently try to detect unusual patterns - for example, patterns where fraudsters are trying to test your stolen card out to see if it's good or not - and alert you through the PayPal wallet so you can get that card shut down with your bank quickly. But detecting these patterns can get really complicated, and the pat-

terns can change on the fly, so AI we believe will help us anticipate these changes and keep us ahead.

Q: But on that same point, where do you think AI is being oversold in some ways, or where do you think that the use case in your industry isn't really there quite yet?

A: I think AI has captured a lot of people's imaginations this year. It's made its way to boardrooms, into stores, every product conversation. Some people have been skeptical, and I think some skepticism is healthy. (AP)

| Market Movements | | | | 28-08-2023 | | | |
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| | JAPAN | - Nikkei | +1.73 | | PHILIPPINES | - PSEi | -1.05 |
| | EGYPT | - EGX 30 | +0.37 | | SAUDI | - Tadawul | -0.05 |
| | | | 4,099.52 | | | | 47,500.78 |
| | | | 32,169.99 | | | | 6,160.61 |
| | | | 18,584.84 | | | | 11,464.26 |

Business

The Conversation

Waves of strikes rippling across the US seem big, but the total no. of Americans walking off the job remains ‘historically low’

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

By Judith Stepan-Norris, University of California, Irvine and Jasmine Kerrissey, UMass Amherst

More than 323,000 workers - including nurses, actors, screenwriters, hotel cleaners and restaurant servers - walked off their jobs during the first eight months of 2023. Hundreds of thousands of the employees of delivery giant UPS would have gone on strike, too, had they not reached a last-minute agreement. And nearly 150,000 autoworkers may go on a strike of historic proportions in mid-September if the United Autoworkers Union and General Motors, Ford and Stellantis - the company that includes Chrysler - don't agree on a new contract soon.

This crescendo of labor actions follows a relative lull in U.S. strikes and a decline in union membership that began in the 1970s. Today's strikes may seem unprecedented, especially if you're under 50. While this wave constitutes a significant change following decades of unions' losing ground, it's far from unprecedented.

We're sociologists who study the history of U.S. labor movements. In our new book, "Union Booms and Busts," we explore the reasons for swings in the share of working Americans in unions between 1900 and 2015.

We see the rising number of strikes today as a sign that the balance of power between workers and employers, which has been tilted toward employers for nearly a half-century, is beginning to shift.

The number of U.S. workers who go on strike in a given year varies greatly but generally follows broader trends. After World War II ended, through 1981, between 1 million and 4 million Americans went on strike annually. By 1990, that number had plummeted. In some years, it fell below 100,000.

Workers by that point were clearly on the defensive for several reasons.

One dramatic turning point was the showdown between President Ronald Reagan and the country's air traffic controllers, which culminated in a 1981 strike by

their union - the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization. Like many public workers, air traffic controllers did not have the right to strike, but they called one anyway because of safety concerns and other reasons. Reagan depicted the union as disloyal and ordered that all of PATCO's striking members be fired. The government turned to supervisors and military controllers as their replacements and decertified the union.

That episode sent a strong message to employers that permanently replacing striking workers in certain situations would be tolerated.

There were also many court rulings and new laws that favored big business over labor rights. These included the passage of so-called right-to-work laws that provide union representation to nonunion members in union workplaces - without requiring the payment of union dues. Many conservative states, like South Dakota and Mississippi, have these laws on the books, along with states with more liberal voters - such as Wisconsin.

As union membership plunged from 34.2% of the labor force in 1945 to around 10% in 2010, workers became less likely to go on strike.

Wages kept up with productivity gains when unions were stronger than they are today. Wages increased 91.3% as productivity grew by 96.7% between 1948 and 1973. That changed once union membership began to tumble. Wages stagnated from 1973 to 2013, rising only 9.2% even as productivity grew by 74.4%.

In general, strikes grow more common when economic conditions change in ways that empower workers. That's especially true with the tight labor markets and high inflation seen in the U.S. in recent years.

When there are fewer candidates available for every open job and prices are rising, workers become bolder in their demands for higher wages and benefits.

Political and legal factors can play a role, too.

In the 1930s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal enhanced unions' ability to organize. During World War II, unions agreed to a no-strike pledge - although some workers continued to go on strike.

The number of U.S. workers who went on strike peaked in 1946, a year after the war ended. Conditions were ripe for labor actions at that point for several reasons.

The economy was no longer so dedicated to supplying the military, pro-union New Deal legislation was still intact and wartime strike restrictions were lifted.

In contrast, Reagan's crushing of the PATCO strike gave employers a green light to permanently replace striking workers in situations in which doing that was legal.

Likewise, as we describe in our book, employers can take many steps to discourage strikes. But labor organizers can sometimes overcome management's resistance with creative strategies.

Between 1983 and 2022, the share of U.S. workers who belonged to unions fell by half, from 20.1% to 10.1%. The COVID-19 pandemic didn't reverse that decline, but it did change the balance of power between employers and workers in other ways.

The "great resignation," a surge in the number of workers quitting their jobs during the pandemic, now seems to be over, or at least cooling down. The number of unemployed people for every job opening reached 4.9 in April 2020, plummeted to 0.5 in December 2021, and has remained low ever since.

Meanwhile, many workers have become more dissatisfied with their wages. The strikes by teachers that ramped up in 2018 responded to that frustration. U.S. inflation, which soared to 8% in 2022, has eroded workers' purchasing power while company profits and economic inequality have continued to soar.

Technological breakthroughs that leave workers behind are also contributing to today's strikes, as they did in other periods.

We've studied the role technology played in the printers' strikes of the 1890s following the introduction of the linotype machine, which reduced the need for skilled workers, and the longshoremen strike of 1971, which was spurred by a drastic workforce reduction brought about by the introduction of shipping containers to transport cargo.

Those are among countless precedents for what's happening now with actors and screenwriters. Their strikes hinge on the financial implications of streaming in film and television and artificial intelligence in the production of movies and shows.

Working conditions, including health and safety concerns and time off, have also been at the root of many recent strikes. (AP)

Wall St gains ahead of busy wk of closely-watched economic reports

Asian shares mostly rise after Fed chief's speech

NEW YORK, Aug 28, (AP): Stocks rose broadly in afternoon trading on Wall Street Monday as markets shift their attention from the Federal Reserve to more corporate and economic reports.

The S&P 500 rose 0.6% to keep upward momentum from its first winning week since July. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 200 points, or 0.6% to 34,546 as of 12:57 p.m. Eastern. The Nasdaq rose 0.7%.

Wall Street is wrapping up its latest round of earnings reports. Best Buy and Costco will report their results this week.

3M jumped 5.2% following reports that the company had agreed to a \$5.5 billion settlement over faulty earplugs, a lower figure than expected. Boston Scientific rose 5.4% after giving investors an encouraging update on a study for a heart device.

Shares of Hawaiian Electric jumped 43.9% as the utility pushed back against accusations it is responsible for causing the wildfire that devastated the community of Lahaina. The company said power to the lines in the area of the fire had been cut off hours before the blaze began, refuting an allegation in a lawsuit filed last week by Maui County. The shares are still down about 64% over the past three weeks.

Investors have a busy week ahead full of economic reports that could shed more light on the employment market and whether inflation is still cooling. The latest data could provide more clues about whether the Federal Reserve is likely to hold interest rates steady or raise them again before the year closes.

Wall Street will get an update Tuesday on consumer confidence, which jumped sharply in July and is expected to remain strong in August.

The government will issue its July report on job openings on Tuesday and its broader jobs report for August on Friday. The job market is being closely watched because it has remained strong amid hot inflation and is credited with acting as a bulwark against a recession.

Investors and economists will be focusing closely on the government's latest inflation update on Thursday. The report on personal consumption and expenditures is the Federal Reserve's preferred measure as it tries to rein inflation back to 2%.

The PCE report showed inflation rising at a rate of 3% in June and the July report is expected to show it rose slightly to 3.3%. Overall, it's down from a high of 7% a year ago.

Investors closed last week relieved that Fed Chair Jerome Powell said the central bank would "proceed carefully" on interest rates.

Global inflation pressures could become harder to manage in coming years: Study

JACKSON HOLE, Wyoming, Aug 28, (AP): Rising trade barriers. Aging populations. A broad transition from carbon-spewing fossil fuels to renewable energy.

The prevalence of such trends across the world could intensify global inflation pressures in the coming years and make it harder for the Federal Reserve and other central banks to meet their inflation targets.

That concern was a theme sounded in several high-profile speeches and economic studies presented Friday and Saturday at the Fed's annual conference of central bankers in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

For decades, the global economy had been moving toward greater integration, with goods flowing more freely between the United States and its trading partners. Lower-wage production overseas allowed Americans to enjoy inexpensive goods and kept inflation low, though at the expense of many U.S. manufacturing jobs.

Since the pandemic, though, that trend has shown signs of reversing. Multinational corporations have been shifting their supply chains away from China. They are seeking instead to produce more items - particularly semiconductors, crucial for the production of autos and electronic goods - in the United States, with the encouragement of massive subsidies by the Biden administration.

At the same time, large-scale investments in renewable energies could prove disruptive, at least temporarily,

by increasing government borrowing and demand for raw materials, thereby heightening inflation. Much of the world's population is aging, and older people are less likely to keep working. Those trends could act as supply shocks, similar to the shortages of goods and labor that accelerated inflation during the rebound from the pandemic recession.

"The new environment sets the stage for larger relative price shocks than we saw before the pandemic," Christine Lagarde, president of the European Central Bank, said in a speech Friday. "If we face both higher investment needs and greater supply constraints, we are likely to see stronger price pressures in markets like commodities - especially for the metals and minerals that are crucial for green technologies."

This would complicate the work of the ECB, the Fed and other central banks whose mandates are to keep price increases in check. Nearly all central banks are still struggling to curb the high inflation that intensified starting in early 2021 and has only partly subsided.

"We are living in this world in which we could expect to have more and maybe bigger supply shocks," Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, chief economist at the International Monetary Fund, said in an interview. "All of these things tend to make it harder to produce stuff and make it more costly. And that is definitely the configuration that central banks dislike the most."

The shifting patterns in global trade patterns sparked the most attention during Saturday's discussions at the

Jackson Hole conference. A paper presented by Laura Alfaro, an economist at Harvard Business School, found that after decades of growth, China's share of U.S. imports fell 5% from 2017 to 2022. Her research attributed the decline to tariffs imposed by the United States and the efforts of large U.S. companies to find other sources of goods and parts after China's pandemic shutdowns disrupted its output.

Those imports came largely from such other countries as Vietnam, Mexico and Taiwan, which have better relations with the United States than does China - a trend known as "friendshoring."

Despite all the changes, U.S. imports reached an all-time high in 2022, suggesting that overall trade has remained high.

"We are not deglobalizing yet," Alfaro said. "We are seeing a looming 'Great Reallocation' as trade patterns shift."

She noted that there are also tentative signs of "reshoring" - the return of some production to the United States. Alfaro said the United States is importing more parts and unfinished goods than it did before the pandemic, evidence that more final assembly is occurring domestically. And the decline of U.S. manufacturing jobs, she said, appears to have bottomed out.

Yet Alfaro cautioned that these changes bring downsides as well: In the past five years, the cost of goods from Vietnam has increased about 10% and from Mexico about 3%, adding to inflationary pressures.

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| from 4.24% late Friday. The yield on the 2-year Treasury, which more closely tracks expectations for the Fed, fell to 5.05% from 5.08% late Friday. | |
| Europe | |
| France's CAC 40 added 0.8% in early trading to 7,288.58. Germany's DAX rose 0.6% to 15,730.05. Trading was closed in Britain for a bank holiday. | |
| Asia | |
| Asian shares were mostly higher Monday, as investors were relieved by the head of the Federal Reserve indicating it will "proceed carefully" on interest rates. | |
| Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 added 1.8% in afternoon trading to 32,195.91. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 gained 0.6% to 7,159.80, after data on Australian retail sales showed they rose a higher than expected 0.5%. | |
| South Korea's Kospi rose 0.8% to | |

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| 2,538.67. Hong Kong's Hang Seng jumped 1.3% to 18,182.87, while the Shanghai Composite surged 1.3% to 3,104.27. | |
| "The muted reaction of treasury yields to the rhetoric from Jackson Hole shows that US Federal Reserve chairman Jerome Powell probably hit the right tone when it comes to keeping further policy tightening on the table but at the same time not rattling market confidence," said Tim Waterer, chief market analyst at KCM Trade. | |
| Oil | |
| In energy trading, benchmark U.S. crude edged up 18 cents to \$80.01 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, rose 10 cents to \$84.58 a barrel. | |
| Currencies | |
| In currency trading, the U.S. dollar fell to 146.38 Japanese yen from 146.40 yen. The euro cost \$1.0819, up from \$1.0798. | |

Deep differences remain

Top US, Chinese comm officials express support for easier trade

BEIJING, Aug 28, (AP): Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo and her Chinese counterpart expressed a desire to improve trade conditions on Monday, as Raimondo began a visit to Beijing aimed at warming chilly relations, but neither side appeared willing to make concessions on the other's main demands.

Raimondo joined American officials including Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen in July who have visited China in the past three months. They expressed optimism about improving communication but have announced no progress on technology, security, human rights and other disputes that have plagued relations to their lowest level in decades.

For its part, Chinese leader Xi Jinping's government wants to revive foreign investor interest in China as it tries to reverse a deepening economic slump.

Beijing is ready to work together to "foster a more favorable policy environment for stronger cooperation" and "bolster bilateral trade and investment," Commerce Minister Wang Wentao told Raimondo. Wang gave no details of possible initiatives.

Raimondo said the two sides are working on establishing "new information exchanges" for "more consistent engagement."

"It is profoundly important that we have a stable economic relationship," she said. "I believe that we can make progress if we are direct, open and practical."

Beijing broke off dialogue with Washington on military, climate and other issues in August 2022 in retaliation for a visit to Taiwan by then-Speaker Nancy Pelosi of the House of Representatives. The mainland's ruling Communist Party claims the self-ruled island democracy as part of its territory and objects to foreign governments having contact with it.

The state press has given positive coverage to the American visits to Beijing, but China has given no indication it might change trade, strategic, market access and other policies that irk Washington and its Asian neighbors.

Raimondo told reporters before leaving Washington she was looking for "actionable, concrete steps" to move forward in commercial relations but gave no details. She said she was realistic that the "challenges are significant."

The visits take place under an agreement made by Xi and President Joe Biden during a meeting last November in Indonesia.

In June, Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Xi for 30 minutes during a visit that was postponed from February after a Chinese surveillance balloon entered U.S. airspace. The Chinese leader called on Washington to change policies on Taiwan and other issues and rebuffed a request to resume military-to-military cooperation.

Last week, on the day Raimondo's visit to Beijing was announced, Washington removed 27 Chinese companies from a blacklist that limits access to U.S. technology.

The decision "may have helped grease the wheels for Raimondo's trip," said Anna Ashton and Kylie Milliken of Eurasia Group in a report.

It suggests Washington "is making modest but measurable progress with Beijing in re-establishing limited government-to-government communication," Ashton and Milliken wrote. "Raimondo's visit could produce additional progress."

A key Chinese complaint is limits on access to processor chips and other U.S. technology that threaten to hamper the Communist Party's ambition to develop artificial intelligence and other industries, which the U.S. has imposed on security grounds. The restrictions crippled the smartphone business of Huawei Technologies Ltd., China's first global tech brand. Washington also has persuaded the Netherlands and Japan to join it in blocking Chinese access to tools for manufacturing advanced chips.

"In matters of national security, there is no room to compromise," but most U.S.-Chinese trade "does not involve national security concerns," Raimondo told Wang. "I'm committed to promoting trade and investment in those areas that are in our mutual best interest."

Raimondo defended the Biden administration's "de-risking" strategy of trying to increase domestic U.S. production of semiconductors and other high-tech goods and to create additional sources of supply to reduce chances of disruption. Beijing has criticized that as an attempt to isolate China and hamper its development.

"It is not intended to hinder China's economic progress. We believe a strong Chinese economy is a good thing," Raimondo told Wang. "We seek healthy competition with China. A growing Chinese economy that plays by the rules is in both of our interests."

Wang visited Washington in May. The U.S. government invited Foreign Minister Wang Yi to Washington, but plans for that have not been announced.

Raimondo also was due to meet China's No. 2 leader, Premier Li Qiang, and other officials.

The Biden administration also has taken steps that are likely to rankle Beijing.

In June, Biden added 59 Chinese companies including military contractors and semiconductor manufacturers to a list of entities Americans are prohibited from investing in.

Last week, Washington approved a \$500 million arms sale to Taiwan including infrared tracking systems for advanced F-16 fighter jets.

Dollar Tree, Family Dollar agree improve worker safety

U.S. regulators announced a settlement with the company that runs Dollar Tree and Family Dollar aimed at improving worker safety at thousands of the bargain stores across the country.

Labor Department officials cited hazards at the stores including blocked exits, unsafe storage of materials, and improper access to fire extinguishers and electrical panels.

Under the agreement, the chains operated by Dollar Tree Inc. are required to find the “root causes” of violations that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration has repeatedly cited at multiple stores and fix them within two years, the department said.

Assistant Labor Secretary Doug Parker noted that OSHA has issued 403 violations at Dollar Tree and Family Dollar stores since 2017, resulting in more than \$13.1 million in fines to date. The company “made some significant improvement” in worker safety following a 2015 settlement that expired

in 2018 but continued violations show more work needs to be done, Parker said.

“These are entirely preventable violations and hazards. And it’s the employer’s ... responsibility, to keep these workers safe,” Parker told reporters. “These improvements will not happen overnight, but this agreement will create a pathway for significant investment by the company to put in place controls that we believe will make workers safer.” (AP)

iFLYTEK launches Budapest Joint A.I. Open Platform

iFLYTEK launched the Budapest Joint A.I. Open Platform this week at the World Athletics Championships (WAC) in Budapest, Hungary. The Platform creates a global ecosystem bringing together cutting-edge technology with global partners’ expertise to develop innovative products and services.

At the press conference, Director of the iFLYTEK R&D Institute Ming-kang Long, said the Joint A.I. Open Platform will gather advanced voice technology to build a global A.I.

ecosystem. He added that iFLYTEK’s multilingual capabilities available to developers will increase to more than 100 by the end of 2023.

iFLYTEK partnered with SpeechTex, a BME (Budapest University of Technology and Economics)-incubated enterprise, to launch the Budapest Joint A.I. Open Platform during the World Athletics Championships Budapest 23. iFLYTEK serves as the official event supplier of the Championships and supplies the WAC Bu-

dapest 23 with communication and translation capabilities.

iFLYTEK’s Senior Vice President Jidong Yu and iFLYTEK’s international partners-including the Speech Communications and Smart Interactions Labs (SmartLabs), BME TMIT (Department of Telecommunications and Media Informatics) [Hungary], Speechmatics [U.K], Acapela [Belgium], Mediazen [South Korea], Communications and Information Technology & Applied Innovation Center (AIC) [Egypt]. (AP)

The Conversation

Insiders seem to be getting an unfair advantage over ordinary investors

Insider trading – the legal kind – more profitable if you work for multinational company

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

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By **D. Brian Blank**, Mississippi State University and **Dallin Aldredge**, Florida International University

Corporate insiders who trade stocks based on the information they gain on the job earn a lot more if they work at multinational corporations than their peers at U.S. companies with no sales abroad. That’s the main finding of our new peer-reviewed research.

Insider trading happens when a director or employee trades their company’s public stock or other security based on important or “material” in-

formation about that business. Insider trading isn’t illegal as long as the person reports the trade to the Securities and Exchange Commission and the information is already in the public domain.

We wanted to know if multinational insiders stand to make more money because of the complexity of the information they could possess relative to outsiders.

So we examined returns from over 2.5 million trades reported to the SEC from 1987 to 2019 by insiders at over 10,000 companies. This is only a subset of all insider trades reported during the period because we focused on only those transactions most likely to be informed by the employee’s insight. We then compared monthly returns for insiders at multinational and domestic companies with those for a typical investor.

We found that all insiders beat the market, but those at multinationals did better - especially if they were on the highest rungs of the corporate ladder. While insiders at domestic companies typically obtained a return of 2.4% in the month following a stock purchase, those at multinational corporations reaped 2.8%. That may not sound like a lot, but, assuming consistent returns, it could amount to earning \$170,000 more if an insider traded \$1 million over several months. And it’s triple the typical stock market monthly gain of 0.9%.

The most in-the-know insiders - executives and others with the most intimate knowledge of the company and its operations - at multinationals got an even bigger advantage, earning 3.6% per month vs. 2.7% at domestic companies.

Insider trading is familiar to most

people from movies that portray it in criminal terms, such as Gordon Gekko of “Wall Street.” In the film, he makes millions off others’ inside information.

But even when it is legal, insider trading is very profitable. That’s because insiders trading on public information are more knowledgeable about their industry and process information more effectively than outside investors.

With global companies, the advantage of being an insider increases. Since multinational companies generate earnings in foreign countries, with different currencies, cultures, economies and operating environments, it can be hard for an outsider or analyst to accurately value the company and its stock price. This is especially true when the company does business in regions that are culturally and lin-

guistically distinct from the U.S. This helps insiders trade more efficiently, by buying underpriced stocks at a bargain and selling them later for a windfall.

Companies often motivate their employees to work harder by offering them a stake in their success, but if insiders seem to be getting an unfair advantage over ordinary investors, it may undermine trust in financial markets. The size and profitability of such trades - particularly in light of our data - mean regulators and policymakers may want to consider whether new restrictions on insider trading are needed, such as placing additional limits on the timing or frequency of trades.

Scholars, including us, are pursuing many avenues of research on insider trading, such as how insider trading restrictions are determined and how

insider trades inform markets when news is limited. We’ve recently conducted research on how insider trades by colleagues at the same company tend to cluster together, and we are currently looking at how innovation affects insider trading.

Another recently published project relates to how information is incorporated into stock market prices and how investors underreact to news that may affect insiders’ ability to trade profitably. Similarly, ongoing research uses a GPT language model to assess the complexity of business regulatory filings and financial statements by analyzing technical jargon that can confuse investors, which could also affect how outside investors understand stock prices compared with insiders.

The Research Brief is a short take about interesting academic work. (AP)

Are we facing higher-for-longer interest rates?

Surprisingly durable US economy poses key question

WASHINGTON, Aug 28, (AP): A year ago, Chair Jerome Powell delivered a stark warning: To fight persistently high inflation, the Federal Reserve would continue to sharply raise interest rates, bringing “some pain” in the form of job losses and weaker economic growth.

Since Powell spoke at last summer’s annual conference of central bankers in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, the Fed has followed through, raising its benchmark rate to 5.4%, its highest level in 22 years. Substantially higher loan rates have followed, making it harder for Americans to afford a home or a car or for businesses to finance expansions.

Yet so far, broadly speaking, not much pain has arrived.

Instead, the economy has powered ahead. Hiring has remained healthy, confounding legions of economists who had forecast that the spike in rates would cause widespread layoffs and a recession. The unemployment rate is near a half-century low. Consumer spending keeps growing at a healthy rate.

As Powell and other central bankers return to Jackson Hole this week, the economy’s resilience has thrust a new set of questions at the Fed: Is its key rate high enough to slow growth and cool inflation? And will it need to keep its rate elevated for longer than expected to slow growth and tame inflation?

“The economy seems to be humming along well, inflation is coming down,” said David Beckworth, a longtime Fed-watcher who is a senior fellow at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University, a think tank. “It seems more and more likely that we’ll have higher growth and higher interest rates going forward.”

One after another, economists have postponed or reversed their earlier forecasts for a U.S. recession. Optimism that the Fed will pull off a difficult “soft landing” - in which it would manage to reduce inflation to its 2% target without causing a steep recession - has risen. Nearly seven in 10 economists polled by the National Association for Business Economics say they’re at least somewhat confi-

dent that the Fed will achieve a soft landing, according to the NABE’s latest survey.

On Friday, Powell’s keynote speech at this year’s Jackson Hole conference will be scrutinized for any hints that the Fed intends to keep borrowing rates high for a prolonged period. Wall Street traders, who earlier this year had predicted that the Fed would begin cutting rates by year’s end, now don’t envision any rate cuts until well into 2024.

In the meantime, optimism is rising in financial markets not only for a soft landing but for an acceleration of growth. Last week, the Fed’s Atlanta branch estimated that the economy is growing at a blistering 5.8% annual rate in the current July-September quarter - more than double its pace last quarter. That estimate is likely too high, but it still suggests the economy is likely accelerating from last quarter’s 2.4% rate.

Such expectations have helped fuel a surge in bond yields, notably for the 10-year Treasury note, which heavily influences long-term mortgage rates. The 10-year yield, which was around 3.75% in mid-July, has soared to 4.3%, its highest level in 15 years.

Accordingly, the average fixed rate on a 30-year mortgage has topped 7%, the highest level in 22 years. Auto loans and credit card rates have also shot higher and will likely weaken borrowing and consumer spending, the lifeblood of the economy.

Some economists say those higher long-term rates might lessen the need for further Fed hikes because by slowing growth, they should help cool inflation pressures. Indeed, many economists say they think the Fed’s July rate increase will prove to be its last.

Even if the Fed imposes no further hikes, it may feel compelled to keep its benchmark rate elevated well into future to try to contain inflation. This would introduce a new threat: Keeping interest rates at high levels indefinitely would risk weakening the economy so much as to trigger a downturn.

It could also endanger many banks by reducing the value of bonds they own, a dynamic that helped cause the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank and two other large lenders last spring.

“We’re not totally out of the woods yet, for banks or the econo-

my,” said Raghuram Rajan, an economist at the University of Chicago and former head of India’s central bank.

The jump in Treasury yields has likely been driven, in part, by the government’s ramped-up sale of bonds to finance gaping budget deficits. At the same time, the Fed is no longer buying bonds as it did during and after the pandemic recession to drive down borrowing rates. Many central banks overseas have also stopped or reduced their bond purchases. Banks and some investors are wary, too, given the potential for rates to rise further and reduce the value of their existing bonds.

“Where is the demand for these bonds going to come from?” Rajan asked. Weak demand could force bond yields even higher to try to attract buyers.

Other threats also loom. Some analysts say they think the Fed’s 11 rate hikes have yet to exert their full effect on the economy.

Oscar Munoz, chief U.S. macro strategist at TD Securities, said the Fed’s initial rate increases were merely the equivalent of lifting its foot off the accelerator. By Munoz’s calculations, only since the start of 2023 has the Fed’s benchmark rate been high enough to slow growth. He thinks it could take up to another year for the full impact of the rate increases to be felt.

One reason why economists say the rate hikes haven’t caused more pain is that consumers stockpiled savings after the pandemic struck in 2020, thanks to federal stimulus checks and other aid.

But those savings are dwindling. The Fed’s San Francisco branch estimated last week that pandemic-era household savings have shrunk to just \$190 billion - from a peak of \$2.1 trillion - and will likely run out entirely by next month.

Though year-over-year inflation has slowed to 3.2% from a peak of 9.1% in June 2022, gas and grocery prices are still elevated compared with two years ago. And items like rent, restaurant meals and other services are still growing more expensive.

“We should be somewhat worried that between exhausting their savings and the purchasing power of their money being eroded by inflation, many people are facing tighter budgets,” said Karen Dynan, a



Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell (left), chats with economist Philip Jefferson outside of Jackson Lake Lodge during the Jackson Hole Economic Symposium near Moran in Grand Teton National Park, Wyo. (AP)

Heiko Roth joins Workerbee’s advisory board, ‘paving’ path for innovation and rapid growth

LAS VEGAS, Aug 28, (AP): Workerbee, an online talent marketplace for businesses to instantly access on-demand corporate software experts, today announced the addition of Heiko Roth, a seasoned enterprise HR innovator and serial entrepreneur, to its Board of Advisors.

With a career in Human Resources spanning over two decades, Roth has a proven track record of driving transformative initiatives for Fortune 500 companies across the globe. Roth’s accomplishments include co-founding Agilea Solutions, a thriving IT Services company specializing in Human Capital Management, and TestAssure, an innovative automated testing platform focused on helping organizations maintain Pay Compliance globally.

“Workerbee represents a transformative way for businesses to instantly access on-demand expertise, connecting them with highly skilled professionals who are eager to adopt a fresh new

way of working,” said Heiko Roth. “For businesses, it provides them immediate access to experts that can step right in and help on Day 1, without having to hire full-time. For Specialists, it provides additional opportunities to monetize their skills and work on their own terms.”

Roth’s experience advising corporations such as Walmart, Target, Citigroup, UKG, and Verizon and his experience launching successful startups in the HR sector will provide Workerbee with strategy, operations, sales, and technology expertise at a critical time for the company.

“Heiko has long been a visionary in the HR Tech sector, applying his tremendous insight, experience, and passion into helping organizations modernize their technology stacks and realize business value more quickly,” said Albert Cuesta, Co-founder of Workerbee. “We’re excited to welcome him to Workerbee’s board of advisors,

leveraging Heiko’s experience to collaboratively reshape our trajectory.”

Leveraging his track record of success in delivering for and selling to both SMBs and enterprises, Roth is positioned to advise the company during a phase of rapid growth. His strategic insights will play a pivotal role in broadening product market coverage and meeting the escalating demands of its diverse customer base.

Workerbee is an online marketplace that connects businesses with highly-skilled corporate software specialists in minutes. Our goal is to disrupt the way companies access specialized expertise by curating and vetting a network of top-tier professionals immediately available for both full-time and part-time engagements. Workerbee is dedicated to ensuring in-demand corporate software skills are accessible to any company, at any time, and to eliminating the time and cost it takes to find and train niche software talent.

Knightscope grabs 2 Texas ‘sales’ totaling four machines

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif., Aug 28, (AP): Knightscope, Inc. [Nasdaq: KSCP] (“Knightscope” or the “Company”), a leading developer of autonomous security robots and blue light emergency communication systems, announced two new contracts - one for 3 of its K1 Hemispheres, and the other for a K1 Blue Light Tower.

One of Knightscope’s resellers, a Houston-based security company that provides custom-tailored security services for clients of all sizes in 42 U.S. states, received its second signed contract - a pre-order for three K1 Hemisphere Autonomous Security Robots (“ASRs”) from a gated golf community in central Texas. This order comes on the heels of

Knightscope’s recent announcement that the Hemispheres have entered the final stage of testing as the Company prepares to fulfill its many pre-order contracts.

The next sale comes from an existing Knightscope customer in San Antonio expanding its deployment of K1 Blue Light Tower (“K1BLT”) emergency communication devices. The new sale brings the total number of K1BLTs being used in park areas to 16. Blue light towers and emergency phones provide one-touch access to first response services and expand the reach of emergency assistance to those utilizing park areas by providing lifelines to people who may be experiencing some form of emergency, crisis or distress.

MUMBAI, India, Aug 28, (AP): Tata Communications, a global digital ecosystem enabler, today announces the launch of its global, cloud-based 5G Roaming Laboratory (Lab), enabling Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) to trial 5G standalone network use cases before introducing the service to their subscribers. With this, Tata Communications is harnessing the potential of 5G to help reimagine mobility experiences for mobile network operators benefitting their consumers, and enterprise customers.

Tata Communications cloud-based 5G Roaming Lab trials the international mobile roaming experience

by closely monitoring traffic movement and network usage for giving the highest quality of experience to mobile phone users while roaming. Its tests get an objective performance assessment across networks, connected in the exchange process while a user is roaming. This also includes onboarding and internet trials on the high-speed, high-reliable and low-latency 5G standalone network.

The new Tata Communications 5G Roaming Lab is specially designed keeping safety at the heart of its operations. It is equipped with hi-tech server applications that provide high-speed and seamless 5G roaming connectivity along with

network security. Agile and secure network is critical considering 5G adoption is accelerating globally with GSMA predicting 5 billion 5G connections by 2030 (Source: The Mobile Economy 2023 (gsma.com)).

“Connectivity is a key ingredient in today’s fast-paced digital world. An internet that is fast, secure and available at all times is of paramount importance to customers, whether they are individuals or an enterprise. We are excited to introduce our newest capability in 5G roaming testing ensuring MNO customers are receiving proven services,” said Mysore Madhusudhan, Executive

Vice President, Collaboration and Connected Solutions, Tata Communications. “By ensuring that the tests can take place across geographies, enhances the flexibility available to MNOs for delivering superior and agile services. Armed with fast and uninterrupted connectivity, this generation will accelerate a lot faster than its predecessors!”

Tata Communications is a global leader in Mobile Roaming Services, with proven track record of carrying 2G/ 3G/ 4G roaming signaling services in 200+ countries. Its worldwide relationship with 700+ MNOs gives it a natural edge to provide 5G roaming services.



Lamia Karam

Gulf Bank: Lamia Karam promoted to GM of Treasury

As part of the bank's efforts in empowering national talents in order to obtain leadership positions

Following the approval of the Central Bank of Kuwait, Gulf Bank announced the promotion of Ms. Lamia Ali Karam to assume the position of General Manager of Treasury. This is part of the Bank's continuous efforts to enable national talents to advance and obtain leadership positions, based on the bank's 2025 – noting that the percentage of Kuwaitis in the bank's senior management positions exceeded 60% in 2022. Ms. Karam has around 30 years of experi-

ence in the Kuwaiti banking sector, most of which focused on treasury management, in a number of Kuwaiti banks, until joining the Gulf Bank in 2017, where she assumed the position of Deputy Director of the Treasury department.

Karam has an extensive experience in Money Market, Foreign Exchange, and Sales, and has a proven track record of managing and leading teams to achieve high performance. Over the years, Karam has succeeded in building a prestigious reputation in the local and GCC markets, along with a strong network of clients and banks. Academically, Karam holds a Bachelor's de-

gree in Economics and Political Science from Kuwait University and has completed many courses in Management and Leadership from MIT Sloan school - USA, University of Navarra – Spain, Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies and others.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large.

Onam festival in full swing at LULU Hypermarket Kuwait



Photos taken during the Onam Pookalam event

Onam Pookalam (flower carpet) contest held

LULU Hypermarket, a household name for quality and excellence, celebrated the vibrant festival of Onam in Kuwait with an array of exciting events and offers that brought the essence of Kerala right to its Al-Rai outlet. The top management of LULU Kuwait inaugurated the festivities by lighting the traditional lamp, marking the beginning of a truly memorable Onam celebration.

One of the highlights of the day was the Onam Pookalam (flower carpet) contest held on 26th Aug at the Al-Rai outlet. Over 15 teams enthusiastically participated, showcasing their artistic talents with vibrant

and intricate flower designs. 1st Prize Team Winners get A generous 100 KD Gift Voucher, 2nd Prize get an impressive 75 KD Gift Voucher, 3rd Prize team get a commendable 50 KD prize and Every participating team received consolation prizes as a token of appreciation. The Onam Pookalam Contest was generously sponsored by Eastern, a trusted partner in promoting cultural celebrations.

The celebrations continued with a captivating Chendamelam performance and the traditional Pulikali (Tiger Dance), which left the audience spellbound. Cul-

tural programs showcasing the rich heritage of Kerala added to the festive spirit.

LULU Hypermarket delighted its patrons with an authentic Onam Sadhya, featuring a sumptuous spread of 22 delectable dishes. From the fragrant rice to the mouthwatering avial and payasam, the Sadhya offered a true taste of Kerala. For those with a sweet tooth, LULU Hypermarket had a treat in store. Eleven varieties of Payasam, a traditional South Indian dessert, were available at unbeatable prices.

Shoppers looking to cook up their own Onam feasts

could find a wide array of fresh and authentic Kerala vegetables at all LULU outlets. LULU Hypermarket also offered discounts on Onam special garments, including sarees and churidars, so patrons could dress in style for the festivities.

Adding to the excitement, a thrilling Tug of War competition took place on August 25th at the same LULU Al-Rai outlet. LULU Hypermarket Kuwait has once again demonstrated its commitment to celebrating cultural diversity by bringing the spirit of Onam to its customers.

LOYAC interns show their creativity by organizing event for staff of Zain

Company empowered 'Darb' students

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: The Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC) recently hosted a special event for staff that was fully organized, supervised, and managed by high school trainees enrolled in LOYAC's 'Darb' internship program. The students spent 6 weeks interning at Zain's various departments, and the company empowered them to showcase their skills and apply what they learned in a real-world project.

Zain's support to 'Darb' came in line with its long-term strategic partnership with LOYAC, the leading youth empowerment non-profit. This year, the partnership extends to 19 years, and through it Zain supports a plethora of social programs targeting children, young people, high school students, and college graduates. These initiatives cover a number of competencies to prepare trainees for their future careers, and include entrepreneurship, internship, part time, volunteer, and other programs.

Partnership

In partnership with LOYAC, Zain supported the 'Darb' internship program, where it welcomed a number of bright highschoolers who spent 6 weeks interning at the company's various departments and divisions. During this period, the trainees gained invaluable business and personal experiences that unleashed their creativities, skills, and



Zain LOYAC Darb 2023

passions, and helped prepare them for their future careers.

At the program's end, ZINC hosted this wonderful social activity that was attended by Zain employees who were keen on showing their support to the students. Not only did the company recognize the trainees for their hard work but took the extra step to give them the opportunity to apply their experience into a real-world project. Zain presented the students with financial support and mentored them to bring their ideas to reality.

The trainees fully organized, supervised, and managed the event, which was themed around the end

of the summer vacation season. Their tasks included planning the project, brainstorming ideas, setting up the agenda, branding the venue, marketing the event, contacting suppliers, managing the budget, supervising the installation process, welcoming guests, and more. The experience helped them upskill their talents in project management, marketing, PR, procurement, HR, and more.

Zain and LOYAC's strategic partnership extends to 19 years of successful programs and initiatives that empowered thousands of ambitious Kuwaiti youth in business, volunteering, and academic projects. Zain

considers this a great achievement that truly reflects the strength and resilience of the collaboration ecosystem between the private sector and non-profit organizations in empowering Kuwaiti youth.

LOYAC is a non-profit organization established in Kuwait in 2002 with the aim of empowering the youth to become impactful leaders in the society, offering a broad range of unique programs that fall under a model integrating community, professional, and life empow- erments. LOYAC operates in Kuwait, Lebanon, Yemen, and Jordan, and has empowered over 3.5 million young people since its inception.

Bid to drive IoT connectivity

Ooredoo Group 'joins' the IoT World Alliance

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: Ooredoo Group, a leading enabler of IoT solutions, announced today joining the IoT World Alliance as their newest member and the sole operator representing the Middle East and North Africa region within the Alliance.

The IoT World Alliance is the world's largest Mobile Network Operator cooperative. Acting as a global forum of telecommunications providers, it is dedicated to tracking IoT connectivity trends and sharing expertise with partners and customers to help reduce the complexity associated with world- wide deployments of connected devices.

As an Alliance member, Ooredoo is now an integral part of global IoT discussions, sharing valuable insights from its extensive presence in the region and gaining access to a powerful program for exchanging knowledge and experiences. The company's deep understanding of local regulations, particularly in critical areas of compliance, enhances the Alliance's knowledge base and strengthens its ability to navigate the complexities of regional markets.

Ooredoo Group will also be able to assist other operators in facilitat- ing seamless connectivity for customers entering the "Ooredoo region". This strategic advantage positions Ooredoo as a key partner for operators looking to expand their IoT services into new markets.

simplify the deployment of con- nected devices in more countries, empowering businesses to harness the full potential of IoT solutions on a global scale."

Ooredoo's membership in the Alliance marks a significant mile- stone in the Group's commitment to advancing IoT connectivity and col- laboration across the globe. Being the sole operator representing the MENA region, Ooredoo will enable the Alliance to expand their cover- age to previously untapped regions, unlocking new opportunities for collaboration and growth.

Mark van den Berg, IoT World Alliance Chairman, said: "We are pleased to welcome Ooredoo as our latest Member of the Alliance, expanding our footprint and knowledge base so businesses can seamlessly deploy connected devices in more countries. Ooredoo will be of great value helping us comply with local regu- lations in the Middle East, North Africa, and Southeast Asia."

With Ooredoo's entry into the IoT World Alliance, the company reaffirms its commitment to upgrad- ing people's worlds through innova- tion and customer-centric solu- tions. By leveraging the collective strength of the Alliance, the com- pany aims to accelerate the adop- tion of IoT technologies, drive digi- tal transformation, and create a smarter, more connected world for all.

About Ooredoo

Ooredoo is an international com- munications company operating across the Middle East, North Africa, and Southeast Asia. Serving consumers and businesses in ten countries, Ooredoo delivers leading data experience through a broad range of content and services via its advanced, data-centric mobile and fixed networks.

Ooredoo generated revenues of QAR 23 billion as of 31 December 2022. Its shares are listed on the Qatar Stock Exchange and the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange.

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UK flights are being delayed and canceled as a 'technical issue' hits air traffic control

LONDON, Aug 28, (AP): Thou- sands of air travelers faced delays on Monday after Britain's air traf- fic control system was hit by a breakdown that slowed takeoffs and landings across the U.K.

Flight control operator National Air Traffic Services said it was ex- perienceing an unexplained "tech- nical issue" that could delay flights on Monday, the end of a holiday weekend and one of the busiest travel days of the year.

The service said it had "applied traffic flow restrictions to maintain safety" and that engineers were working to find and fix the fault. It said U.K. airspace remained open.

It did not give an estimate of how long it would take to fix the problem, or what had caused it, but European air traffic authority Eurocontrol warned of "very high" delays because of a "flight data processing system failure" in the U.K.

Scottish airline Loganair said there had been "a network-wide failure of U.K. air traffic control computer systems."

"Although we are hopeful of being able to operate most intra-Scot- land flights on the basis of local coordination and with a minimum of disruption, north-south and in- ternational flights may be subject

to delays," it said.

Airports both inside and outside the U.K. told passengers to expect delays and cancellations.

Heathrow, Europe's busiest air hub, said "national airspace is- sues" were causing disruption to flights, and advised passengers to check with their airline.

Dublin Airport said in a statement that air traffic control issues were resulting in delays and cancellations to some flights into and out of Dub- lin. "We advise all passengers due to travel today to check the status of their flight with their airline in ad- vance of travelling," it said.

British Airways said it was "work-

ing closely with NATS to under- stand the impact of a technical issue that is affecting U.K. airspace, and will keep our customers up to date with the latest information."

Aviation analyst Alastair Rosen- schein, a former BA pilot, said the air traffic system appeared to have suffered "some kind of patchy failure as opposed to a total shut- down."

He told Sky News that "the disruption will be quite severe at some airports" and some U.K.- bound flights will likely have to land in other European countries in order to reduce the flow of inbound planes.



Web

The Conversation

Prenups can insulate one spouse from potential debt from partner’s business

Beyoncé has prenup – but do you need one if not a millionaire?

By Allison Anna Tait
University of Richmond

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

A prenuptial agreement can seem like something only high-profile people like Jeff Bezos – with his US\$138 billion fortune to protect – actually need.

But prenups – contracts entered into before marriage that detail how assets will be divided in the case of divorce – can be a good idea for anyone going into a marriage, according to lawyers and marriage counselors. They have been in regular use since 1983, when a group of attorneys and law professors drafted the Uniform Premarital Agreement Act, a set of rules regulating prenups that 28 US states have since adopted.

A recent poll showed that the percentage of couples with prenups has risen from 3% in 2010 to 15% in 2022. Nearly 40% of married or engaged couples between the ages of 18 and 34 have signed prenups, while just 13% of couples between 45 and 54 have done so.

As a law professor who specializes in family law, I teach my students what prenups are and how to make sure they stand up in court. I also write about what happens to property when couples get divorced, especially unique forms of property like family businesses or trust funds.

Shield from unwanted debt

But prenups can be about more than what you own – they can also be about what you owe.

Millennials have accumulated more debt than previous generations, and prenups can help millennial couples navigate some of the concerns about debt in marriage. They can help couples address questions about the shared debt incurred during the marriage and who will pay what if the marriage ends. For example, couples can agree in a prenup to allocate student loan debt to the person who took out the loan.

They can also choose to protect one person from the other’s medical debt, especially if they know that large medical bills are on the horizon. Prenups can insulate one spouse from potential debt and financial risk from their partner’s business.

Shield from state laws

Couples may also be drawn to prenups because these agreements allow them to make arrangements that, if executed correctly, take precedence over state laws.

When you get divorced, you can either follow the terms in a prenup or the terms that state law provides and be at the mercy of a divorce court’s estimation of who should get what.

State rules that generally divide all assets and debt equally were initially created for divorcing couples with conventional and gendered household patterns. For example, stay-at-home mothers raising children, working fathers with full-time employment, and assets like a house, life insurance and pension.

Younger couples are likely to organize their households much differently. Both spouses generally work. Expectations about who is responsible for child rearing are more varied. Millennials and Gen Z workers are frequently free-

lance employees or independent contractors, with less income security and fewer benefits like employer-provided pensions or health and life insurance.

Prenups are a helpful way to address these emergent work-life arrangements. For example, one spouse can choose to keep their income or pension benefits as separate property, not to be divided upon divorce.

New ways to draft prenup

New platforms like Hello Prenup – a “Shark Tank” success story – can be helpful for younger couples. The company aims to make the prenup process more accessible and less costly – think Turbo Tax but for prenups. Online platforms like Rocket Lawyer or Legal Templates, which provide outlines for all kinds of legal documents, also offer a prenup template.

These platforms provide state-specific documents and explain the process, walking clients through things like financial disclosure rules that are important if a prenup ever ends up being questioned in court.

Valuable conversation

Prenups make the news because of celebrity agreements and sensational provisions, like fidelity clauses or sobriety requirements. However, for most couples, these items are less important. Many people draft prenups to feel financially safe and know what will happen if they divorce.

One of the most significant benefits of prenups is that they get couples to talk about their financial lives and what it might look like to merge – or separate – finances as a part of marriage. And, considering conflicts around money are one of the biggest causes of divorce, prenup conversations may be the best kind of wedding planning you can do. (AP)

NerdWallet

‘Create safety plan’

How to get ‘comfortable’ with financial-risk taking

By Kimberly Palmer
NerdWallet

Making money, whether by putting cash into the stock market, buying a home or jumping to a better-paying job, requires some degree of risk. While embracing any of those moves might feel as scary as skydiving off a cliff, there are times when a little risk makes financial sense.

“In certain scenarios, not taking enough risk is actually a bigger risk,” says Liz Davidson, CEO and founder of Financial Finesse, which provides workplace financial wellness programs as an employer benefit.

Davidson and other financial experts also caution against being overly risky with your finances. How to find the right level of financial risk for you is highly personal; there’s no formula that can tell you whether or not to buy that house or take that new job. But there are ways to get more comfortable with risk when you know that taking the less comfortable path is the right decision for you.

Here are five strategies to help you embrace financial risks that make sense for you.

Understand fears

“When we think about making financial decisions, fear is a natural emotional component because with money, there are really high stakes,” says Farnoosh Torabi, creator of the “So Money” podcast and author of the forthcoming book “A Healthy State of Panic: Follow Your Fears to Build Wealth, Crush Your Career and Win at Life.”

“When fear shows up in your financial life, ask: ‘Where did you come from, and what do you want me to protect?’” she suggests.

Torabi applied that method when she made the risky decision to buy a new home at the height of the pandemic in spring 2020. “I was scared. It was either going to be the best decision or the worst decision. But I was more afraid of standing still and not doing anything,” she says. Looking back, Torabi says, “It was the best decision we ever made.”

Sometimes, the fear of risk is warranted. Communities of color can face particular challenges when considering financial risks, says Yemi Rose, CEO and founder of OfColor, a financial wellness startup that serves employees of color. “We don’t have the luxury to take as many risks because we don’t have a safety net to fall back on,” he says.

Investing, entrepreneurship and homeownership are all riskier without significant savings to turn to if things don’t go as planned, he adds. Sometimes, it makes sense to proceed anyway. He urges people to consider paying off debt and building up savings to give themselves more stability while still tak-

ing smart risks.

Build emergency fund

In fact, building up a bigger savings account is one of the most powerful ways you can protect yourself from the risks you decide to embrace, Davidson says. “To have cash in the bank does multiple things. It psychologically gives you a sense of peace, freedom and options,” she explains. It will also help you cover basic needs if you fall on hard times, she adds.

While financial advisers generally recommend saving three to six months of expenses, Pamela Capalad, a certified financial planner and the founder of Brunch & Budget, a financial planning firm in the Brooklyn borough of New York City, says you can alter your target savings goal based on the stability of your job, whether you have dependents and other factors. For some, she says, one to two months’ worth of expenses is a solid goal.

Up level financial knowledge

“The best way to avoid stress and confusion is to become more knowledgeable. When you’re more knowledgeable, you’ll feel more confident. Take some time to learn and understand the basics” about investing, home value trends and other topics that relate to your upcoming financial decisions, says Carol Petrov, a certified financial planner and vice president of Kendall Capital Management, a financial firm in Rockville, Maryland.

To do that, she suggests watching educational videos posted on your financial institution’s website, reading books and articles about market risk and listening to financial podcasts.

Create safety plan

Sometimes it’s useful to think through the worst-case scenario, Torabi says. If you lose your house or your job, what would be your first three steps to recovery? They might include looking at your savings and cutting back on expenses. “Going to that dark place can help us make a plan,” she says.

Seek safer route

If worrying about your investments or mortgage payments is keeping you up at night, then it might be time to rethink those choices, Petrov says. “For me, the right amount of financial risk means I can make my mortgage payments and take care of myself and my son even if I lose my job,” she adds.

Capalad recommends thinking through how a recession would affect your current choices when it comes to the stock, housing and job markets. “We’re in a place with a lot of financial uncertainty. You can be less aggressive with risk to balance out some of the volatility we’re seeing,” she says.

The challenge is to find that balance. (AP)



A tip box is filled with US currency in New York, April 3, 2019. Taking on some degree of risk is a healthy part of making financial decisions, but it's not always comfortable. Consider building up your emergency savings fund to help provide a buffer in case events don't go as planned. (AP)

Businesses should adapt to digitally native generation

Gen Zers, with \$360bn purchasing power, to revolutionize industries

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug 28: Last year, Gen Zers – born between 1997 and 2012 – surpassed millennials to become the most-populous generation on Earth, representing more than 25% of the global population and an estimated \$360 billion in purchasing power. But to tap that vast pool of consumer spending, today’s businesses must adapt to Gen Zers’ materially-different preferences and behaviors compared with other generations – and pivot accordingly, according to global, technology-focused investment firm Battery Ventures.

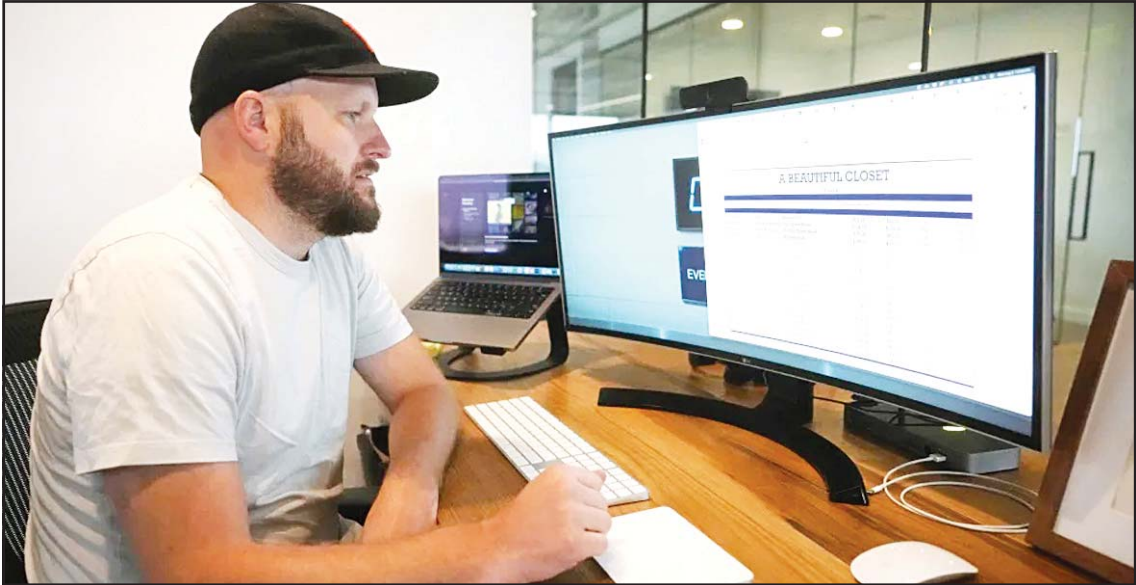
Today, Battery released a comprehensive new report on the preferences and behaviors of Gen Z consumers and the opportunities to serve – and build new consumer-technology businesses around – this digitally native, socially conscious and entrepreneurial generation. The full report, titled “Understanding the Next Generation of Consumers: A Gen Z Snapshot,” is available here.

Investment opportunities exist across a number of key industries to better serve Gen Z, according to Battery. The report found that companies should consider these core themes when creating businesses to serve this groundbreaking generation:

- Values & ethics: Gen Z has a deep belief in ethical and social consciousness. Specifically, 70% of Gen Zers try to purchase from companies they consider ethical, and 90% believe companies must act on social and environmental issues. It showcases a generation that demands ethical behavior from businesses.
- Entrepreneurial spirit: These consumers have a notable entrepreneurial inclination with 62% of Gen Zers stating they have started or intend to start their own business. This showcases their drive and ambition.
- Health & well-being: Mental health is a priority; 37% of Gen Zers have received treatment from a mental-health professional. This group’s pronounced use of fitness trackers (70%) points towards a holistic-and-technology-enhanced-approach to well-being.
- Hybrid/remote work preference: This generation shows a strong inclination toward a changed work landscape, with 85% of Gen Zers preferring hybrid or remote work. It underscores the evolving nature of the professional world.
- Digitally native: Gen Z is distinct as the first truly “digitally native” generation. Immersed in digital tools, entertainment and communication their entire lives, Gen Zers are intensely tech-forward, a trend we expect to persist with the advent of new technologies.
- Role of social media: Platforms like TikTok, Instagram and more have taken center stage in the lives of this generation. 97% of Gen Zers use these platforms for shopping, a powerful shift in consumer retail behavior.
- Diversity: As the most-diverse generation in terms of race, ethnicity and sexuality, Gen Zers’ focus on inclusivity, representation and individuality—and expectation that brands reflect their values—should be a major consideration for businesses.

“We are thrilled to unveil our Gen Z Snapshot report, which explores the behavior of this rising generation and offers key takeaways for founders and business leaders who seek to capitalize on the consumer shifts these young people are driving,” said Roger Lee, a general partner at Battery focused on consumer technology and co-author of the report. “It is critically important that businesses at all stages appreciate the unique attributes of Gen Z consumers, as failing to do so could result in diminishing relevance and visibility in the market.”

Over the past decade, the software industry saw an accelerated shift to mobile content consumption, device usage and the development and monetization of social media platforms, coinciding with the maturation of millennials. However, with Gen Zers sur-



Jake Welch looks at a spreadsheet on his computer on Aug 2 in Salt Lake City. The 36-year-old brand director for an advertising firm calculates the cost-per-wear of his wardrobe by highlighting 200 items in a spreadsheet – excluding underwear and socks – and meticulously listing the price he paid for each of them as well as how many times he’s worn it. (AP)

Retailers shift their marketing strategy

More shoppers ditch cheap items for more durable, versatile goods

NEW YORK, Aug 28, (AP): For Jake Welch, getting dressed is one big math problem.

The 36-year-old brand director for an advertising firm calculates the cost-per-wear of his wardrobe by highlighting 200 items in a spreadsheet – excluding underwear and socks – and meticulously listing the price he paid for each of them as well as how many times he’s worn it. He updates the spreadsheet every night on his computer to determine whether his purchases were worth it – or not.

Lots of people thought Welch was weird when he started doing this 12 years ago, opting to ditch the cheapest items on the sales rack in favor of maximizing the value of his purchases over the span of their lifecycles. But with inflation still a nagging problem, more shoppers are coming around to his way of thinking.

Retailers are taking note of this mindset and shifting their marketing strategy in some cases. Gap’s Old Navy is offering shoppers a full refund for uniforms purchased during the upcoming back-to-school season if the clothes don’t hold up for a year. Retailers like Kohl’s and online shirt retailer Untuckit have recently revamped their marketing campaigns – particularly for the fall – to focus on durability and versatility. American Eagle is touting the “longevity of your most-loved jeans” made of recycled cotton and polyester in an email campaigns to customers.

That means a \$200 classic sweater may end up being a better deal if you plan to wear it every week in comparison to a hot pink dress picked up for \$40 that might be worn only once a

month.

“Cost-per-wear is another way that they think about how to combat some of the inflation,” said Christie Raymond, Kohl’s chief marketing officer. “Is this item going to last? Is it going to really be versatile? For back to school, for example, can my child wear it in a number of different ways?”

Worn

Some shoppers are also looking to be more eco-friendly by buying clothes that don’t end up in a landfill after being worn a few times.

Still, the cost-per-wear calculation may only make sense for those consumers who can afford to prioritize quality and versatility over price. Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData Retail, notes that shoppers with tighter budgets will look at price and may not care whether something will last just as long as it looks good for now.

Indeed, fast-fashion purveyors are still faring well in the face of inflation. Chinese e-commerce retailer Temu, known for deep discounts and coupons, has continued its meteoric rise in the U.S., adding nearly 10 million new daily users since the turn of the year, according to market intelligence firm GWS. Meanwhile, Shein, the ultra-low-price, fast-fashion juggernaut founded in China, has been increasing its daily users from 3.1 million to 4.9 million daily users over the past year, according to GWS.

But there’s a growing backlash to the cheap stuff.

Rohan Deuskar, founder and CEO of Stylics, a retail technology firm that powers personalized styling, outfitting and bundling suggestions for 150 retail-

ers online, said he started seeing the trend this past holiday shopping season. He noted the average order was going up, particularly for holiday dresses, while shoppers were buying fewer items. And shoppers were also spending more time engaging with the virtual models that showed different ways to wear the item.

“Shoppers are being more considerate about every purchase and being willing to spend only if they get value – and that no longer just means cheap,” Deuskar said. “We’re reaching a little bit of an oversaturation of buying a bunch of stuff.”

According to market research firm Circana’s Retail Tracking Service, higher prices are outpacing lower prices over the past 12-month period ending in June. Women’s dresses priced \$200 and above grew about twice as fast as those priced under \$50. Sales of men’s jeans that were less than \$30 declined, while higher price brands drove growth. Sales of women’s jeans priced \$150 and above increased by 7%. And while the market for women’s active pants declined 20%, women’s active pants priced between \$125 to \$150 increased 19%, according to Circana.

Saunders notes that “price and quality aren’t always linked.” In fact, some retailers may be using any excuse to sell higher price goods. There’s also the timeliness of the fashion item to consider. Shoppers may think about longevity when they look for a coat but not for a skirt or a top.

“People like to refresh or their tastes change,” he said.

And cost-per-wear calculations don’t factor in weight loss or gain, Saunders added.

panies must take action on social and environmental issues, per the report.

As the first truly “digitally native” generation, Gen Z has embedded technology solutions, including generative AI, into work, school, socialization, health and wellness and every other area of life. Industry analysts predict that 53% of Gen Zers will be monthly generative-AI users by 2025, likely leveraging these technologies for search and discovery, education, work and entertainment, among other applications.

In selling to Gen Zers, businesses must meet these young consumers where they are – online – by using popular social media platforms to cultivate trust and brand visibility. Gen Zers

are also eager to use their digital savvy in their professional lives – 85% prefer hybrid or remote to in-office work. Many are interested in charting their own career paths, either by pursuing entrepreneurship, as 62% of Gen Zers have indicated they have started or intend to start their own business.

“Every generation of consumers makes its mark across industries with unique preferences and behaviors. Nevertheless, we feel that Gen Z is poised to be one of the most-influential generations in history, with a distinct – and deeply principled – consumer perspective, coupled with a global platform through social media,” added Courtney Chow, a vice president at Battery and co-author of the report.

Television

NEW YORK, Aug 28, (AP): Janis Joplin's first rehearsal with the rock band Big Brother & The Holding Company was apparently a loud affair. So loud it was alarming.

Bassist Peter Albin recalls the band raising the roof off one day in the 1960s when their playing was interrupted by a knock at the door. Two San Francisco police officers were investigating reports of a woman screaming.

"Oh, that's just Janis. It's OK," came the reply.

That fun nugget — as well as rare footage of the actual rehearsal — enliven "San Francisco Sounds: A Place in Time," a two-part documentary on MGM+ that concluded Sunday. The first part dropped Aug. 20.

The late Joplin is joined by an astonishing number of great artists who came to define the city — the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Sly and the Family Stone, The Great Society, Steve Miller, Carlos Santana, Moby Grape, and Country Joe & The Fish, all mixing rock, folk and the blues.

Viewers get a street-level view of the rise of the San Francisco dream — artistic freedom, community and authenticity — and its fall, thanks to hard drugs, commercialism and increasingly hard edges. The time period is 1965 to 1975, short but sweet.

"It's not just the music," says co-director Anoosh Tertzakian. "Eve-

rybody was trying to break the rules of whatever their medium was, and I think it's in that breaking the rules that they found something new. The music was what was keeping the pulse together."

The docuseries explores how the Grateful Dead got some of their iconic logos, how city music venues Avalon Ballroom and The Fillmore began, how the seminal Jefferson Airplane song "White Rabbit" came about and how the deaths at the Altamont show soured the hippie mood.

Tertzakian and filmmaker Alison Ellwood, who last teamed up to capture the music of the Los Angeles neighborhood Laurel Canyon, turned their attention north and found a place "on the edge of the earth."

Quality

"It was like every misfit from anywhere in this country who rattled loose, ended up in San Francisco," the series quotes Bob Weir of the Grateful Dead as saying.

The main guides are disc jockey Dusty Street, poster artist Victor Moscoso, light show artist Bill Ham and Rolling Stone magazine journalist Ben Fong-Torres. The musicians are captured in audio interviews that play over archival footage — a technique Ellwood and Tertzakian used in "Laurel Canyon: A Place in Time," in 2020.

"It's obviously a place that so many people have focused on and they really focus on the star quality of the musicians," says Tertzakian.

"And I think that was something that we really wanted to minimize in order to bring it back to the source."

That technique both captures the spark of creativity and bypasses the grave. "We can't set Grace Slick down and then counter it with Janis Joplin sitting down and doing an interview. So that's another reason, just to keep everyone young, of the time of the moment," says Ellwood.

An astonishing amount of footage and interviews were used, borrowed from reporters, universities, archive houses and personal collections. Susan Joy Balin, wife of Jefferson Airplane's Marty Balin, handed over her own footage of the time, as did Jerry Slick, Grace's ex-husband.

"We were saying, 'Just give us whatever you have and let's play around with it,'" says Tertzakian. "That was both super fun and also a challenge because the amount of material we had, we had to really pick and choose how to use it and in a relatively short time frame."

The hippie decline — charted in the second half — is heartbreaking, as record companies start flooding the music scene with money, and heroin starts to displace the psychedelics, with disastrous consequences.

"Hordes of people invaded without the artistic vision and plan to come there in the first place. They just showed up with no plan and the city couldn't sustain it," says Ellwood.

Variety



A ticket machine with a poster of 'The Witness' movie is displayed in a cinema lobby inside a shopping mall in Moscow, Russia, Thursday, Aug. 17. 'The Witness,' a state-sponsored drama that premiered in Russia on Aug. 17, is the first feature film about Russia's military campaign in Ukraine to hit the movie theaters nationwide. It depicts Ukrainian troops as violent neo-Nazis who torture and kill their own people. (AP)

Film

Kremlin's film glorifies Moscow's action in Ukraine

Russia presents 'Witness' on Ukraine war

NEW YORK: "Gran Turismo: Based on a True Story" and "Barbie" are in a dead heat for the box-office crown, with the video game adaptation just edging **Greta Gerwig's** pop sensation, according to studio estimates Sunday.

Sony Pictures reported that "Gran Turismo" opened with \$17.3 million over the weekend, while Warner Bros. estimated that "Barbie," in its sixth week of release, took in \$17.1 million. Those totals could change when final ticket sales are counted Monday.

Due to a few wrinkles, it's all but certain that "Barbie" sold more tickets than any other movie Friday through Sunday, even if "Gran Turismo" is claiming the checker flag.

One reason: It was an usual weekend in multiplexes. US movie theaters held the second annual National Cinema Day on Sunday, with \$4 tickets to all films and showtimes at nearly all of the country's theaters.

"Barbie" was expected to be easily the top draw during the discounted day, with a particular boost coming from repeat viewings. With a domestic total of \$594.8 million in ticket sales, "Barbie" has passed "The Super Mario Bros Movie" (\$574 million) to become the year's biggest domestic hit. With \$1.34 billion worldwide, "Barbie" will also soon surpass the leading \$1.35 billion worldwide tally of "Mario."

National Cinema Day is meant to lure moviegoers to theaters during a typically slow period - and recoup the lost ticket revenue by selling a lot of popcorn. Last year's event drew 8.1 million moviegoers, making it the busiest day of the year in theaters. Warner Bros. estimated that "Barbie" would gross \$7.8 million on Sunday, which would mean almost 2 million people saw the film that day.

So what was the top movie in theaters this weekend?

"Barbie," says **Jeff Goldstein**, distribution chief for Warner Bros. "Without any question."

Though "Barbie" is the weekend's top draw, "Gran Turismo" has a slight - and somewhat debatable - edge in gross earnings. In its weekend totals for "Gran Turismo," Sony is also factoring in a hefty \$3.9 million from preview screenings held before Thursday, along with \$1.4 million in Thursday previews. Such accounting, while common practice for Hollywood, has stretched the definition

TALLINN, Estonia, Aug 28, (AP): The movie centers around a violinist from Belgium arriving to Kyiv to perform. It is February 2022, and his trip is upended as Russia starts bombing Ukraine. The artist survives a series of "inhuman crimes and bloody provocations by Ukrainian nationalists," and he is ready to tell the world "what it was really like."

"The Witness" - a state-sponsored drama that premiered in Russia on Aug. 17 -- is the first feature film about the 18-month-old invasion. It depicts Ukrainian troops as violent neo-Nazis who torture and kill their own people. One wears a T-shirt with Hitler on it. The film also has the main character's young son wondering: "Isn't Ukraine Russia?"

It's the narrative the Kremlin has been promoting since the first days of the war - all packaged up in a motion picture.

The release of "The Witness" comes after Russian authorities announced a plan to boost production of movies glorifying Moscow's actions in Ukraine.

But in an era of instantaneous information and disinformation in wartime and other times, it is a big question whether such films will attract viewers. Similar movies have been box-office disasters. Plus, sociologists say the public interest in following the war has waned, and people these days mainly want to escape from the gloom and doom of news from Ukraine.

"We regularly hear (from respondents) that it's a huge stress, a huge pain," says Denis Volkov, director of the Levada Center, Russia's top independent pollster. Some Russians, he says, insist they "don't discuss, don't watch, don't listen" to the news about Ukraine in an effort to cope.

Controlling imagery has been a regular feature of dictatorships. Propaganda films were produced in the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany and Italy under Benito Mussolini - as well as in North Korea and the Middle East. In today's Russia, authorities speak openly about their intention to bring the Ukraine war - or, rather, the Russian narrative around it - to the big screen.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has ordered the Culture Ministry to ensure theaters screen documentaries about the "special military operation," as the Kremlin calls its war in Ukraine. The ministry also has prioritized themes when allocating state funding for films,

including "heroism and selflessness of Russian warriors" in Ukraine and "batting modern manifestations of the Nazi and fascist ideology" - a false accusation Putin makes about Kyiv's leaders.

The amount of state funding that makers of Russian films can tap into this year is higher than ever: 30 billion rubles (about \$320 million). That's a pivotal part of today's industry, which has been heavily dependent on state funding for years.

Russian film critic Anton Dolin describes it as a "vicious system when the state is the main and richest producer in the country." Dolin notes that all films have to get a screening license from the Culture Ministry. So "censorship mechanisms" work even for those who don't take money from the government.

That doesn't mean, however, that Russian filmmakers who get state funding always produce propaganda. There is also "very decent cinema" out there, says critic and culture expert Yuri Saprykin.

Portrayals

Some Oscar nominees from Russia received state funding. And there were other domestic hits: widely watched historical dramas, sci-fi blockbusters, portrayals of legendary Soviet athletes.

After Russia's brief war with Georgia in 2008, Russian state TV broadcast a film reflecting Moscow's version of how its neighbor started the conflict. Its storyline was somewhat similar to that of "The Witness": a foreigner witnesses the beginning of the war and embarks on a mission to bring the truth to the world.

After the 2014 illegal annexation of Crimea, the Kremlin's narratives spilled into movie theaters. Two state-funded films were heavily promoted by state media: the 2017 film "Crimea" justified Moscow's seizure of the peninsula, showing Ukrainians brutally beating and killing their compatriots; the 2018 state-sponsored romantic comedy focused on a Putin pet project - a bridge linking Crimea to the mainland - and depicted local residents thriving under Russia's reign. Both eventually failed at the box office.

At the time, Russians had an alternative: Hollywood blockbusters that were always much more successful. So much so that at some point Russia's authorities started postponing releases of Hollywood hits that co-

incided with domestic movies they wanted to succeed.

"Any Spider-Man movie, any Marvel movie, any 'Star Wars', any American film earned a fortune in Russia," said Ivan Philippov, creative executive at AR Content, production company of renowned film producer Alexander Rodniansky.

Overall, the Russian industry over the years expressed little interest in making propaganda films about Moscow's conflict in Ukraine: of hundreds of movies released in Russia every year, only about a dozen since 2014 have been dedicated to this topic, Philippov said.

He expects this number to grow and points to two in the works in addition to "The Witness." One follows a Moscow artist who decides to join the Kremlin-backed separatist insurgency in eastern Ukraine. Another one is about Russian troops trying to save a group of Indian students trapped in a Ukrainian city by "nationalists" as Moscow's "special military operation" unfolds.

After major Hollywood studios halted their business in Russia last year, the competition is not as fierce, though some hits still trickle through in the form of pirated copies and there are foreign movies available.

But other Russian films out there are proving extremely popular among moviegoers. "Cheburashka," a colorful fairy tale featuring the iconic Soviet cartoon character that was released during the New Year holidays this year, earned nearly 7 billion rubles (\$74 million) against the \$850 million (roughly \$9 million) spent on making it.

Philippov says no one in the industry could even imagine such earnings, and filmmakers are following suit, remaking Soviet classics and turning to fairy tales. Russians "don't want to watch (films) about the war" was the conclusion the industry made, he says.

"The Witness" premiered in Russia without much fanfare. At a movie theater in Moscow on a rainy Sunday afternoon last week, almost a dozen moviegoers said they came to see films other than "The Witness," though several said they planned on watching it at some point. During its first weekend, it had earned just over 6.7 million rubles - or about \$70,000.

That's not entirely surprising, if you ask Ruth Ben-Ghiat, a history professor at New York University who studies authoritarianism and propaganda.

of an opening "weekend."

"We've made a big issue of it only because 'Barbie' has had incredible holds," says Goldstein. "To take away the number one, which would make it five weekends at number one since it opened, kind of doesn't feel right for the 'Barbie' filmmakers who really deserve the accolades."



Goldstein



Gerwig

Sony executives declined to comment.

Either way, it's a so-so start for "Gran Turismo," which cost about \$60 million to make. But the film, about a young man whose love of the PlayStation video game helps turn him into a real-life racer, has gone over well with audiences. Moviegoers gave the **Neill**

Blomkamp-directed movie an "A" CinemaScore.

The ongoing strike by actors and screenwriters has taken away the studios' ability to promote films with their casts. To help spread the word on "Gran Turismo," Sony held several weeks of preview screenings and fan events.

"Obviously, every movie is in

pursuit of being the number one film," says **Paul Dergarabedian**, senior media analyst for data firm Comscore. "But at the end of the day, 'Barbie' is just an out-and-out smash global blockbuster. No matter how you slice it, 'Barbie' is always going to be a winner no matter the outcome of this weekend." (AP)

People & Places

Technology

‘Joy of rediscovery’

Digitizing ‘old’ photos can unlock memories

By Michael Liedtke

This may seem like a sad story because it begins with a boy with few memories of his father, who died when he was 7 years old. It’s why Mitch Goldstone cherishes his only picture with his dad — a snapshot at Disneyland taken during the late 1960s, when the concept of people reflexively reaching for smartphone cameras in their pockets could only happen in Tomorrowland.

But this story, and the personal stories that follow, aren’t sad at all. And a half-century later and more, Goldstone has done something with that memory.

He is pursuing a career focused on the joy of rediscovery. He and his longtime partner, Carl Berman, run ScanMyPhotos, part of a niche industry that specializes in turning the billions of analog slides, undeveloped negatives and printed pictures taken in the pre-smartphone era into digital treasure chests filled with memories that had been forgotten.

“There’s nothing else like it, there are so few businesses doing something that makes people cry when they get the product back,” Goldstone says. “Fortunately, they are usually happy tears.”

Giving analog photos new digital life can resurface long-buried memories and make them feel fresh. It can bring back the roar of the water in old vacation snapshots, resurrect long-gone relatives in their prime and rekindle the warmth of a childhood pet’s unconditional love. It can remind you of the intricacies of family relationships, summon forgotten moments and — perhaps best of all — make them easy to share.

It happened to me. I finally ended several years of procrastination and entrusted professionals to scan thousands of Kodachrome slides that I inherited from my 81-year-old dad when he died in 2019.

I hadn’t been able to look at them — not from an emotional standpoint, but because I didn’t have the proper equipment to peruse analog slides. Converting them into accessible digital media launched me on a journey back to my own childhood and the pasts of my parents, grandparents and great-grandparents. That, in turn, is giving me a better understanding of how I became me.

Phenomenon

It’s a phenomenon shared by other people who have taken the steps to preserve analog photos that were painstakingly shot in the decades before smartphones enabled people to routinely take pictures of everything.

During his award-winning acting career, **Ed Asner** became famous for playing crusty yet lovable characters, with the most famous being Lou Grant — the newsroom boss in two popular TV series, “The Mary Tyler Moore Show” from 1970 to 1977 and an eponymous spinoff from 1977 to 1982. Asner also provided the voice for the curmudgeonly Carl Fredricksen in Pixar’s 2009 animated film, “Up,” that included a poignant scene about photography’s power to rekindle memories.

After Asner died in 2021, a similar scene became real. His son, Matt, found hundreds of undeveloped negatives. He decided to get them digitized along with a storehouse of printed pictures.

“I honestly didn’t know what I was going to get back,” Matt Asner says. “It’s kind of overwhelming. It’s like you get this treasure back that opens your eyes to a past that you sort of remember. But a lot of it you don’t remember.”

Looking at his dad’s photos rekindled memories that Matt didn’t realize had been buried in his subconscious. One day, Matt was gazing at some photos taken of him when he was 3 or 4 years old at a Southern California beach house that his father would rent for the family during the summer. One picture in particular opened the floodgates.

“There’s this picture of me holding a dead fish, and I had this wild memory of finding it on the beach and keeping it with me for four days,” the son recalls. “My mom finally threw it away when I was sleeping because it was stinking so much. That was a very strong memory that I had forgot.”

The digital conversions of Ed Asner’s old pictures also produced troves of other visual baubles, including one of the actor as a young man gazing introspectively at himself in a mirror — perhaps as he prepared for a role. Matt now shares some of his favorite pictures of his father on his Twitter account, but what he likes best is sending them around to relatives — something the digital format makes easy.

Retrieved

After retiring in 2021 from a long career as a US diplomat who worked all over the world, Lyne Paquette returned to her home in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and retrieved from storage 12,000 images that she had taken from her film camera during her wide-ranging travels. After spending months sorting through them all, Paquette sent about 3,500 to be digitized.

When Paquette got them back, she found herself transported back to so many of the places where she had been assigned or visited — various countries in Central and South America, Australia, Germany, Bangladesh, Syria and Vietnam. While she loves looking back at all the good times with all the friends she made, some of her favorite images are our her late parents.

Russell Gordon worked in 20 countries as a photographer covering assignments that thrust him into wars, including the one in Bosnia. So yes, he accumulated a lot of analog pictures, slides and negatives in his career. He had 200 of his favorites digitized, including one-of-a-kind shots such as a photo of a fellow journalist in Afghanistan who was eventually assassinated by the man he was interviewing in the picture.

“I was like a kid at Christmas, waiting with such anticipation,” says Gordon, 58, as he recalled the wait for the digital conversion.

He wasn’t disappointed. The memories embedded in the photos are even more precious to him because he is afflicted with post-traumatic stress disorder after years of covering horrific wars. “I have a little bit of quality of life now, but my life is largely formed around nostalgia now,” Gordon says. “So this is such a gift.”

The experience has made him more convinced that anyone with analog images should digitize them as soon as they get a chance. (AP)



Asner



Kazutaka Yonekura, chief executive of Tokyo startup Alt Inc., demonstrates his digital clone on a personal computer at his office in Tokyo, Aug. 17. His company is developing a digital double, an animated image that looks and talks just like its owner. (AP)

Music

Digital clones still to find favor with Westerners

Vocaloids popular in Japan

TOKYO, Aug. 28, (AP) — Kazutaka Yonekura dreams of a world where everyone will have their very own digital “clone” — an online avatar that could take on some of our work and daily tasks, such as appearing in Zoom meetings in our place.

Yonekura, chief executive of Tokyo startup Alt Inc., believes it could make our lives easier and more efficient.

His company is developing a digital double, an animated image that looks and talks just like its owner. The digital clone can be used, for example, by a recruiter to carry out preliminary job interviews, or by a physician to screen patients ahead of checkups. “This liberates you from all the routine (tasks) that you must do tomorrow, the day after tomorrow and the day after that,” he told The Associated Press as he showed off his double — a thumbnail video image of Yonekura on the computer screen, with a synthesized version of his voice.

When his digital clone is asked “What kind of music do you like,” it pauses for several seconds, then goes into a long-winded explanation about Yonekura’s fondness for energetic rhythmic music such as hip-hop or rock ‘n’ roll.

A bit mechanical perhaps — but any social gaffes have been programmed out.

Yonekura, 46, argues that the technology is more personal than Siri, ChatGPT or Google AI. Most importantly, it belongs to you and not the technology company that created it, he said.

For now, having a digital double is expensive. Each Alt clone costs about 20 million yen (\$140,000), so it will likely take some time before there’s a clone for everyone.

In creating a digital double, information about a person is skimmed off social media sites and publicly available records in a massive data collection effort, and stored in the software. The data is constantly updated, keeping in synch with the owner’s changing habits and tastes.

Yonekura believes a digital clone

could pave the way for a society where people can focus on being creative and waste less time on tedious interactions.

For many Japanese — the nation that gave the world Pokemon, karaoke, Hello Kitty and emojis — the digital clone is as friendly as an animation character.

But Yonekura acknowledges cultures are different and that Westerners may not like the idea of a digital clone as much.

“I can’t tell you how many times I’ve been asked: Why does it have to be a personal clone, and not just a digital agent?” he said, a hint of exasperation in his voice.

Recognition

Yonekura’s company has drawn mostly domestic investments of more than 6 billion yen (\$40 million), including venture capital funds run by major Japanese banks, while also building collaborative relationships with academia, including the University of Southern California and the University of Tokyo.

But large-scale production of digital doubles is a long way off — for now, the company offers more affordable voice recognition software and virtual assistant technology.

Matt Alt, who co-founded AltJapan Co., a company that produces English-language versions of popular Japanese video games and who has written books about Japan, including “Pure Invention: How Japan Made the Modern World,” says the digital clone idea makes more sense culturally in Japan.

Ninjas, the famous feudal Japanese undercover warriors, were known for “bunshin-jutsu” techniques of creating the illusion of a double or a helper in battle to confuse the opponent. The bunshin-jutsu idea has been adopted and is common in modern-day Japanese video games and manga comic books and graphic novels.

“Who wouldn’t want a helping hand from someone who understood them intimately?” Alt said but added that in the West, the idea of an existing dou-

ble is “more frightening.”

“There is the ‘Invasion of the Body Snatchers,’ for instance, or even the brooms that multiply like a virus in Disney’s ‘Fantasia,’” he said.

INCS toenter Co., another Tokyo-based startup, has been successful as a production company of computerized music for animation, manga, films, virtual realities and games that uses so-called Vocaloid artists. The synthesized singers or musical acts known as Vocaloid are often paired up with anime- or manga- style characters.

Like Yonekura’s digital clone, Vocaloids are an example of Japanese technology that uses computer software to duplicate human traits or likeness.

Among INCS toenter’s hits is “Melt,” created on a single desktop in 2007 and performed by a group called Supercell, which has been played 23 million times on YouTube.

A more recent hit is “Kawaikute gomen,” which means “Sorry for being so cute,” by HoneyWorks, a vocaloid unit. Another is Eve, who performs the theme song of megahit animation series “Jujutsu Kaisen,” and has 4.6 million subscribers on his YouTube channel.

Some wonder whether digital clones or Vocaloids could become popular outside Japan. Digital assistant and voice software, as well as computerized music exist in the West, but they are not clones or Vocaloids.

Yu Tamura, chief executive and founder of INCS toenter, says he is encouraged by the increasing global popularity of Japanese animation and manga but that one thing to watch out for is the “Galapagos syndrome.”

The term, referring to the isolated Pacific islands where animals evolved in unique ways, is widely used in Japan to describe how some Japanese products, while successful at home, fail to translate abroad.

Overseas consumers could see it as quirky or too cutesy, except for Japanophiles, Tamura said.

“They simply won’t get it,” he said.



Rina Sawayama performs at the Reading Music Festival, England, Sunday, Aug. 27. (AP)



Floresta



Hubbard

Variety

ATLANTA: Georgia’s second-largest school district says that it has removed two books from 20 school libraries, saying the books had “highly inappropriate, explicit content.”

The announcement, sent in an electronic message to parents in some Cobb County schools, comes days after the Republican-majority school board voted 4-3 along party lines to fire a teacher for reading a book about gender identity to fifth-grade students.

Although not new, book removals have surged since 2020, part of a backlash to what kids read and discuss in public schools. Conservatives want to stop children from reading books with themes on sexuality, gender, race and religion that they find objectionable. PEN America, a group promoting freedom of expression, counted 4,000 instances of books banned nationwide from July 2021 to December 2022.

Cobb County, with 106,000 students, said that 20 libraries had contained “Flamer” by Mike Curato or “Me and Earl and the Dying Girl” by Jesse Andrews, or both.

“Protecting our students from explicit content isn’t controversial, it’s what our parents expect,” **John Floresta**, the district’s chief strategy and accountability officer. “Our board and superintendent are clear — any book, video, or lesson which contains sexually explicit content is entirely unacceptable and has no place in our schools.”

Jeff Hubbard, president of the Cobb County Association of Educators, said media specialists were being questioned about when they had bought the books and why. Such interviews could be a prelude to the librarians being disciplined or fired. The district didn’t respond to questions about whether officials intended to take disciplinary action.

“They’re scared to death, and one parent complaint could cost them a career,” Hubbard said.

Nan Brown, an advocacy coordinator for the Georgia Media Library Association, said it’s important that students be able to see themselves and others in books. She questioned in particular the removal of “Flamer,” noting Georgia librarians nominated it for a statewide award.

“No book is perfect for everybody all the time,” Brown said. “But that book is really important to some children.” Hubbard said he fears teachers will feel compelled to censor classroom

libraries after the district fired **Katie Rinderle**. An elementary school teacher, she got into trouble in March for reading the picture book “My Shadow Is Purple,” by **Scott Stuart**, after which some parents complained. Rinderle said a board policy prohibiting teaching on controver-

sial issues was so vague that she couldn’t know what was barred.

The district didn’t respond to questions about who asked that the books be removed or if the district intends to remove additional books. In an electronic message, which Hubbard said was sent



Dan Reynolds of Imagine Dragons performs at the Reading Music Festival, England, Sunday, Aug. 27. (AP)

to parents at all 20 schools, the district stated that “With thousands of books purchased over decades, we are making every effort to ensure our library only includes materials that are aligned to Georgia standards, supported by law and CCSD policy, and contain content that is age appropriate for our students.” (AP)

□ □ □
LONDON: Intrepid athletes donned snorkels and slithered through slime on Sunday during one of Britain’s quirkiest sporting events: the World Bog Snorkeling Championships.

The annual competition in the tiny town of **Llanwrtyd Wells**, Wales, sees competitors race to complete two lengths of a 60-yard (55 meter) water-filled trench cut through a peat bog. They can use flippers on their feet, but conventional swimming strokes are banned.

Some contestants accessorized their snorkels, masks and flippers with more flamboyant touches -- one carried a giant plastic toad on their head, another had a bathing cap adorned with flowers. Spectators also got in on the fun, with two wearing pink cardboard boxes proclaiming them to be limited edition bog-snorkeling Barbie and Ken.

Competitors at the 35th annual contest were hoping to beat the time of current world record-holder **Neil Rutter**, who won in 1 minute, 18 seconds in 2018. (AP)

Environment

Neighbors cautious

Removing melted nuke fuel biggest challenge

OKUMA, Japan, Aug 28, (Agencies): At a small section of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant’s central control room, the treated water transfer switch is on. A graph on a computer monitor nearby shows a steady decrease of water levels as treated radioactive wastewater is diluted and released into the Pacific Ocean.

In the coastal area of the plant, two seawater pumps are in action, gushing torrents of seawater through sky blue pipes into the big header where the treated water, which comes down through a much thinner black pipe from the hilltop tanks, is diluted hundreds of times before the release.

The sound of the treated and diluted radioactive water flowing into an underground secondary pool was heard from beneath the ground as media, including The Associated Press, toured the plant in northeastern Japan for the first time since the water release began.

“The best way to eliminate the contaminated water is to remove the melted fuel debris,” said Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings spokesperson Ken-ichi Takahara, who escorted Sunday’s media tour for foreign media.

But Takahara said the scarcity of information from inside the nuclear reactors makes planning and development of the necessary robotic technology and a facility for the melted fuel removal extremely difficult.

“Removal of the melted fuel debris is not like we can just take it out and be finished,” he said.

The projected decades-long release of treated water has been strongly opposed by fishing groups and criticized by neighboring countries. China immediately banned imports of seafood from Japan in response. In Seoul, thousands of South Koreans rallied over the weekend to condemn the release, demanding Japan to keep it in tanks.

Japan’s Foreign Ministry on Sunday issued a travel advisory to Japanese citizens to use extra caution while in China. It said act of harassment, including massive phone calls, have targeted to the Japanese embassy, consulate and Japanese schools in China, and it urged Japanese in China to stay away from those places and from protests of the water release, and not to talk loudly in Japanese to avoid attention.

Milestone

Managing the ever-growing volume of radioactive wastewater held in more than 1,000 tanks has been a safety risk and a burden since the plant was wrecked by a massive earthquake and tsunami on March 11, 2011. The tanks are already filled to 98% of their 1.37 million-ton capacity.

Releasing the water into the sea is a milestone for the decommissioning of the plant, which is expected to take decades. But it is just the beginning of the challenges ahead, such as the removal of the fatally radioactive melted fuel debris that remains in the three damaged reactors, a daunting task if ever accomplished.

The plant’s operator, Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings, started releasing the first batch of 7,800 tons from 10 of the group B tanks, among the least radioactive water at the plant.

They say the water is treated and diluted to levels that are safer than international standards, and so far, testing by TEPCO and government agencies has found no detectable radioactivity in seawater and fish samples taken after the release.

The Japanese government and TEPCO say releasing the water is an unavoidable step in the decommissioning of the plant.

Since the earthquake and tsunami destroyed the plant’s cooling systems and caused three reactors to melt, highly contaminated cooling water applied to the damaged reactors has leaked continuously to the buildings’ basements and mixed with groundwater. Some water is recycled to cool the nuclear fuel, while the rest is stored in the tanks.

The release started at the daily pace of 460 tons and moves slowly. TEPCO plans to release 31,200 tons of treated water by the end of March 2024, which would empty only 10 tanks because the site will continue to produce radioactive water.

The pace will quicken later and about 1/3 of the tanks will be removed over the next 10 years, freeing up space for the plant’s decommissioning, said TEPCO executive Junichi Matsumoto, who is in charge of the treated water release. The water will be released over 30 years, but as long as melted fuel stays in the reactors, it requires cooling water under the current prospect.

About 880 tons of radioactive melted nuclear fuel remain inside the reactors. Robotic probes have provided some information but the status of the melted debris remains largely unknown, and the amount could be even larger, says Takahara, the TEPCO spokesman.

A trial removal of melted debris using a giant remote-controlled robotic arm is set to begin in Unit 2 later this year, though it will be a very small amount, Takahara said.

Spent fuel removal from the Unit 1 reactor’s cooling pool is set to start in 2027. The reactor top is still covered with debris from the explosion 12 years ago and needs to be cleaned up after putting a protective cover to contain radioactive dust.

Inside the worst-hit Unit 1, most of its reactor core melted and fell to the bottom of the primary containment chamber and possibly farther into the concrete basement. A robotic probe sent inside the Unit 1 primary containment chamber has found that its pedestal - the main supporting structure directly under its core - was extensively damaged.

Assessment

Most of its thick concrete exterior was missing, exposing the internal steel reinforcement, prompting regulators to ask TEPCO to make risk assessment.

The government has stuck to its initial 30-to-40-year target for completing the decommissioning, without defining what that means. Rushing the schedule could cause more radiation exposure to workers and more environmental damage. Some experts say it would be impossible to remove all the melted fuel debris by 2051 and would take 50-100 years, if achieved at all.

Japan on Monday expressed deep regret over the harassment from the Chinese side following the start of the release of treated water from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant into the sea last week, urging Beijing to disseminate accurate information.

“We are extremely regretful and concerned. Japan has been strongly urging the Chinese side to take appropriate actions, including calling for calm among their citizens, and to provide accurate information regarding the treated water. Japan will continue to make this request,” Chief Cabinet Secretary **Hirokazu Matsumoto** told a press conference.

Matsumoto made remarks as a number of restaurants and public offices in Japan have received harassing phone calls believed to be coming from China regarding the ocean release, as well as incidents of harassment, such as stone-throwing, at some Japanese schools in China.

The top government spokesman also said the government is aware that many Chinese consumers have boycotted Japanese products and canceled trips to Japan. “Japan will continue to be very transparent and provide information based on scientific evidence,” he noted.

Japan’s Foreign Ministry on Sunday urged Japanese nationals traveling to or staying in China to take precautions, and pay close attention to their surroundings when visiting the embassy or Japanese schools.

Tokyo began releasing treated and wastewater from the Fukushima nuclear plant into the Pacific Ocean on Thursday. The plant, located 230 km north of Tokyo, was crippled by the magnitude-9.0 earthquake and ensuing tsunami in 2011.

Before the discharge, treated water is diluted with seawater to reduce tritium levels to less than 1/40 of that permitted under Japanese safety standards and around 1/7 of the World Health Organization’s (WHO) guidelines for drinking water.



Matsuno



Simon and Sally Glass comfort each other during an emotional news conference in Denver on Sept. 13, 2022. Two Colorado sheriff’s deputies needlessly escalated a fatal standoff with their son, Christian Glass, who was shot and killed while experiencing a ‘mental health crisis.’ As part of a \$19 million settlement this spring 2023 with Glass’ parents, Colorado’s Clear Creek County in August 2023 joined a growing roster of US communities that respond to nonviolent mental health crises with clinicians and EMTs or paramedics, instead of police. (AP)

Health

US adopts new ways to tackle mental health crisis

Civilians not cops answer ‘crisis’ calls

DENVER, Aug. 28, (AP): Christian Glass was a geology geek, a painter and a young man beset by a mental health crisis when he called 911 for help getting his car unstuck in a Colorado mountain town last year.

Convinced that supernatural beings were after him, he balked when sheriff’s deputies told him to get out of his car. The officers shouted, threatened and coaxed, body camera video shows. Glass prayed: “Dear Lord, please, don’t let them break the window.”

They did, and the 22-year-old grabbed a small knife. Then he was hit with bean bag rounds, stun gun charges and, ultimately, bullets that killed him and led to a murder charge against one deputy and a criminally negligent homicide charge against another.

As part of a \$19 million settlement this spring with Glass’ parents, Colorado’s Clear Creek County this month joined a growing roster of US communities that respond to nonviolent mental health crises with clinicians and EMTs or paramedics, instead of police.

The initiatives have spread rapidly in recent years, particularly among the nation’s biggest cities.

Data gathered by The Associated Press show at least 14 of the 20 most populous US cities are hosting or starting such programs, sometimes called civilian, alternative or non-police response teams. They span from New York and Los Angeles to Columbus, Ohio, and Houston, and boast annual budgets that together topped \$123 million as of June, The AP found. Funding sources vary.

“If someone is experiencing a mental health crisis, law enforcement is not what they need,” said Tamara Lynn of the National De-Escalation Training Center, a private group that trains police to handle such situations.

There’s no aggregate, comprehensive data yet on the programs’ effects. Their scope varies considerably.

In Denver, just an hour’s drive from where Glass was killed, a program called STAR answered 5,700 calls last year and is often cited as a national model. Its funding has totaled \$7 million since 2021.

In New York, a more than \$40 million-a-year program dubbed B-HEARD answered about 3,500 calls last year, and mental health advocates criticize it as anemic.

Representatives from some other cities were frank about challenges - staffing shortages, acclimating 911 dispatchers to sending out unarmed civilians, and more - at a conference in Washington, D.C., this spring.

Still, officials in places including New York see no-police teams as an important shift in how they address people in crisis.

“We really think that every single B-HEARD response is just a better way that we, the city, are providing care to people,” said Laquisha Grant of the New York Mayor’s Office of Community Mental Health.

Federal data is incomplete, but various studies and statistics show that mentally ill people make up a substantial proportion of those killed by police. Often, the dead are people of color, though Glass was not.

Reform

The alternative approach dates back decades but gained new impetus from calls for wide-ranging police reform after the 2020 killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

In Denver, STAR responders arrive in a van stuffed with everything from medical gear to blankets to Cheez-Its. In one recent instance, they spent three hours with a Denver newcomer who was living on the streets. The team helped him get a Colorado ID voucher, groceries, and medications and took him to a shelter.

“It’s really about meeting the needs of the community and making sure we are sending the right experts, so we can actually solve the problem,” says Carleigh Sailon, a former STAR manager who now works elsewhere.

STAR responded to 44% of calls deemed eligible last year, said Evan Thompkin, a STAR program specialist.

A Stanford University study found that petty crime reports fell by a third and violent crime stayed steady in areas that STAR served in its earliest phase. Throughout the program’s three years, police have never been called for backup due to safety concerns but have helped direct traffic, Thompkin said.

New York plans to expand its two-year-old B-HEARD program citywide. Officials note that its social workers and EMTs resolve about half of calls by talking to people or taking them to social service or community health centers, rather than hospitals.

Grant credits the program with “providing people with more options and letting people know that they can stay safely in their homes, in their communities, with the connection to the right resources.” Officials say B-HEARD answered 53% of “eligible” calls in the last six months of 2022, according to the most recent available data.

But those calls are relatively few. Staffers answered about 2% of all mental health crisis calls citywide last year. Even within the program’s limited territory, it fielded 16% of such calls from July-December 2022.

Grant says the city is exploring whether more calls could qualify.

John Barrett, however, wanted to go to a hospital to get some physical and mental health problems checked out one June day. He asked 911 for an ambulance, but police came, he said. Then two other people showed up in bulletproof vests and face masks.

“Between them and the police being there, I was just totally terrified,” recalled Barrett, 45, a former door technician.

He said he learned only by asking that they were with B-HEARD. (Teams can be summoned by on-scene police, and staffers are allowed to wear ballistic vests.)

The city mental health office said it couldn’t discuss any individual responses.

Barrett ultimately got an ambulance to a hospital.

“I’m saving money for an Uber next time,” he said.



An H2A rocket sits at launch pad at Tanegashima Space Center in Kagoshima, southern Japan Monday, Aug. 28. The rocket was to blast off Monday morning, but the lift-off was postponed due to strong winds, according to Kyodo News. (AP)



Weaver



Webb

Discovery

‘Asphalt’ remains in river: Two months after a railroad bridge collapse sent carloads of hazardous oil products plunging into Montana’s Yellowstone River, the cleanup workers are gone and a mess remains.

Thick mats of tarry petroleum asphalt cover portions of sandbars. Oil-speckled rocks and bushes line the shore along with chunks of yellow sulfur, a component of crude. In the middle of the river downstream of the bridge, a tangle of steel juts out of the water from a ruptured railroad tank car that has not been removed.

The railroad, Montana Rail Link, in conjunction with federal and state officials last week halted most cleanup work and stopped actively looking for more contaminated sites. They said dropping river levels that have been exposing more pollution also make it harder to safely operate the large power boats used by cleanup crews.

Almost half the estimated 48,000 gallons (180,000 liters) of molten petroleum asphalt that spilled has not been recovered, officials said. That includes 450 sites with asphalt in quantities considered too small or too difficult for efficient removal, according to data provided to the Associated Press.

The spill extends more than 125 miles (200 kilometers) along a stretch of the Yellowstone popular among anglers and recreationists and relied on by farmers to irrigate crops. Yellowstone National Park is upstream of the bridge collapse and was not impacted.

The scope of remaining pollution was evident this week when viewed by boat downstream of the collapsed bridge, which has since been repaired. Asphalt could be seen on every river island visited, ranging from globs stuck on riverside vegetation to thick mats of tar oozing across sand bars as summer temperatures heated it into a viscous liquid.

“What we’ve seen out there tells us that there should be a second phase of cleanup. They need to come back and they need to do a better job,” said **Wendy Weaver**, executive director of Montana Freshwater Partners. The non-profit group focused on water protection has received reports of tar balls and other asphalt at more than 40 sites cleanup workers already passed through.

Elevated levels of a toxic component of oil known as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, or PAHs, have been detected in mountain whitefish downstream of the spill site, prompting an advisory against eating any caught along a 41-mile (66-kilometer) stretch of the Yellowstone. The contamin-

tion has not been conclusively linked to the derailment but the asphalt that was spilled contained PAHs, according to documents submitted to federal officials.

Test results on other fish species are pending, said **Chrissy Webb** with Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks.

Downstream intakes for drinking water and irrigation were temporarily shut down after the spill and have since reopened with no impacts reported.



This photo taken during the tour of the treated water dilution and discharge facility for foreign media shows TEPCO official Kenichi Takahara explains about a facility to take samples of treated radioactive wastewater after dilution for testing before release, part of the facility for the releasing treated radioactive water to sea from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, operated by Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings (TEPCO), in Futaba town, northeastern Japan, Sunday, Aug. 27. (AP)

struction or as roofing material. (AP)

□ □ □

Peacock shot by bow & arrow: A beloved Las Vegas neighborhood peacock named Pete was killed with a hunter’s bow and arrow, and authorities are trying to find who was behind it.

Animal Protection Services officers are investigating the death of the peacock, which belonged to a resident in a small gated neighborhood but had come to be accepted as the neighborhood pet throughout the years.

Felicity Carter, a neighbor, said she found the bird against a fence with an arrow sticking out of him. She wrapped Pete in a blanket and, with the help of other neighbors, took him to a veterinarian who specializes in exotic pets.

She said the staff rushed to treat him, even looking into getting a blood transfusion from another peacock. But they found Pete had actually been shot twice.

“I just don’t understand why someone would do this,” Carter said. “We all just want to find out who did this. We want justice for Pete.”

Several neighbors say they are heartbroken. They loved to feed Pete berries and found comfort in knowing he was always just around the corner, lounging in someone’s yard or chasing the garbage truck on Tuesday mornings. Even the homeowners association accepted Pete as a neighborhood fixture.

Carter said Pete will be remembered for his “very distinct personality.”

Pete often was seen admiring his reflection in the chrome detailing of cars parked in the neighborhood. The mail courier and landscapers knew Pete, too, and would drive carefully through the neighborhood in case he was on the street. (AP)

SPORTS

Mariners edge Royals, take AL West lead from Texas

Phillies sweep Cardinals

SEATTLE, Aug 28, (AP): Luis Castillo pitched seven shutout innings and the Seattle Mariners grabbed sole possession of first place in the AL West, beating the Kansas City Royals 3-2 on Sunday for a three-game sweep.

Teoscar Hernández and Julio Rodríguez homered off rookie Alec Marsh (0-7) as the Mariners (74-56) won for the 11th time in 12 games and improved to a major league-best 36-14 since July 1.

Seattle moved one game ahead of Texas (73-57) and Houston (74-58). The Mariners trailed by 7 1/2 games on Aug. 15 but have sole possession of first this late in a season for the first time since 2003.

Castillo (11-7) allowed one hit, struck out six and walked one to win his fourth straight start. Andrés Muñoz struck out the side in the ninth for his 10th save.

Twins 7, Rangers 6, 13 innings

In Minneapolis, Jonathan Hernández (1-2) walked three batters in the 13th inning, among a season-high 10 walks by Texas pitchers. The Rangers' only other day without a share of the lead was after play on April 8.

Texas wasted a 5-0 lead built with Jonah Heim's grand slam and J.P. Martinez solo homer, and Royce Lewis started Minnesota's comeback with a fourth-inning slam. Donovan Solano hit a tying single in the ninth against Aroldis Chapman.

Dylan Floro (5-6) got three straight outs after a leadoff walk in the 13th for Minnesota, which leads the AL Central by six games.

Giants 8, Braves 5

In San Francisco, Patrick Bailey hit a tiebreaking three-run double in the fifth inning, fellow rookie Casey Schmitt hit his first homer since in 3 1/2 months, and San Francisco avoided a three-game sweep.

The Giants won for just the sixth time in their last 20 games to slow a slide that has dropped them out of a wild card position after they once held the top spot.

Atlanta's Marcell Ozuna hit his 29th home run to break a tie with Ronald Acuña Jr. for second-most on the team behind Matt Olson (30).

BASEBALL

Reliever Scott Alexander (7-2) pitched 1 1/3 innings to pick up the win. Tyler Rogers and Taylor Rogers got the next seven outs, and Camilo Doval pitched a perfect ninth for his 34th save - snapping a streak of four consecutive blown chances.

Braves starter Jared Shuster (4-3) allowed four runs and struck out three in 4 2/3 innings.

Astros 17, Tigers 4

In Houston, Justin Verlander (10-6) struck out seven and allowed two hits over five scoreless innings against his first team and got his 254th win.

Kyle Tucker hit his 26th homer in the third against Alex Faedo (2-5). Mauricio Dubon and Martin Maldonado hit back-to-back homers off Tyler Holton.

Houston added seven runs in the eighth inning on Jeremy Peña's three-run triple off Andrew Vasquez and Yainer Diaz's two-run homer on a 63 mph fastball from backup catcher Carson Kelly.

Dodgers 7, Red Sox 4

In Boston, Mookie Betts capped his return to Boston with a second straight three-hit game, hitting a two-run homer against the team he led to the 2018 World Series title.

Playing in Boston for the first time as a Red Sox opponent, Betts collected seven hits and a series of standing ovations over the three-game set.

Freddie Freeman also had three hits, and James Outman homered to help the Dodgers improve to 21-4 in August. Gavin Stone (1-0) earned his first career victory. Tanner Houck (3-8) lost his eighth straight decision. Evan Phillips pitched the ninth for his 21st save.

Rays 7, Yankees 4

In St. Petersburg, Brandon Lowe homered and drove in four runs, and New York (62-68) dropped a season-high six games under .500.

Benches and bullpens emptied twice in the eighth inning after one of five hit batters in the game but no punches were thrown, and the Yankees lost their eighth straight series rubber game.

Tampa Bay rallied from a 4-2 deficit in the sixth when Harold Ramírez flared a bases-loaded, two-out single to right off Ian Hamilton (2-2) and Lowe followed with a two-run single against Wandy Peralta.

Mets 3, Angels 2

In New York, Pete Alonso hit a tying double in the eighth inning and Rafael Ortega a winning single in the ninth off Reynaldo López (2-7) as New York stopped a four-game losing streak.

The Angels' Shohei Ohtani went 0 for 4 with two strikeouts and was 3 for 9 with three runs, two steals and an RBI in his first series since the Angels said he tore a ligament in his right elbow while pitching on Wednesday.

Adam Ottavino (1-4) struck out one in a perfect ninth.

Rockies 4, Orioles 3

In Baltimore, Hunter Goodman had two hits and RBI, scoring the tiebreaking run in the ninth inning of his major league debut as Colorado stopped a six-game losing streak.

Goodman hit .371 with nine and 33 RBIs in 15 games at Triple-A after he was promoted. The 23-year-old first

MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, Aug 28, (AP): Results and standings from MLB games on Sunday.

| | | | |
|----------------|----|----------------|---|
| NY Mets | 3 | LA Angels | 2 |
| Colorado | 4 | Baltimore | 3 |
| LA Dodgers | 7 | Boston | 4 |
| Tampa Bay | 7 | NY Yankees | 4 |
| Chicago W. Sox | 6 | Oakland | 1 |
| Houston | 17 | Detroit | 4 |
| Cleveland | 10 | Toronto 11 inn | 7 |
| Minnesota | 7 | Texas 13 inn | 6 |
| Seattle | 3 | Kansas City | 2 |
| Miami | 2 | Washington | 1 |
| Colorado | 4 | Baltimore | 3 |
| Chicago Cubs | 10 | Pittsburgh | 1 |
| LA Dodgers | 7 | Boston | 4 |
| Philadelphia | 3 | St Louis | 0 |
| Milwaukee | 10 | San Diego | 6 |
| Arizona | 5 | Cincinnati | 2 |
| San Francisco | 8 | Atlanta | 5 |

American League

East Division

| | W | L | Pct | GB |
|-----------|----|----|------|--------|
| Baltimore | 81 | 49 | .623 | — |
| Tampa Bay | 80 | 52 | .606 | 2 |
| Toronto | 71 | 60 | .542 | 10-1/2 |
| Boston | 69 | 62 | .527 | 12-1/2 |
| New York | 62 | 68 | .477 | 19 |

Central Division

| | W | L | Pct | GB |
|-------------|----|----|------|--------|
| Minnesota | 68 | 63 | .519 | — |
| Cleveland | 62 | 69 | .473 | 6 |
| Detroit | 59 | 71 | .454 | 8-1/2 |
| Chicago | 52 | 79 | .397 | 16 |
| Kansas City | 41 | 91 | .311 | 27-1/2 |

West Division

| | W | L | Pct | GB |
|-------------|----|----|------|--------|
| Seattle | 74 | 56 | .569 | — |
| Texas | 73 | 57 | .562 | 1 |
| Houston | 74 | 58 | .561 | 1 |
| Los Angeles | 63 | 68 | .481 | 11-1/2 |
| Oakland | 28 | 93 | .290 | 36-1/2 |

National League

East Division

| | W | L | Pct | GB |
|--------------|----|----|------|--------|
| Atlanta | 84 | 45 | .651 | — |
| Philadelphia | 72 | 58 | .554 | 12-1/2 |
| Miami | 66 | 65 | .504 | 19 |
| Washington | 61 | 70 | .466 | 24 |
| New York | 60 | 71 | .458 | 25 |

Central Division

| | W | L | Pct | GB |
|------------|----|----|------|--------|
| Milwaukee | 73 | 57 | .562 | — |
| Chicago | 69 | 61 | .531 | 4 |
| Cincinnati | 68 | 64 | .515 | 6 |
| Pittsburgh | 58 | 73 | .443 | 15-1/2 |
| St Louis | 56 | 75 | .427 | 17-1/2 |

West Division

| | W | L | Pct | GB |
|---------------|----|----|------|--------|
| Los Angeles | 80 | 49 | .620 | — |
| Arizona | 69 | 62 | .527 | 12 |
| San Francisco | 67 | 63 | .515 | 13-1/2 |
| San Diego | 61 | 70 | .466 | 20 |
| Colorado | 49 | 81 | .377 | 31-1/2 |



New York Mets' Pete Alonso hits a RBI double during the eighth inning of a baseball game against the Los Angeles Angels in New York. (AP)

baseman went 2 for 4. He hit an RBI single off Ryan Flaherty in the sixth for a 3-1 lead and reached on an infield single against Yennier Cano (1-3) leading off the ninth and scored on Elias Díaz's groundout.

Brewers 10, Padres 6

In Milwaukee, William Contreras homered and doubled, Sal Frelick drove in three runs and Milwaukee won its eighth straight game. The Brewers took the lead for good in a seven-run sixth inning that included five walks.

Milwaukee has a four-game NL Central lead over the second-place Cubs heading into a three-game series beginning Monday at Wrigley Field.

Carlos Santana's bases-loaded walk forced in the go-ahead run against Steven Wilson (1-2). Bryse Wilson (6-0) pitched four shutout innings.

Cubs 10, Pirates 2

In Pittsburgh, Cody Bellinger had three hits and five RBIs, raising his total to 53 since July 1 and 75 this season. Bellinger singled in Hoerner in the first inning. He doubled home two more runs in the fifth for a 5-1 lead. The 2019 NL MVP added another two-run double in the ninth.

Nico Hoerner had three hits and scored three times, helping Chicago close out a 5-2 trip. Jeimer Candelario homered and drove in three runs.

Javier Assad (3-2) struck out seven in seven innings. Bailey Falter (1-8) was tagged for six runs and seven hits in 4 2/3 innings. The Pirates have lost nine of 10 against the Cubs this year.

Phillies 3, Cardinals 0

In Philadelphia, Aaron Nola (12-8) allowed one hit and struck out nine in seven innings, Kyle Schwarber homered on the first pitch of the game from Drew Rom (0-2) and NL wild-card leading Philadelphia completed a three-game sweep.

Johan Rojas doubled among his three hits and Bryce Harper hit an RBI single for the defending NL champion Phillies, who outscored the Cardinals 22-3 in the series.

Craig Kimbrel completed a two-hit shutout with his 20th save, sending St. Louis to its ninth loss in 11 games.

Guardians 10, Blue Jays 7, 11 innings

In Toronto, Kole Calhoun hit a tie-breaking double in the 11th off Jay Jackson (3-1), and José Ramírez and Ramón Laureano hit two-run home runs.

Davis Schneider and Vladimir Guerrero Jr. hit two-run home runs, and George Springer added a solo shot for Toronto, which has lost four of its last five.



Los Angeles Dodgers' Caleb Ferguson delivers a pitch to a Boston Red Sox batter in the first inning of a baseball game in Boston. (AP)

Ironman wins Bommarito 500 to keep championship hopes alive

Dixon ends Newgarden's five-race oval winning streak

MADISON, Ill., Aug 28, (AP): IndyCar ironman Scott Dixon capitalized on needing to make only three pit stops and kept his championship hopes alive in winning Sunday's Bommarito Automotive Group 500.

The victory was the 55th of Dixon's career, and it came in his record-extending 320th consecutive start. He set the record two weeks ago at the Gallagher Grand Prix in Indianapolis. "They're all special, right?" Dixon said. "These last few races I think have been good on all fronts, right? We've had to cover all bases whether it was speed, strategy, consistency throughout, great pit stops."

Dixon held the lead for 82 laps before making his final pit stop on lap 196. With all the cars on the lead lap having to pit after he made his final stop, the 43-year-old took the check-

ered flag, finishing more than 22 seconds ahead of second-place Pato O'Ward.

"He's just Scott Dixon," O'Ward said. "I feel like that's what he's best known for. He knows how to do it better than anybody with a great combination that he has with his team and car and everything. It's a bummer that we weren't even close to kind of even race him."

The 22-second margin of victory broke Juan Pablo Montoya's 23-year-old track record when he finished almost 12 seconds ahead of Patrick Carpentier at the Motorola 300 in 2000.

"Ross (Bunnell), the engineer, did an amazing job ... and had a car that enabled me to kind of save the fuel that we needed," Dixon said. "When I had 10 to go, I asked him, 'How much heat are we getting from behind?' They're like, 'It's over 20 seconds, so just cruise it.' I'm like, 'Oh, that's pretty sweet.' It's been a long time since I've had the race like that."

Josef Newgarden started in the top spot with pole-sitter Scott McLaughlin serving a nine-position grid penalty and led 101 of the first 104 laps.

His quest to become the first IndyCar driver to win six consecutive races on ovals since A.J. Foyt in 1964 came to an end when his No. 2 Honda made contact with the wall in turn two on the 211th lap.

Newgarden had won three consecutive races at World Wide Technology Raceway and four overall at the track. McLaughlin earned his fifth career IndyCar pole ahead of the race but

started in the No. 10 position due to his penalty. He finished fifth. McLaughlin is one of six drivers who were penalized for unapproved use of a fifth engine this season.

Qualifying was pushed back to Sunday morning after rain kept drivers off the track until 6 p.m. Saturday night. Dixon's victory pulled him to within 74 points of Chip Ganassi Racing teammate and IndyCar leader Alex Palou with two races remaining. Dixon is Palou's only challenger for the season title as Newgarden dropped to 125 points behind Palou falling out of championship contention.

"Going into the last few races, to only have a Ganassi driver able to win the championship is very cool and very, very good for this team and the amount of effort," Dixon said.

Marcus Ericsson fell behind a lap after his left rear tire fell off on the pit road after not being properly secured during a pit stop on a caution on the 128th lap. Ericsson was competing in teammate Palou's backup car after wrecking his primary car in a crash with Will Power during Saturday night's practice.

Chip Ganassi Racing and points leader Palou were assessed a nine-position starting grid penalty for unapproved engine changes after Saturday's practice. Teammates Dixon and Takuma Sato, McLaughlin, Andreotti Autosport's Kyle Kirkwood and Juncos Hollinger Racing's Agustín Canapino were also penalized for unapproved changes after the Gallagher Grand Prix on Aug. 12.

Sunday's race was the first on an oval course to use the Firestone Firehawk alternate tires constructed with a softer compound to allow for more grip at the cost of quicker tire wear. All drivers were required to start the race on the primary tires and run at least two laps on both sets of tires.

Conor Daly turned in the 15th best qualifying time of 50.0200 seconds in his first race for Rahal Letterman Lanigan racing. Daly replaced Jack Harvey, who was released after the Gallagher Grand Prix. Daly started three races for Meyer Shank Racing filling in for an injured Simon Pagenaud after being released by Ed Carpenter Racing after the Detroit Grand Prix.

The IndyCar series returns to action Sunday, Sept. 3, with the Bitnile.com Grand Prix of Portland. Both of the final two races will be held on road courses.

Bears waive QB Walker

Rookie Stroud has 'scoring' pass as Texans overcome Saints 17-13

NEW ORLEANS, Aug 28, (AP): Houston rookie C.J. Stroud threw his first touchdown as a pro before being named the Houston Texans' starting quarterback to open the regular season.

Meanwhile, Jimmy Graham looked determined not to let his mysterious medical episode and run-in with police last week derail his NFL comeback with the New Orleans Saints.

Stroud's short touchdown pass to Nico Collins helped the Texans defeat the Saints 17-13 on Sunday night in the preseason finale for both teams.

A f - terward, Stroud said his starting role going forward is "something that I think I worked for and definitely earned."

While Stroud provided a glimpse of his potential, the 36-year-old Graham offered evidence that he can still make the type of plays Saints fans remember from his first five NFL seasons in New Orleans from 2010 to 2014.

The five-time Pro Bowl tight end, who signed with the Saints last month after spending the previous season out of football, caught three passes for 34 yards and a touchdown.

"It was nice to see Jimmy had a couple of nice catches - contested catches," Saints coach Dennis Allen said. "We've said this that we don't have to see it every day from these guys, particularly the veteran players, yet at some point we have to see it - and we saw it tonight."

His catches were reminiscent of the way he played when Drew Brees was his quarterback. He established leverage with his 6-foot-7 frame in tight coverage and came down with contested catches. His

score on a 3-yard pass from Jameis Winston came shortly after his 25-yard grab had given New Orleans a first down on the Houston 11.

Graham sat out New Orleans' second preseason game against the Chargers in Los Angeles last weekend. That game was played two days after Graham was arrested by Newport Beach police during what the Saints have described as a likely seizure that caused the 2013 All-Pro to become disoriented.

Graham was charged with suspicion of being under the influence of a controlled substance and resisting officers, and was released into the Saints' care at a hospital early on the morning of Aug. 19.

He returned to practice on Wednesday. Graham has not spoken publicly about his arrest and declined to meet with media after the game,

FOOTBALL

but the Saints provided a comment from Graham about his performance.

"It just reminded me of all the amazing moments I had here in front of these fans ... so many special moments and wins," Graham said.



The **Chicago Bears** released quarterback **P.J. Walker** on Sunday, clearing the way for rookie **Tyson Bagent** to back up **Justin Fields**.

The Bears agreed to a two-year deal with Walker in March, only to see him struggle in camp. Bagent is now in line for the No. 2 spot, unless the Bears bring in another quarterback, after going undrafted following a record-setting career at Division II Shepherd University.

He set the NCAA's all-division record with 159 career touchdown passes while finishing with 17,034 yards. In 2021, Bagent won the Harlon Hill Trophy, Division II's equivalent of the Heisman.



Scott Dixon holds the first place trophy following an IndyCar auto race at World Wide Technology Raceway in Madison, Ill. (AP)



Thailand's Kunlavut Vitidsarn in action during the men's final singles badminton match against Japan's Kodai Naraoka, of the BWF World Championship, at the Royal Arena, in Copenhagen, Denmark. (AP)

An, Kunlavut earn historic 'first' titles

COPENHAGEN, Denmark, Aug 28, (AP): An Se Young and Kunlavut Vitidsarn became the first women's and men's singles winners from South Korea and Thailand at the badminton world championships.

An won the title her form foretold and prevented Carolina Marin of Spain from a record-extending fourth world crown by taking their final 21-12, 21-10 in 42 minutes.

Kunlavut won the men's final by wearing down Kodai Naraoka of Japan 19-21, 21-18, 21-7 a year after he lost in the 2022 final.

An rose to No. 1 at the start of the month, the first South Korean woman to make the summit since 1996, six years before she was born.

The worlds title validated the ranking in a year in which she has utterly dominated. This was her eighth title from 11 finals in 12 tournaments this year.

An announced she was coming when she won the 2021 World Tour Finals then reached the 2022 All England final and worlds semifinals.

This year, her game has gone to another level.

Nozomi Okahura, the 2015 world champion, was the only player to take a game off An at the worlds in the quarterfinals. An took apart Olympic champion

BADMINTON

Chen Yu Fei in the semis.

No. 6-ranked Marin lost all three previous matchups with An this year, but her confidence was up after she beat former No. 1 Tai Tzu Ying in the quarterfinals and two-time defending world champion Akane Yamaguchi in the semis. Marin has been on the comeback trail following two knee surgeries which sidelined her for a year.

From 4-4 in the final, An won six straight points to take charge. In the second game, Marin fought back to tie it at 10 but An reeled off the last 11 points. Her defense and pressure forced Marin into repeated errors.

The first game of the men's final took longer than the entire women's final.

No. 4-ranked Naraoka edged the 45-minute game after No. 3 Kunlavut needed to strap his right knee twice and led 19-18. In the second game of more long rallies, Naraoka was three points from victory at 18-18 but netted twice to concede.

Coming so close and missing out broke Naraoka, who was warned by the umpire in the deciding game to play his best. Kunlavut reached 10-1 and won nine more straight points to reach 19-5. The end came after 109

Ukrainian high jumper Mahuchikh takes gold

Men's 4x400 win title as Americans close out worlds with 29 medals

BUDAPEST, Hungary, Aug 28, (AP): Yaroslava Mahuchikh, the best high jumper in the war-torn country of Ukraine, won a gold medal Sunday night to bring an emotional close to the track and field world championships.

The very last person competing in the final event of the nine-day meet, Mahuchikh cleared 2.01 meters (6 feet, 7 inches) to win her first major outdoor title and set herself up as a favorite at the Paris Olympics next year.

Her evening came to a close moments after Femke Bol of the Netherlands, whose fall on opening night cost her team a medal in the mixed 4x400 relay, made up some 20 meters down the homestretch to win the women's version of that relay.

But no medal packed a bigger emotional punch than the one Mahuchikh earned for Ukraine. The 21-year-old, wearing eyeliner colored the same blue and yellow as her country's flag, had been training in Germany. Now she's in Belgium, where her mother, sister and niece also are living. All these moves came since she was forced to leave quickly from her hometown of Dnipro shortly after the war began last year.

ATHLETICS

She has been home for only a few weeks over Christmas, and Dnipro, which was relatively safe at the outset of the fighting with Russia, has become a target in the war.

Mahuchikh was one of 29 Ukrainian athletes competing at worlds in neighboring Hungary this week. It marked the first gold medal for Ukraine and the second overall, adding to a silver won by Maryna Bekh-Romanchuk two nights earlier in the triple jump.

Mahuchikh sealed the win after jumping 2 centimeters higher than Australian Eleanor Patterson, who beat her last year in Eugene, Oregon. With the gold medal secure, Mahuchikh had the bar set to 2.07 to try for a personal best.

After missing twice, she waited for the end of Bol's amazing comeback to make her last attempt. With Bol and her teammates in a dogpile celebrating on the track, Mahuchikh failed to clear. Still, it was a win, and a few moments later, she was smiling, holding her country's flag aloft and waiting for her medal.

The rest of the days winners included Neeraj Chopra of India in the javelin throw; Winfred Mutile Yavi of Bahrain in the women's steeplechase; Jakob Ingebrigtsen of Norway in the men's 5,000 and Mary Moraa of Kenya in the women's 800 where American Athing Mu finished third.

Athing Mu still had on her bedazzled aqua-blue track spikes when she made her announcement: She was officially on vacation.

Before heading on a trip for some rest and relaxation, the 800-meter runner grabbed a bronze medal on the final day of world championships Sunday night. Time for a quick reset before getting back to work to defend her Olympic title at the Paris Games in 11 months.

"I'm just happy my race is over," said Mu, who entered as the defending champion but nearly skipped worlds due to fatigue. "I can go home and finally enjoy vacation and stop thinking about track and field."

A bronze from Mu and a gold by the men's 4x400 relay team pushed the



Mohamed Katir, of Spain (left), Berihu Aregawi, of Ethiopia (second from right), and winner Jakob Ingebrigtsen, of Norway (right), compete in the final of the Men's 5000-meters during the World Athletics Championships in Budapest, Hungary. (AP)

Americans final total to 29 medals in Budapest, including 12 gold. The red, white and blue eclipsed the Jamaicans (12) in total medals, along with Canada and Spain (four apiece) in gold medals.

This wasn't quite the bountiful haul of last summer, when the U.S. amassed 33 medals, 13 gold, at worlds on home turf in Eugene, Oregon.

Now, it's time to regroup. But first, a break. That's Mu's plan, anyway.

Since winning in Tokyo and in Eugene, Mu has changed coaches to Bobby Kersee and relocated to Los Angeles. It's been a lot to absorb.

That's why she nearly passed on worlds.

B o b b y knows what's going on and he just wanted to make sure that my mental was fine," Mu explained. "He knows, obviously, what everyone expects for me or what they wish to see from me. He just wants to take that pressure off me and just let me do what I could because this sport is very long. We have many years ahead of us."

Mu recently deleted all her social media so she could concentrate on training for worlds. In the final, she was leading before being caught by silver medalist Keely Hodgkinson of Britain and Kenya's Mary Moraa, who punctuated her gold-medal finish by leaping across the line.

"I feel fine. I'm not upset with it at all," Mu said. "Coming to this meet, the world was already talking about me

- whether or not I was coming? What is Bobby doing? What is Athing doing? Athing is gonna lose. Athing is going to (win).

"I just, like, people can just take a chill pill sometime. Just let us do our thing," Mu added. "I don't know, just let us be athletes."

This season, something has been missing for Mu - that extreme passion. That's why she needs a reset. Just don't ask where she's going on vacation, because she's not saying.

"I feel like I was definitely fighting to find the excitement this go-around," Mu said. "This year wasn't my favorite. But we'll see what happens in the future."

The Americans turn toward Paris with a lot to be pleased about. Like the emergence of sprinter Sha'Carri Richardson, who won gold in the 100 and as part of the women's 4x100 relay. Or the domination of Noah Lyles, who not only won the 100 and 200 but helped the men's 4x100 to a title - just like Usain Bolt used to do.

The medal tally could've been more, but the Americans were missing several big names. Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone, always a sure-fire bet to medal, withdrew due to a minor knee issue. She could possibly compete in both the 400 hurdles and 400 next summer. Michael Norman, the defending 400 champion, also didn't race.

On the last race of the championships, the women's 4x400 relay, Team USA could've been going for their 30th medal. But they weren't in the field after being disqualified in the previous round due for a faulty baton exchanged. Instead, Femke Bol made a big comeback in the final few meters to lead the Netherlands to a gold.



Mahuchikh

'It just doesn't feel real for some reason'

Biles clinches record 8th US Gymnastics crown

SAN JOSE, Calif., Aug 28, (AP): Simone Biles is not going to explain herself. Part of this is by design. Part of this is because she simply can't.

When the gymnastics star is at her best, as she was on Sunday night while winning her record eighth U.S. championship, she feels like she's in a "fever dream." It's not autopilot exactly. It's more of a vibe. A flow.

It's in those moments that the doubts that still plague her almost daily even now, a decade into a run of unprecedented excellence, fade away.

There is no thinking. No over-analyzing. No "twisties." All of it recedes into the background. Her coach Laurent Landi calls it a skill. Biles, even at 26, won't go that far. Maybe because she simply doesn't want to.

She spent a long time, far too long, getting caught up in her head. She's intent on not doing it this around.

So yeah, she was smiling midway through a floor routine that made almost every other competitor on the floor stop what they were doing to watch and drew a standing ovation from a portion of the sellout SAP Center crowd. No, she can't explain why. When her coaches told her she'd nailed every tumbling pass, she was clueless.

"It just doesn't feel real for some reason," Biles said.

It is. Remarkably.

Ten years ago she was a teenage prodigy who doesn't remember much from her ascension to the top of her sport. She was always fixated on the next thing. World championships. Team camps. The Olympics.

Now she's a 26-year-old newlywed determined to enjoy this. For real. Six months ago she wasn't sure she was

all in. Three weeks ago she returned to competition in Chicago feeling as if she was going to "throw up" every time she saluted the judges.

The woman who posted a two-day all-around total of 118.40 this week-end in northern California - four points clear of runner-up Shilese Jones and well ahead of Florida junior Leanne Wong in third place - is not ready to hit fast forward. She won. She's letting herself be happy this time. That didn't always happen before.

"We really try to celebrate our success individually and as a team just so that in a couple of years you can remember this," she said. "Because I really don't remember a lot from the past."

She knows that gymnastics won't last "forever" even if, for her in a way it has.

Peaks aren't supposed to last this long. Most elite gymnasts at 26 - at least the ones who haven't retired - are simply hoping to hold on to what they have.

The athlete who became the oldest woman to win a national title since USA Gymnastics began organizing the event in 1963 is not interested in that. Landi called Biles' floor routine in the finals the best he'd ever seen her do.

GYMNASTICS

"I think it's maturity," he said. Biles' eight crowns moved her past Alfred Jochim, who won seven between 1925-33 when the Amateur Athletics Union ran the championships and the men's competition included rope climbing.



Simone Biles reacts after competing on the floor exercise during the U.S. Gymnastics Championships in San Jose, Calif. (AP)

Khang earns maiden victory

Hovland wins title with record finish

ATLANTA, Aug 28, (AP): Viktor Hovland played the best golf of his life in the final two weeks of the PGA Tour season, and it paid off Sunday with the biggest trophy of his career - a FedEx Cup title along with the \$18 million bonus.

Staked to a six-shot lead, Hovland didn't flinch under a relentless challenge from Xander Schauffele. The 25-year-old Norwegian stayed on the attack and closed with a 7-under 63 for a five-shot victory at East Lake.

Schauffele made him work for that \$18 million, firing at flags from the opening hole and closing with a 62. He got to within three shots with seven holes to play and had momentum on his side. And then Hovland ended the suspense with a 25-foot par putt on the 14th hole, and he put Schauffele away with a 10-foot birdie putt on the 16th.

GOLF

Hovland was the No. 2 seed going into the Tour Championship, meaning he started the tournament at 8-under par. Hovland posted a 19-under 261 - the same score as Schauffele, who started the tournament at 3 under as the No. 15 seed.

It was the second time in four years that no one scored better than Schauffele, and he left Atlanta without a trophy to show for it.

U.S. Open champion Wyndham Clark won the B-Flight, closing with a 65 to finish third, 11 shots behind. That was worth a \$5 million bonus. Rory McIlroy had a 65 to finish fourth and collect \$4 million, while Patrick Cantlay (66) was alone in fifth to earn \$3 million.

The next time Hovland and Schauffele meet is for no prize money at all - the Ryder Cup in Rome in a month's time.

Megan Khang beat Jin Young Ko with a par in a playoff for her first LPGA win, and Andrea Lee rallied to clinch a spot on the U.S. Solheim Cup team at the CPKC Women's Open on Sunday.

After struggling most of the afternoon, Khang made a 4-foot birdie putt on the par-4 18th hole at Shaughnessy Golf and Country Club to force the playoff. Ko hit her tee shot on the first playoff hole into the hazard left of the fairway and took a double bogey after a penalty shot.

The 25-year-old Khang hit her second shot to the fringe left of the pin on 18 and two-putted for her first win in eight years on the LPGA Tour, giving her caddie a giant huge after it dropped. She shot 2-over 74 in the final round to finish at 9-under 279.

Lee needed to finish 13th to earn one of the seven automatic qualifying spots for the U.S. team. She just missed a birdie on 18 to shoot 70 in the final round, leaving her 11th at 2 under with several players still on the course.

After a nearly hourlong wait, Lee tied for 13th, earning a spot in the Sept. 22-24 matches in Spain. Lexi Thompson earned the



Megan Khang of the U.S. holds the trophy after winning the CPKC Women's Open golf tournament, Sunday, Aug. 27, 2023, in Vancouver, British Columbia. (AP)

eighth U.S. Solheim Cup spot based on world rankings despite missing the cut by eight shots.

Todd Clements came through a bunched field Sunday to win the Czech Masters for his first European tour title, closing with a bogey-free round of 9-under 63 for a one-stroke victory over Matt Wallace.

Wallace missed a 10-foot birdie putt on the final hole at the Albartross Golf Resort that would have forced a playoff. He shot 67.

Clements, who turns 27 on Tuesday, graduated from the Challenge Tour last year and is ranked No. 394. He hadn't finished in the top 20 in any previous event this season, but shot in the 60s every round at the Czech Masters.

Clements finished on 22-under 266.

Nicolai Hojgaard (69) finish third. The six-way-tie for fourth included Robert MacIntyre of Scotland (66) and Ludvig Aberg of Sweden (66), both of whom could be part of Europe's team for the Ryder Cup next month.

MacIntyre strengthened his spot in third place on the European points list. Qualifying ends next week at the European Masters in Switzerland. Aberg, a 23-year-old Swede who only turned pro in June and was playing in his first European tour event, is under consideration for a captain's pick.

Vijay Singh won The Ally Challenge for his first PGA Tour Champions title in nearly five years, mainly because of a five-putt triple bogey by Paul Goydos. Singh closed with a 4-under 68, and he walked off the 18th green at Warwick Hills thinking he would need some help from Goydos, who was in the group behind and had a one-shot lead. Singh didn't realize the help already had been delivered.

Goydos was leading by one and had about an 18-foot birdie putt on the par-3 17th hole. He left that about 3 feet short. He rammed the par putt by the hole. He missed the 3-foot bogey putt. And then he missed again from about 4 feet and then tapped in for triple bogey.

Goydos closed with a par for a 71, two shots behind. Singh finished at 14-under 202, one shot ahead of Jeff Maggert.



Majok Deng (13) of South Sudan drives to the basket against Zhao Rui (8) of China in the fourth quarter during the FIBA Basketball World Cup Group B game at Araneta Coliseum in Manila, Philippines. (AP)

Sports

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Dominant US advance to second round

Historic day for African basketball, with South Sudan, Cape Verde getting WC victories

MANILA, Philippines, Aug 28, (AP): Austin Reaves scored 15 points and the U.S. topped Greece 109-81 on Monday to clinch a berth in the second round of the Basketball World Cup.

Jalen Brunson and Anthony Edwards each scored 13 for the Americans (2-0), who haven't lost in seven games overall this summer. Brunson made all five of his shots, Bobby Portis had 10 points and Josh Hart grabbed 11 rebounds for the winners.

The win, combined with New Zealand's 95-87 overtime victory over Jordan earlier Monday, clinched a second-round berth for the Americans. They'll finish group play against Jordan on Wednesday, then play Lithuania and Montenegro - in some order - on Friday and Sunday.

Georgios Papagiannis led Greece (1-1) with 17 points.

Getting to the second round isn't exactly a surprise for the U.S., the current tournament favorites and a team seeking a sixth World Cup gold medal. There was no real gold-medal contender in Group C along with the U.S., and the Americans followed up a 27-point win over New Zealand in Saturday's opener with a 28-point victory that was never in doubt Monday.

BASKETBALL

Greece is playing this summer without its best player, two-time NBA MVP and 2021 NBA Finals MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo of the Milwaukee Bucks. He said he needed more time to recover from offseason knee surgery.

Without Giannis, Greece went to Papagiannis instead.

The former lottery pick - taken No. 13 in the 2016 draft - played 39 games in the league with Sacramento and Portland, last appearing in the NBA in 2018. He provided a flash of what he could do, scoring 11 points in the first quarter, 15 in the half, and trying to keep Greece's upset shot afloat.

It wasn't anywhere near enough. The U.S. lead was 50-37 at the half, and the Americans pushed the margin out to 79-56 going into the final 10-minute period.

South Sudan is the world's youngest nation, only gaining its independence 12 years ago. Cape Verde is one of the world's least-populated nations, with fewer residents than any country that qualified for the Basketball World Cup.

They stood tall on Monday at the World Cup - both nations winning games at FIBA's biggest tournament for the first time.

It was a double-dose of history for African basketball: South Sudan beat China 89-69 at Manila and Cape Verde beat Venezuela 81-75 at Okinawa, Japan. The wins kept both teams in contention for berths in the second round of the World Cup, and they remain very much in the race to be Africa's automatic qualifier for next summer's Paris Olympics.

"I'm still speechless," said Cape Verde's Will Tavares, a Rhode Island-born forward who scored 20 points in Monday's win. "I feel like I'm in a dream right now, but the win was so big for us and our country and our families. We made a statement. Even though we're the smallest country, we have so much heart." They were the two lowest-ranked nations in the 32-team field to begin the tournament, both countries getting to the World Cup for the first time. South Sudan is ranked 62nd worldwide by FIBA, the sport's global governing body; Cape Verde is ranked 64th.

And they both have a chance to be among the 16 teams still standing when the second round starts Friday.

South Sudan's basketball program was essentially started a few years ago by former NBA player Luol Deng, who was born in the country and raised in London after his father - a former Sudanese government official and former political prisoner - was granted asylum by Great Britain. Deng learned to play basketball in London, a scout noticed him when he was about 14 and his life forever changed.

When Deng's playing days were over, he became president of South Sudan's fledgling basketball federation. If there is an indoor court anywhere in that country, Deng doesn't know where it is. He believes the country doesn't have a single regulation-sized floor.

Here they are, undaunted by doubt, unfazed by massive challenges.

Africa has long been considered the sleeping giant in global basketball, and big strides have been made in re-



The victorious Kuwait Sporting Club celebrate on the podium.

KUNA photo

Kuwait SC win Arab handball championship

Kuwait Sporting Club won the Arab Handball Champions League after defeating Zamalek SC in the final.

Kuwait SC snatched their first Arab Handball title after a very close final against the Egyptian side with the score of 31-30.

Napoli win again

Vlahovi to the rescue as Juventus snatch draw vs Bologna amid jeers

MILAN, Aug 28, (AP): Juventus needed Dušan Vlahović's late goal to rescue a 1-1 draw at home to Bologna in Serie A.

Lewis Ferguson had given Bologna the lead in the 24th minute and the Bianconeri were booed off the field at halftime. But Vlahović, who earlier had a goal ruled out for offside, headed in the equalizer with 10 minutes remaining.

Defending champion Napoli made it two wins out of two after beating 10-man Sassuolo 2-0. Last year's runner-up Lazio surprisingly lost 1-0 at home to newly promoted Genoa.

After a difficult time last season, Juventus had kicked off the new campaign with a 3-0 win at Udinese. It was a second tricky test for Bologna, which lost to AC Milan in its opener.

The visitors took the lead after Joshua Zirkzee drew two defenders towards him and managed to knock the ball forward to Ferguson, who had time to control and fire into the far bottom corner.

After the jeers at halftime, Juventus appeared to have more impetus in the second period and thought it had taken the lead seven minutes after the break but Vlahović's strike was ruled out as Adrien Rabiot was in an offside position.

Bologna reckoned it should have had a penalty in the 70th minute when forward Dan Ndoye collided with Juventus winger Samuel Iling-Junior but the referee waved away their protests. Bologna coach Thiago Motta was booked for dissent while one of his staff was sent off.

continent.

"Today is a unique and marvelous moment for our people," Cape Verde coach Emanuel Trovoada said.

Both South Sudan and Cape Verde

Illy-Junior was involved in the equalizer 10 minutes later with a cross from the right that Vlahović headed into the bottom right corner.

Khvicha Kvaratskhelia made his season debut and took just three minutes to produce a moment of magic.

SOCCER

The Napoli winger, last season's revelation and nicknamed "Kvaradona," came on as a substitute in the 61st minute. Shortly afterward he sent a delightful through ball to put Giovanni Di Lorenzo clear on goal for a simple finish and Napoli's second goal.



Napoli's Victor Osimhen goes for the ball during an Italian Serie A soccer match between SSC Napoli and Sassuolo Calcio at the Diego Armando Maradona stadium in Naples, Italy. (AP)

have one game left in group-stage play - South Sudan plays Serbia on Wednesday, while Cape Verde will take on Dallas Mavericks star Luka Dončić and Slovenia. The top-ranked

li's second goal.

Kvaratskhelia missed last weekend's win at Frosinone with a muscular problem.

Napoli almost got its first home match of the season off to the perfect start but Giacomo Raspadori's effort from point-blank range came off the right post in the opening minute.

It took the lead in the 16th minute when Victor Osimhen converted a penalty after Daniel Boloca fouled Matteo Politano.

Sassuolo's chances of getting something from the match diminished six minutes into the second half when midfielder Maxime Lopez was shown a red card for something he said to the referee - repeatedly.

Napoli should have doubled its lead on the hour mark but Raspadori clipped the crossbar with a spot kick following a handball by Sassuolo defender Jeremy Toljan.

Mateo Retegui headed in his first Serie A goal to give Genoa a huge win at the Stadio Olimpico.

The 24-year-old Retegui had netted twice in the Italian Cup earlier this month. The Argentina-born forward, who has Italian citizenship through his maternal grandmother, also scored in his first two matches for Italy in March.

Lazio has zero points after surprisingly losing at Lecce in their opener last weekend after the opposition scored two late goals.

Lecce followed that up by coming back from two goals down to draw 2-2 at Fiorentina on Sunday.

African team at this World Cup will automatically qualify for the Paris Olympics; so far, South Sudan, Cape Verde and Angola all have 1-1 records in the battle for that berth.



U.S. forward Mikal Bridges (5) recovers the ball in front of Greece guard Giannoulis Larentzakis (5) during the first half of a Basketball World Cup Group C match in Manila, Philippines. (AP)

Mancini 'appointed' Saudi Arabia coach 2 weeks after quitting Italy

RIYADH, Aug 28, (AP): Roberto Mancini was appointed coach of the Saudi Arabia national team on Sunday, just two weeks after the European Championship-winning manager surprisingly left his job in charge of Italy.

The Saudi Arabian soccer federation (SAFF) said the Italian has been given a four-year contract. His first matches in charge will be against Costa Rica on Sept. 8 and South Korea four days later - both are friendly games and will take place at Newcastle.

SAFF posted a video on social media with clips of Mancini. In it, he says: "I made history in Europe, now it's time to make history with Saudi." Italian media reported that Mancini's contract is worth 25 million euros (\$27 million) a year, and that the 58-year-old will be presented to the media at a news conference on Monday.

"I am immensely honored to be offered the position as Saudi Arabia national team manager," Mancini said. "I believe this is a great opportunity for me, to experience football in a new country, especially with the growing popularity of football in Asia. I firmly believe that the passionate footballing culture of Saudi

Arabia and the intrinsic quality of Saudi players are crucial ingredients for success. The presence of top players in the Saudi Pro League indicates the potential for growth in the national football scene."

Mancini stunned Italian soccer when he quit as national team coach earlier this month, ending an up-and-down tenure with the national team that included a European Championship title in 2021 but also a failed qualification for last year's World Cup.

He was replaced by Luciano

SOCCER

Spalletti, who led Napoli to the Serie A title last season.

Mancini also won three straight Serie A titles with Inter Milan - from 2005 to 2008 - as well as steering Manchester City to the Premier League crown in 2012.

"We are delighted to welcome Roberto Mancini to lead the Green Falcons," SAFF President Yasser Al Masehal said. "His experience and proven track record at club and international level marks a significant step towards achieving our goals in international football."

cent years through investment - such as academies that the NBA has built there to identify and develop promising young players, the NBA-backed Basketball Africa League and the Gi-

ants of Africa initiative led by Toronto Raptors President Masai Ujiri, a native of Nigeria. That group, among other things, is building courts and hosting clinics for boys and girls around the