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# ARAB TIMES

THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY IN FREE KUWAIT  
Established in 1977 / www.arabtimesonline.com



soccer Pages 15 & 16

SUNDAY, AUGUST 13, 2023 / MUHARRAM 26, 1445 AH

emergency number 112

NO. 18364

16 PAGES

150 FILS

## REVITALIZING TOURISM TO COUNTERACT MASS MIGRATION DURING HOLIDAYS

# Optimize Kuwait wealth, fix business atmosphere

Ministerial stability pivotal for reform

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

■ Around 400,000 citizens fly abroad during holidays and festivals due to the absence of recreational activities and tourist attractions here

■ Stop 'mass migration' during holidays

■ Closing public beaches to the people is a negative phenomenon that some have created, even though they are State-owned pieces of land that cannot be monopolized

■ Revision of laws to confront wastage of public money and those with personal interests at the expense of the nation

■ Serious steps to stop the exodus of wealth holders and entrepreneurs abroad due to red tape

■ Opening the country to everyone to contribute to the renaissance of Kuwait, as it happened in the 1980s during the reign of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem

■ Revitalizing the national economy and guiding young people in managing their enterprises while receiving vital support are essential

■ Oil in neighboring countries accounts for 40 percent of the national income, while it still constitutes 93 percent of the income in Kuwait

■ Stability of the ministerial position is the pillar of reform and confrontation with the parliamentarians must be according to certain criteria

■ Benefiting from minds and expertise without limiting themselves to a specific group, and confronting 'wasta' and the 'this is our own' mindset

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12:** The dimensions of the leadership's strategy towards a comprehensive developmental transformation to achieve an integrated renaissance in all fields continue to unfold.

Today's article highlights the starting point for the political leadership to launch reforms.

The first step is to fully utilize national capabilities, materials and human resources on one hand; and on the other hand, improving the business environment by localizing capital, easing procedures for entrepreneurs, revitalizing leisure activities and tourist attractions to stop the 'mass migration' of citizens and expatriates during holidays.

In this context, reliable sources confirmed that the higher decision-making circles deliberated on the issue of wasting public money; while reviewing



Al-Jarallah

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Ministry seeks to limit wastage of medicines

## Expats health services fees review could lead to an increase of prices

By Raed Youssef and Marwa Al-Bahrawi  
Al-Seyassah Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: The parliamentary Health Affairs Committee has postponed taking a final decision regarding the shortage of medicines issue, as it intends to evaluate the information it has received so far and then present recommendations to the National Assembly.

Parliamentary sources said the Ministry of Health issued contradictory statements, as it sometimes confirmed the shortage of medicines due to circumstances beyond its control; especially the disruption of the global supply chain and lack of raw materials. Sometimes, it called for a description other than 'shortage'; given that shortage from the ministry's point of view is the inability to provide patients with the needed medicines - whether the basic medicines or alternatives - which is refuted by the reassuring strategic medicine stock, sources revealed.

Sources added the ministry reassured the committee of its seriousness in continuing to enhance drug security according to short and long-term plans, and to supply the strategic stock from multiple sources to avoid interruption in the event that

international circumstances interfere with the export of medicines in order to cover the country's needs.

Sources disclosed that the previous meetings, including the one held last week, tackled the approach of the ministry to limit the wastage of medicines through automatic linking or imposing new fees for medicines given to expatriates in different health centers. Sources said this contributed to rationalizing expenditures, indicating the ministry officials expect more control over spending on medicines and treatment after studying, evaluating and reviewing the fees for various health services provided to expatriates.

In an official statement, the ministry pointed out that the health system is not really going through a shortage of medicines; considering the lack of supply for global reasons.

According to the ministry, Minister of Health Dr Ahmed Al-Awadi attended the meeting of the Health Affairs Committee when it discussed the global shortage of medicines issue. It pointed out that several countries, including those in Europe

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A child waves as young Kuwaitis set sail aboard two dhows early Saturday from the Arabian Gulf Road shore kicking off the 32nd Pearl Diving Festival.

Photo by Mohamed Morsi

### Kuwait Pearl Diving Festival kicks off

The 32nd edition of the diving revival voyage organized by Kuwait Sea Sports Club kicked off on Saturday under sponsorship of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Up to 60 young Kuwaitis on board of two dhows launched the endeavor, ceremony

of which was attended by the deputy director general of competitive sports, Bashar Abdullah, and head of the sea club Fahad Al-Fahad.

The dhows with the fluttering sails headed from the sea club in Al-Salmiya toward the destination, Khairan.

In a statement at start of the "dasha" ceremony, Abdullah affirmed significance of marking the occasion as it constitutes part of the Kuwaiti heritage.

Although the current time generation is overwhelmed with modern and digital technology, it remains necessary to bring into

recollections "our genuine heritage" particularly among the youngsters, he said.

Badr Dhiab, a participant, told KUNA that the experience would stimulate him to remember the forefathers and the difficulties they had gone through in the past times. (KUNA)

### IS ambush kills twenty soldiers

BEIRUT, Aug 12, (AP): The Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for an ambush in eastern Syria that killed at least 20 government soldiers and wounded others, warning that such attacks will continue.

IS sleeper cells still carry deadly attacks despite their defeat in Syria in 2019. The group once controlled large parts of Syria and Iraq where they declared a caliphate in 2014.

The Friday night statement said IS fighters ambushed two army trucks in the eastern province of Deir el-Zour using different kinds of weapons. IS claimed that 40 members of the Syrian military were killed and 10 were wounded.

Syrian opposition activists said the Thursday night attack on a bus carrying soldiers near the town of Mayadeen killed at least 20 soldiers and wounded others. State media said several soldiers were killed and wounded, without giving a breakdown.

"Let the whole world know that our allegiance to our leaders is practiced with deeds and not words and our Jihad is going on until Doomsday," IS said.

Last week, IS announced the death in Syria of its little-known leader, Abu al-Hussein al-Husseini al-Qurayshi - who had headed the extremist organization since November - and named his successor.

### Amir condolences over deadly US fire

# Maui wildfires death toll rises to 80

LAHAINA, Hawaii, Aug 12, (Agencies): Survivors witnessed a surreal landscape of flattened homes, blackened hulks of burned-out cars and ashly lots where buildings once stood as they took stock of their shattered lives in the aftermath of a fast-paced wildfire on the Hawaii island of Maui that authorities say killed at least 80 people.

Anthony Garcia assessed the devastation as he stood under Lahaina's iconic banyan tree, now charred, and swept twisted branches into neat piles next to another heap filled with dead animals: cats, roosters and other birds killed by the smoke and flames. Somehow it made sense in a world turned upside-down.

"If I don't do something, I'll go nuts," said Garcia, who lost everything he owned. "I'm losing my faith in God."



A man walks through wildfire wreckage Friday, Aug. 11, 2023, in Lahaina, Hawaii. Hawaii emergency management records show no indication that warning sirens sounded before people ran for their lives from wildfires on Maui that wiped out a historic town. (AP)

Garcia and other residents were faced with catastrophic destruction resulting from the wildfires that tore through parts of Maui this week and were still not fully contained Friday night.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has sent a cable of consolation to US President Joseph Biden over fires in Hawaii that left many victims and injuries and demolished properties.

His Highness the Amir wished the injured quick recovery and leaders of the nation capacity to contain repercussions of this natural catastrophe.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also sent a cable of consolation to US President Joseph Biden.

Maui County raised the number of confirmed deaths to 80 in a 9 p.m. statement Friday. Gov. Josh Green had warned the death toll would likely rise as search and rescue operations continue. Authorities set a curfew from 10 p.m. until 6 a.m. Saturday.

"The recovery's going to be extraordinarily complicated, but we do want people to get back to their homes and just do what they can to assess safely, because it's pretty dangerous," Green told Hawaii News Now.

Cadaver-sniffing dogs were deployed to search for the dead, Maui County Mayor Richard Bissen Jr. said.

A new wildfire Friday evening triggered the evacuation of Kaanapali in West Maui, a community northeast of the area that burned earlier, but crews were able to extinguish the fire before 8:30 p.m., authorities said.

Attorney General Anne Lopez announced plans to conduct a comprehensive review of decision-making and standing policies impacting the response to the deadly wildfires.

"My Department is committed to understanding the decisions that were made before and during the wildfires and to sharing with the public the results of this review," Lopez said in a statement.

The wildfires are the state's deadliest natural disaster in decades, surpassing a 1960 tsunami that killed 61 people. An even deadlier tsunami in 1946, which killed more than 150 on the Big Island, prompted development of a territory-wide emergency system with sirens that are tested monthly.

Many fire survivors said they didn't hear any sirens or receive a warning giving them enough time to prepare, realizing they were in danger only when they saw flames or heard explosions.

"There was no warning," said Lynn Robinson, who lost her home.

### NewsWatch

**WASHINGTON:** Kuwait Embassy in Washington called on its nationals living in the United States to be wary of dealing with contacts via phone or emails from suspicious persons who might disguise as representatives of its consular section.

Suspicious messages from such persons might contain requests for paying sums of money to the US Department of Higher Education for the enrolment of student or other educational services, the embassy warned in a statement on Thursday. (KUNA)

**DUBAI:** Iran has moved five Iranian-Americans from prison to house arrest in exchange for billions of dollars frozen in South Korea, U.S. and Iranian officials said Thursday, as part of a tentative deal that follows months of heightened tensions between the two countries.

Iranian officials at the United Nations told The Associated Press that the prisoner transfer marked "a significant initial step" in the implementation of the agreement, which is still being negotiated and could eventually lead to the full release of the Americans. (AP)

**DOHA:** Qatar is playing a role in facilitating talks between the US and Iran on releasing some prisoners and establishing a banking channel addressing some matters, Minister of State at Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mohammad Al-Khulalfi said Friday.

Qatar believes in the necessity of settling differences peacefully and diplomatically, the Ministry's "X" account carried Al-Khalifa's statement. He hoped that talks would lead to greater understandings that include the return to the nuclear deal. (KUNA)



## Prayer Timings

Fajr .....	03:48	Asr .....	15:28
Sunrise ..	05:14	Maghrib ..	18:32
Zohr .....	11:53	Isha .....	19:55

# Local

## Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

**By Day:** Very hot and relatively humid specially over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind with speeds of 08-32 km/h.

## Weather

**By Night:** Hot to rather hot and humid over coastal areas with light to moderate southeasterly wind to light variable wind with speeds of 08-30 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec		
Kuwait City	43	35		
Kuwait Airport	46	30		
Abdaly	48	29		
Jahra	49	32		
Salmiyah	38	34		
Ahmadi	37	34		
Nuwaisib	43	30		
Wafra	47	29		

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

## We thank Saudi Arabia for hosting Jeddah talks: Dr Balanutsa

# Ukrainian ambassador praises Kuwait for supporting Ukraine

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: The Ambassador of Ukraine to Kuwait Dr. Oleksandr Balanutsa expressed his appreciation for Kuwait's participation in the Jeddah talks and its firm support for his country, as well as its humanitarian assistance, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The ambassador praised the efforts exerted by most countries to stop Russia's attempts to destroy the global balance.

He particularly praised the initiative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and expressed his gratitude to Saudi Arabia for hosting the meeting in Jeddah, which brought together senior officials from more than 40 countries, which is three times more than what it was at the previous meeting of this level in Copenhagen.

Ambassador Balanutsa said, "It is certain that any international meeting of this high level would bring Ukraine closer to implementing the peace formula proposed by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky".

He highlighted that the Jeddah meeting revealed an increase in the number of countries that unconditionally respect Ukraine's independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty.

The ambassador said, "It is also a sign of Russia's increasing isolation, al-

though this country described this noble Saudi initiative as an attempt to swing the world towards the south, behind Kiev.

The Russian statements only confirm that the severity of the global food crisis is of its own making. On the other hand, the civilized countries that have joined the meeting in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are trying to save the world from the Russian dangers."

When asked whether the Jeddah summit will pave the way to resolving the crisis in Ukraine, Ambassador Balanutsa said, "There is still a long way to go until peace is achieved in Ukraine, considering that the Jeddah meeting represents one of the important steps towards peace."

He said he believes the main outcome of the talks in Saudi Arabia is that the vast majority of Ukrainian partners had clearly emphasized the need to withdraw Russian forces from the territory of Ukraine and the impossibility of freezing the war in any way, since this would only give time to prepare for new attacks on Ukrainian territory.

Ambassador Balanutsa praised the dynamism and positive positions of some countries, including China, Brazil, South Africa, India, etc whose assessment of the situation in Ukraine tends to be neutral.

He said, "The participants in the Jeddah meeting also agreed to continue working in this international format, and so it is likely to expand work on the matter."



Dr Balanutsa



Photo by Mohammad Morsi

Boats heading for the sea with young sailors on board as the pearl diving season kicks off Saturday.

## Other Voices

### Bid to regain lost popularity

By Ahmad alsarraf

Our government is not in its best state, and it really needs to take decisions that raise the standard of living of the citizen, and this cannot be done by spraying cash on them, canceling their loans, and exempting them from the interest on their debts, although it is the easiest, but it is the most corrupt and harmful, and this is what I paid attention to.

Governments and individuals, including Alfred Nobel, who in 1895 dedicated a huge amount in his will, to be invested by a board of trustees, and the proceeds used annually to award prizes to creators in several scientific and human fields, and to become one of the most prestigious prizes in the world, and he did not distribute his money in cash at the time to his family and the scholars of his time, so his name was immortalized in history and humanity thanked him for a hundred years ago, and for hundreds to come.

There is nothing more corrupt than the system of cooperative societies, as it has caused damage to hundreds of administrators of these societies and their boards of directors, so that there is no board left that has not been resolved for investigation or prosecution.

Almost all of them failed to achieve good growth rates or to provide distinguished services to the people of the region, despite the fact that the entire lands and buildings of these associations, which are worth billions of dinars, are provided free of charge by the state.

Nevertheless, supermarket companies invade these residential areas and open branches in them and provide better prices and service to the residents of the region, and this is perhaps the biggest evidence of the failure of its cooperative societies!

To remedy the situation of the ruined cooperatives, some people of conscience submitted serious demands to a number of ministers of social affairs and the Council of Ministers, demanding that the associations' boards of directors stop interfering in the management of the central market and the rest of the activities, and hand them

over to specialized local and international companies that are more capable and experienced in managing them, and devote themselves to monitoring their performance.

However, this proposal was not heard, for well-known reasons, despite the fact that a residential area implemented it by force, and its central market achieved unprecedented profits in the history of that area!

Former senior officials also submitted a detailed proposal to the Council of Ministers, stipulating the issuance of decisions by the Council that allow the general assembly of associations to meet and vote on converting the region's association into a "joint stock company", which rents land and buildings from the state, within easy and concessional terms, and this will allow the project to be inevitable success, and later offered its shares in the parallel market, so that after a few years, the people of the region can easily buy and sell its shares and make huge profits from their contributions in the company, and this is not a kind of privatization, as the people are the ones who own the association, and they are the ones who will continue to own the new company.

The project is carefully studied and answers various questions, and it will bring about a positive change in the financial situation of the people of the region, and enhance their ability to manage it in a more professional manner and much less bad and corrupt. And whoever wants to get more information on the subject, contact us to provide him with that.

Our governments, which have historically been known to hesitate to take important decisions, even very easy and feasible ones, such as this idea, are required to take action. In this proposal, there is no loser except for the corrupt councils. This is the government's opportunity to transform the idea of associations into a mine of good financial and social opportunities.

Note: Due to the sharp decline, during the month of August, in the number of readers of "online" articles, and often more than that on the paper version, I have decided to reduce the publication of daily articles, until further notice!

e-mail: [a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw](mailto:a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw)

### Govt faces obstacles in filling senior posts

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: At a time when the government is seeking to fill vacancies in leadership positions in many government bodies and institutions, its plans are colliding with various obstacles, most notably the rejection of many candidates for membership or presidency of these bodies, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to informed sources, one of the important reasons for rejecting these posts is related to the expected new procedures to reconsider the salary scale received by the heads and members of the boards of those bodies, within the framework of a strategy based on bridging the salary gap in order to achieve justice among employees.

The proposed amendments include reducing the salary of the president to approximately KD 6,000, his deputy to KD 5,000, and a member to KD 4,000.

Among the most prominent challenges is the delay in deciding on appointments, which has made some candidates turn to other job positions in the private sector.

The sources affirmed that the government is continuing its reform approach, which includes addressing the imbalance in salaries through modern standards and controls.

They said there are many competencies working in the government and the private sector whose potential can be used to cover these bodies, according to the strategy that the government is working to implement successfully.

The sources indicated that many boards of directors of government agencies apply clear laws and procedures, and do not need all of their members to devote their time to carrying out their tasks. Therefore it is not necessary for them to receive large salaries and the accompanying allowances, travel costs and external tasks that are useless and exaggerated.

However, the sources expressed their fear that the new trend would lead to the leakage of competencies from the regulatory and public bodies and institutions, especially since the second tier that works under the umbrella of the boards of directors represented by the heads of sectors, for example, will receive salaries nearly double of what the members of the new councils will receive in the future.

The sources warned that the gap between the first and second grades may lead to destabilizing the standards of dealing, and thus break the trust between them, as the board of directors is not entitled to prejudice the salaries of Kuwaiti employees, but has the right to rotate, transfer and join advisory work and take other paths that may be reflected in the quality of work, and thus the general approach of the entity or body.

**No meid in market:** The fish auction in Sharq Market witnessed high demand from consumers and fish lovers, considering the entry of large quantities of shrimp baskets which dominated the market and revived the auction, where the price of a 25-kilogram basket ranges from KD50 to KD70 depending on the size of shrimps, reports Al-Rai daily.

A number of vendors complained about the small supply of fish in the market and high prices of local fish. Local shrimp is available and the price ranges from KD2 to KD3 jumbo shrimp stalls, while the price of a kilogram of Kuwaiti zubaidi ranges from KD9 to KD13 depending on the size.

One of the vendors disclosed there is still no supply of Meid fish in the market despite the increasing demand. He added the ban on fishing Al-Joun affected its supply in the market.

## Prosecution tackles ten money-wash cases/mth

Mixed trend in crime rates

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: The data issued by the Ministry of Justice shows the Public Prosecution received a total of 17,000 cases in the first half of this year. Among these cases, there were 60 instances of money laundering, averaging about 10 cases each month, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The statistics, a copy of which has been obtained by the daily, show a mixed trend in crime rates. Some categories of cases and crimes have experienced an increase, while others have witnessed a decrease. Meanwhile, certain cases have maintained their usual levels of reporting to the Public Prosecution.

Comparing the first half of 2023 to the same period in 2022, the total number of cases received by the Public Prosecution has decreased by 10 per cent.

Analyzing the occurrence of money laundering crimes over the past five years, it's evident that 2021 witnessed the highest number of these crimes, with the Public Prosecution investigating 167 cases. This number decreased to 64 cases in 2022, possibly indicating a global effort to combat such crimes. In 2023, the number of money laundering cases dropped further to 60.

The data highlights that males constitute 90 per cent of those accused of crimes investigated by the Public Prosecution, while females make up the remaining 10 per cent.

The total number of defendants was approximately 18,000, with the majority of those committing these crimes falling within the age range of 30 to 40 years old.

The data for the first half of 2023 indicates that environmental violations top the list with a significant margin, registering 4030 cases. Domestic violence cases rank second with 2200 instances, followed by juvenile misdemeanors with 815 cases.

The surge in environmental misdemeanor cases can be attributed to heightened enforcement measures and stricter adherence to the law. Law enforcement and environmental agencies are acting swiftly to combat violations.

Tightening legal penalties for environmental violations, which can include up to 3 years of imprisonment and fines up to 50,000 dinars, contributes to curbing environmental crimes.

Domestic violence cases have also experienced a slight increase, totaling 1,216 cases in the first half of 2023 compared to 2,200 for the entire 2022. Observers within the court system, especially at the Palace of Justice, have noted an uptick in domestic violence cases.

These cases are being heard daily, with an increasing number of complaints from abused women. Some of these cases arise from retaliatory or malicious intent, while others result from actual assaults.

Nevertheless, many of these cases end in acquittals or minor fines. Consequently, some parties are turning to out-of-court settlements in an effort to mend family relationships and contribute to their stability.



Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Lt. Gen. Anwar Al-Barjas and his team during the tour.

Top Mol official visits T5 at airport

### 'Treat all travelers with respect'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12, (KUNA): Lt. Gen. Anwar Al-Barjas, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, has emphasized the importance of treating everyone with respect and facilitating the journey of travelers. He commended the exceptional efforts of airport security personnel, acknowledging their competence and effectiveness in executing their assigned responsibilities.

These remarks were conveyed through a statement by Lt. General Al-Barjas, as released by the Ministry of Interior on Wednesday. He made these comments during a tour conducted alongside Major General Mansour Al-Awadi, the Assistant Undersecretary for Ports and Borders Security, within the T5 airport. The purpose of the tour was to assess the readiness level and traveler procedures in place.

According to the statement, Al-Barjas expressed gratitude to all airport staff members for their significant role in showcasing Kuwait's honorable and cultured image. He highlighted that the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, had directed the reinforcement of female police personnel from various sectors within the ministry at the airport during the summer season. This move aims to ensure the successful completion of necessary tasks in this context.

During the outset of the tour, Al-Barjas

familiarized himself with the workflow procedures, strategies for handling increased summer traffic, departure and arrival protocols, and received an overview of the operational activities conducted by the Applications Division. He also gained insight into the passenger verification process, all geared towards achieving seamless movement for travelers.

**Training doctors:** As part of its plan to protect public health, the Ministry of Health is organizing a workshop to train 154 doctors on epidemiological monitoring through nasal and mouth swabs from Sept 17-21, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The ministry instructed the heads of public health service units and nursing staff in the Public Health Department to organize the workshop, through which doctors and other health professionals assigned in preventive centers in health districts will be trained in cooperation with the Environmental Health Department.

Sources confirmed that the ministry is intensifying efforts to develop the epidemiological surveillance mechanism, enhance public health and apply the best preventive methods used globally within the framework of a well-studied plan that is implemented by a specialized team of national professionals.



# diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## 'Stop embarrassing Kuwait with the issue of bedouins'

"ATTEMPTING to embarrass Kuwait through emotional manipulation and assuming the role of guardians for those whose legitimacy has been examined by official authorities is a futile and desperate endeavor," columnist Dr. **Saud Mohammed Al-Asfour** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Such actions reflect a sense of self-deprecation and can severely tarnish Kuwait's international reputation, portraying it as a violator of human rights. This reality should be acknowledged by all.

"Those who genuinely have evidence of their Kuwaiti origins should present their proofs to the Central Apparatus for Resolving the Status of Illegal Residents, an institution established by the state to address this issue comprehensively in accordance with the enacted laws. This initiative aims to preserve the dignity of citizens and thwart false claims of patriotism that seek unearned recognition.

"The challenge Kuwait faces is not solely about granting nationality but also pertains to the rights extended to new naturalized citizens. These privileges pale in comparison to what citizenship offers in their home countries. The demand for Kuwaiti citizenship seems driven by these factors.

"The Gulf countries with strong economies impose stringent conditions for citizenship, causing nationality applicants in Kuwait to evade these conditions.

"Kuwait, along with its neighbors, provides not only safety and security but also allows individuals to express themselves through various channels like parliament, free press, and social media. However, it's important to exercise restraint in addressing this issue to avoid inflaming public sentiment.

"A pressing question arises: Would there be a clamor for nationality if these privileges were absent? The answer is likely no.

The Central Apparatus for Resolving the Status of Illegal Residents, led by Saleh Al-Fadala and the virtuous Kuwaiti people, has worked diligently to ensure the rights of deserving citizenship candidates. Those who fled their homelands and are now competing with Kuwaiti citizens should be exposed.

"It's important to cease making unwarranted claims. Kuwait is a benevolent nation that has provided shelter, rights akin to its own citizens in health, education, and food support, and allowed temporary settlements. Stop turning this into an issue championed by certain parties through human rights organizations and fictitious social media accounts, which embarrass Kuwait before the world.

"It's clear: Those truly deserving of citizenship, as determined by the central apparatus, are warmly welcomed as citizens with rights and responsibilities. This matter, however, needs to be balanced against available resources, demographic considerations, and addressing issues like housing, education, employment, and infrastructure.

"Patience, not abandonment, is the key. Kuwait is a place of compassion, and its people don't deny favors or allow injustice. Those living among Kuwaitis are respected and cherished. Overcoming obstacles and fostering peace is a shared objective, as Kuwait is a land of benevolence and opportunity."

**Also:**

"Every summer season, a range of challenges and inconveniences arise, affecting vacationers and tourists, especially those from the Gulf region. Amid these concerns are individuals without legitimate identity who reside among us unlawfully. Among these are some infamous individuals who initially left for foreign tourist destinations and engaged in disruptive behaviors, tarnishing the image of Gulf tourists in those countries," columnist Dr. **Issa Muhammad Al-Amiri** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"During my time in the capital, I encountered some of these irresponsible groups, bearing grudges against Kuwait despite the kindness and generosity the nation extended to them on numerous occasions, treating them as honorary citizens even when their true origins remained unclear.

"Many of these individuals concealed their real nationalities, seeking benefits from the Kuwaiti and other Gulf governments. Unfortunately, some of these individuals took advantage of perceived grievances to denigrate Gulf nationals, particularly Kuwaitis. This trend became more pronounced after the post-Saddam invasion era.

"In a particular instance, some of these individuals impersonated Kuwaiti characters, portraying themselves as such while engaging in disgraceful acts that did not align with genuine Kuwaiti or Gulf values.

"To address these matters, our governments and embassies should raise awareness, especially during holiday seasons and travel to foreign countries. It is vital for them to consistently highlight the perils of such behavior that can distort the reputation of Gulf citizens, particularly Kuwaitis. This would counteract any misguided attempts to seek revenge for perceived grievances.

"The intent behind discussing this issue stems from real incidents observed firsthand in the capital. Instances have occurred that contributed to tarnishing the image of Gulf tourists due to the actions of misguided and unscrupulous groups. We earnestly call upon relevant authorities in Kuwait and across the Gulf states to adopt proactive measures, vigilance, and awareness campaigns against these detrimental practices. This will safeguard the reputation of Gulf countries during all seasons of travel, including the summer. We pray to God to guide us."

"Combining study and work does not mean luxury or prestige, it is rather a national demand to ensure that the wheel of development moves continuously," columnist Dr. **Mohammad Al-Azmi** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"Those with high school diplomas and capabilities should be encouraged to improve their educational and scientific levels by obtaining university degrees. This will raise the percentage of university graduates in Kuwait, and then their scientific and practical levels for the benefit of the country."

"Also, those with university degrees must complete their postgraduate studies — master's and doctoral degrees. This is a necessary and urgent requirement in the context of the amazing acceleration in the pace of science and technology around us, which requires intelligent people to be involved in the field of science and all its disciplines. Through knowledge and tracking its sources and paths, any country can occupy high places, which guarantee a future full of goodness and progress.

"We thank God that Kuwait has many human resources that help improve the educational level of its people and achieve their aspirations, with applicable controls and conditions.

"Therefore, it is necessary to reconsider the issue of combining study and job — to evaluate it, study it and put forward appropriate proposals for its controls, while avoiding incapacity in setting conditions, which leads to frustration and distraction of citizens from improving their scientific levels.

"A few days ago, the Education and Human Resources Committee issued a statement about combining work and study internally and externally. Those present in the meeting unanimously approved the proposal to allow combining work and study inside and outside Kuwait, in accordance with controls and standards that ensure the achievement of quality education and protection of the employees' right to education."

"Kuwait is located in the far northwestern part of the western Gulf. The Arabian Gulf Basin is a concave fold whose southern end is connected with the Gulf of Oman through the Strait of Hormuz, the Arabian Sea and then the Indian Ocean. Kuwait is one of the small countries in the area — about 18,000sq kilometers," columnist **Wasmiya Al-Mosallam** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"Security and stability are fundamental pillars for building states, their progress and prosperity. Kuwait's basic need could be a deterrent that secures its independence and protects its sovereignty, roots, heritage and territorial integrity in light of the unstable conditions in regions around us and the unrest that comes with security risks and economic consequences.

"We know that the role of Britain is to ensure the safety and security of Kuwait through its commitment to agreements and speed of decision-making. The British protection agreement in 1899 was signed with Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah and lasted until 1961, coinciding with the independence of Kuwait.

"History testifies to Britain's commitment and loyalty to safeguarding Kuwait's security and sovereignty. The goal was to protect the Kuwaiti security, its soil and sovereignty, while strengthening the role of the Kuwaiti Army by developing strategic military and security plans for crisis management, fortified with technology and training, and armed with the best military mechanized technologies and the cyber technological revolution.

"This is in addition to the role of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and the strategic depth of Kuwait diplomatically, geographically and culturally, as well as the brothers of fate in the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We do not forget their honorable role in the war to liberate Kuwait from the brutal Iraqi aggression.

"Likewise, the GCC course must be fortified to achieve the unification of foreign, defense and economic policies — a common destiny and unified purpose that binds the citizens of GCC countries.

"The strategic relationship between Kuwait, Britain and the United States of America must be maintained. They are committed to maintaining Kuwaiti and Gulf security and development of security agreements, considering their full knowledge of the real Kuwaiti history, and the intensification of communication with them in all fields and activities of life."

"The healthcare that the State provides to its citizens is neither a favor nor a gift. It is rather a right that the Kuwaiti Constitution guarantees for every citizen. The State must provide health services to citizens inside Kuwait. If a citizen does not find treatment here, the State sponsors his treatment abroad," columnist **Adel Al-Mezel** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"However, if you want to consult a specialist, you have to wait for months or you could go to a private hospital and pay a lot of money. Whoever cannot find it must endure the pain associated with the illness until his appointment with the specialist. If illness strikes you suddenly, you have to go to the clinic first where you wait for your turn in a long line. Then, you get a referral to transfer to the hospital, where you also stand in a long line. Your suffering starts in front of the doctor's office where dozens are gathered, waiting for their turn.

"Once the doctor gives you a prescription, you go to the pharmacy where you will discover that some of the prescribed medicines are not available, so you have to go to a private pharmacy.

"A flaw that surfaced recently must be addressed quickly — limiting the operation of diabetes clinics to the morning period. The Health Ministry must immediately issue a decision to reopen these clinics in the evening.

"I would like to highlight a problem that expatriates face whenever they go to the clinic. They pay KD2.5 for the medicine. If they go to the hospital, they have to pay KD10 for consultation and another KD10 for the medicine, not to mention the fees for blood tests and X-ray. The amount varies depending on the type of test. They have to pay KD2.5 for a sugar level test and another amount for diabetes medicine. We ask the ministry to reduce these fees, considering the conditions of many expatriates.

"I would like to ask the ministry, where are we? Are we not in the country of goodness, grace and oil, yet we do not find some medicines in pharmacies?! How is Kuwait's money distributed to the world when our hospitals suffer from shortage of medicines? Where are those in charge of medicines?"

— Compiled by **Mai Elsoukary**



A fireman fights the fire in the basement.

### 5 tons of stolen 'ration' food items seized

The Ministry of the Interior announced that the personnel from the Criminal Investigation Department from the Capital Governorate have arrested an Asian for stealing and smuggling out of the country state-subsidized food supplies, estimated to be 5 tons, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.

The ministry told the daily, the suspect and the seized foodstuffs have been referred to the compe-

tent authority. An investigation is underway to arrest his accomplices and whoever facilitated the theft.

The Capital City Dept. of the Ministry's General Directorate of Criminal Investigations spotted the man while repacking the stolen foodstuffs in new bags under various brand names before selling them on the local or foreign markets.

The man and other accomplices were referred to investiga-

tors pending taking a legal action against them, according to a statement from the Ministry's General Directorate of Security Relations and Media.

Meanwhile, firefighting teams from the Mangaf and Fahaheel centers were able to put out a fire that broke out in the basement of a building in the Abu Halifa area, without causing any injuries, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.

## Kuwait, Interpol database tied to curb drugs & terror

Infiltration at border posts tackled

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12:** Within the framework of the measures aimed at consolidating security, the Ministry of Interior is moving internationally to protect Kuwait from the dangers of terrorism, organized crime, and drugs, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.

Sources from the ministry revealed the status of Gulf and international terrorism lists within the database of border crossings in Kuwait, in addition to the regional and international coordination to pursue those wanted and convicted of crimes in line with security agreements.

They stressed that all of the country's ports constitute a strong protection wall that cannot be penetrated by terrorist elements or dangerous elements that are wanted by law internationally.

In response to questions about the tasks of the INTERPOL department, the sources said, "During the past three years, the INTERPOL department within the General Department of Criminal Investigation has been interested in a project to link all state outlets with databases of internationally-wanted persons.

Since 2019, Kuwait's outlets have been associated with the INTERPOL database project in order to protect the country from the entry of internationally-wanted persons, including terrorists and other dangerous criminals, as well as terrorists classified by the United Nations."

They explained that this project aims to create a distinct information firewall at the border posts to prevent the entry of any international wanted person to Kuwait.

The INTERPOL administration follows up serious crimes all over the world, and feeds local expertise with the dangerous methods used by criminals, in order to keep pace with all forms of emerging crime, and ensure readiness to face security challenges.

The INTERPOL department also provides information to all local search and investigation agencies and authorities.

The efforts of the Ministry of Interior are continuing at various levels in order to protect Kuwait from the dangers of terrorism, crime and drugs, based on the directives and direct follow-up of the First Deputy Prime Min-

### Mol's vigilance lauded

### Huge cache of drug pills seized

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12:** Personnel from the Directorate-General for Drugs Control foiled an attempt by an unidentified person to smuggle approximately quarter of a million Captagon pills into the country, by concealing them in a vehicle, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.

The Public Relations and Security Media Department the Ministry of Interior Friday underscored that this operation is a testament to the relentless security endeavors undertaken by the criminal security sector.

The statement clarified that both the suspect and the seized contraband are presently being referred to the appropriate authorities for necessary legal actions to be taken. The Ministry emphasized

that security personnel will persist in executing pre-emptive strikes against drug dealers and smugglers, adopting a resolute stance against any threat posed to the youth of the nation.

These endeavors encompass heightened vigilance in search and investigation activities, targeting anyone attempting to benefit from the narcotic substances trade in the country. Such measures are aimed at safeguarding the population against the perils of these hazardous substances.

The Ministry of Interior reiterated its steadfast commitment to its ongoing campaign against drug dealers and promoters to safeguard society from the grave consequences of these perilous narcotics.

ister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khalid.

In this regard, the ministry announced that all the country's ports constitute a strong firewall, which cannot be penetrated by terrorist elements or internationally wanted dangerous elements.

The ministry said, "Since 2019, Kuwait's ports have been linked to the databases of the INTERPOL organization, in order to protect the country from the entry of internationally wanted persons, including terrorists and other dangerous criminals, whose presence constitutes a threat to public safety, as well as terrorists who are classified by the United Nations."

It stated that this project aims to create a distinct information firewall at the border posts to prevent the entry of any international wanted person to Kuwait.

The ministry affirmed that the INTERPOL department follows up serious crimes all over the world, and feeds local expertise with dangerous criminal methods, in order to keep pace with all forms of crime developed, with the aim of improving security and benefiting from the security challenges facing countries of the world, adding that these methods are passed on to all local jurisdictions.

The Ministry of Interior explained that the INTERPOL department is one of the sensitive departments in the nature of its work, given its connection with the follow-up of Gulf Arab and

international police organizations. It was established in 1962 after Kuwait signed the Criminal Exchange Agreement concluded under the umbrella of the League of Arab States.

The INTERPOL department plays a pivotal role in the link between the local police and the police of the countries of the world that are members of these organizations. It also studies the needs of bilateral and multilateral security agreements to recover wanted persons, in addition to directing their implementation in coordination with the Public Prosecution.

It implements agreements related to the transfer of prisoners to and from Kuwait under treaties between countries through the ministries of Foreign Affairs.

The INTERPOL department has a dedicated prosecution office, which is the international cooperation prosecution. It is the commanding authority to issue international circulars in the so-called "international arrest warrant", which the INTERPOL administration implements with its related international entities.

In March, the INTERPOL administration organized a workshop related to combating bioterrorism, in which the Ministry of Health, the Fire Department, scientific research organizations, customs, the Ministry of Defense, the Directorate General of Civil Defense, and others related to the national plan for civil defense participated.

### Weather will 'cool' Aug 24

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12,** (KUNA): High heat in Kuwait is expected to taper off as of August 24 with onset of Shaal star season that would proceed for 52 days and end on October 14, **Al-Ojairi Scientific Center** announced on Saturday.

The center said in a statement to KUNA temperature would substantially drop with rise of Shaal star, adding that it would remain well below the threshold, 50 degrees.

Hot air will dissipate giving way for moderately cool blows, amid incoming humidity and scattered and recurring drizzles.

Shaal star will be seen from Kuwait as of September 4.



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# Indian envoy praises Kuwait's policy of neutrality in region

'High-level visits from both sides to boost ties'

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: The Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Adarsh Swaika affirmed the depth of the bilateral cooperation relations between the two countries, reports Al-Qabas daily.**

Praising Kuwait's pivotal role in various regional issues, he explained that Kuwait has followed a policy of neutrality in the region and has played an important role in the issues related to the Gulf Cooperation Council countries. It is implementing a number of social and economic development projects in many developing countries, especially through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, and is at the forefront of countries in providing humanitarian aid around the world, something that is highly appreciated by the international community.

The ambassador said, "We look forward to high-level visits from both sides to strengthen these historical relations between our two countries due to their importance in providing an opportunity to reach mutual understandings and agreements on important issues."

Regarding the date of the joint committee meeting between the two countries, he indicated that the

date and place have not yet been decided, as it will depend on the visit of any of the foreign ministers of the two countries.

## Consultations

Ambassador Dr. Swaika referred to the steady bilateral consultations held between the foreign ministries of the two countries, such as those held in New Delhi during the first week of May after a gap of almost four years, and the first multilateral consultations between India, Kuwait and the United Nations that were held in the first week of June in Kuwait.

Speaking of security cooperation, he said, "The defense and security relations have so far been limited to training and medical cooperation. Four Indian ships had visited Kuwait in July and October of last year. An Indian warship (ANS Visakhapatnam guided missile destroyer) is expected to visit Kuwait in August."

Commercially, there is growth in economic and trade cooperation between the two countries. Our bilateral trade amounting to USD 13.8 billion for the period 2022-2023 recorded its highest levels ever, with an increase of 12.8 percent on an annual basis. The main potential area of cooperation is in the field of Kuwaiti investments in India, which provides an attractive investment and financial climate."

Highlighting the significant

contribution of the Indian community to the Kuwaiti economy, Ambassador Dr. Swaika explained that the bilateral memorandum of understanding regarding domestic workers was signed in June 2021. A decree was issued by the Kuwaiti side in April 2022 to implement it. The memorandum contains provisions that enumerate the legal rights and obligations of both the employer and the employee. Therefore it is important to adhere to these provisions for both parties.

The proper implementation of the MoU by both sides could lead to resolving most of the problems. The embassy has been keen to disseminate information related to legal immigration procedures, so that Indian nationals who intend to come to work in Kuwait do not fall into the hands of illegal sponsors.

## Skills

The ambassador stressed the keenness of the government of India to work on developing skills among its citizens to enhance their employability in the international labor market, by establishing training programs, and cooperating with the private sector to identify and enhance the required skills.

He indicated that the agreed price for hiring domestic workers was determined, taking into account the minimum wage in Kuwait as per Indian labor requirements.

Ambassador Dr. Swaika explained that the fees for recruiting domestic workers, which are approved by the government-approved employment agency in India, is INR 35,400, which is equivalent to KD 145. There

are separate fees for a clearance certificate (certificate of proof of criminal status) which costs KD 2, and a medical certificate from accredited medical test centers in India at a value of KD 20.

In addition, Ambassador Dr. Swaika said, "Educational and academic cooperation is one area in which we have not been able to harness the synergies between us and Kuwait to a large extent. There are 26 schools in Kuwait that follow the Indian CBSE curriculum with more than 50,000 students of different nationalities. However, the same does not apply to higher education."

## Cooperation

Kuwaiti students have been receiving their higher education in India since as early as 2009-2010, but this seems to be relatively stalled at the present time. We look forward to strengthening cooperation in this field, especially since the Indian education sector has made a real leap."

He affirmed that he considers Kuwait's accession as a partner in the dialogue with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) during the Indian presidency as a welcome step.

The ambassador said, "The area of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has not yet covered any of the countries in the Middle East. The entry of Iran as a full member and the entry of Kuwait and the Arab Emirates will add to the organization's deliberations an essential value."

Most of the discussions in the organization are related to combating terrorism and ensuring regional security, which is also closely related to this region."

## National Day greetings sent

### HH Amir congratulates Chad

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12, (KUNA):** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to General Mahamat Idriss Deby, chairman of Chad's Transitional Military Council, on his country's National Day, wishing him good health and for his country and people progress and prosperity.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Ja-

ber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to General Mahamat Idriss Deby, chairman of Chad's Transitional Military Council, on his country's National Day, wishing him good health.

Also, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to General Mahamat Idriss Deby, chairman of Chad's Transitional Military Council, on his country's National Day.

## MoSA panel studies set of proposals

### Plan eyed to amend conditions of 'national employment' in co-ops

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12:** The Cooperative Work Committee in the Ministry of Social Affairs is studying a set of proposals submitted by the Union of Cooperative Sector Workers to the Minister of Social Affairs, Family Affairs and Childhood Sheikh Firas Al-Malik Al-Sabah, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The proposals, of which the daily obtained a copy, deals with a set of steps to encourage national workers to engage in jobs within cooperative societies and create opportunities for them, and support the approach to modifying the demographics based on the directives of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaleel.

One of the proposals dealt with "developing a plan to amend the conditions of national employment" in cooperative societies, and issuing a work permit for all workers in the cooperative sector, including Kuwaiti retirees, Gulf employees and bedoun, in addition to "non-renewal for those over 60 years", in addition to adopting new job titles in the work permit that are identical to the titles of cooperative societies.

The proposals call for amending the conditions of national workers in cooperative societies, by improving salaries, settling vacancies, distributing them to the departments of soci-

eties in the right way, and creating a suitable work environment for them, which leads to supporting and encouraging national workers to engage in work in the cooperative sector.

The sources spoke of the importance of assigning the administrative controller in cooperative societies to follow up on national labor affairs, which leads to protecting employees from the abuse of some boards of directors in cooperative societies, and obliging societies to implement tasks and duties by assigning all departments and employees to specific work tasks, especially supervisory jobs and providing an appropriate work environment.

This is in addition to stressing the importance of linking the salaries of workers in cooperative societies to the mechanization system at the Ministry of Affairs, to prevent duplication of employment and prevent manipulation of unjustified increases, which causes overburdening of the budget.

According to the plan, work will be done to create job opportunities for national workers, and to involve citizens of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries in social insurance, based on the decisions of the Cooperation Council of 2006 to limit manipulation and duplication.



Al-Fadhli

## Expats health

Continued from Page 1

and America, are suffering from shortage of medicines for several reasons – the most important of which is the disruption of the global supply chain, shortage of raw materials and consequences of the Corona pandemic.

Meanwhile, reliable sources said that studying, evaluating and reviewing the fees for health services provided to expatriates could actually lead to a price hike.

Sources explained this process is delaying the operation of Daman hospitals and implementation of the health insurance law for visitors, which includes reviewing the value of insurance for the segment that continues to use services in the government sector.

The Health Insurance Hospitals Company (Daman) announced the completion of its facilities in February with the readiness to build Jahra and Ahmadi hospitals, as well as five primary health care centers.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the company Thamer Arab revealed at the time: "We have completed the buildings necessary for operation ... Jahra Hospital is a qualitative addition to the sector and its infrastructure."

Earlier, the Ministry of Health confirmed that most countries of the world suffer from a shortage of medicines for several reasons, the most important of which is the disruption of the global supply chain and the shortage of raw materials, in addition to the consequences of the Corona pandemic crisis, reports Al-Rai daily.

The Ministry stated during the Parliamentary Health and Social Affairs Committee, which was held in the presence of the Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadi, that what the health system is going through is not a shortage as much as it is a lack of supply for global reasons.

The ministry stressed it is exerting all efforts to overcome all difficulties to enhance drug security and provide drug alternatives by developing quick and short plans in addition to long-term solutions to avoid any defect in the future, as she requested an exception from the tender law to double contracting with drug suppliers, and increasing contracts, to provide all the requirements for that.

For its part, the Kuwait Medical Association, which participated in the meeting, called for activating and expanding the oversight role on drug suppliers and distributors and tightening penalties for anyone who tampers with drug security.

## Optimize Kuwait

Continued from Page 1

everything that transpired in previous years like the questionable appointments and corruption, how such malpractices affected the rights of people and the operations of institutions, and how they made the country fall into the trap of the game of personal interests. This deliberation resulted in prioritizing three issues.

Sources attributed the wastage of public money to weak laws, some of which were approved in the interest of a certain segment of people. Sources asserted this does not achieve justice, which is a basic aspiration for any country facing challenges, indicating these laws must be revised to protect public money and hold those involved in squandering public money accountable.

Sources emphasized that "the second part focuses on wasting opportunities, and the exodus of capital and entrepreneurs abroad due to bureaucracy and the contradictory decisions of ministries."

For example, the Ministry of Commerce issues a license to an entrepreneur, while the Kuwait Municipality prevents the latter from starting his business or a certain department puts obstacles for reasons that are in the interest of an influential person."

Sources also disclosed that "in neighboring countries, anyone can complete his

transaction at home. He does not go back and forth between ministries. Therefore, the entrepreneurs and owners of capital fled to those countries, where they can enjoy facilities that Kuwait cannot provide.

The higher decision-making circles are disturbed by this matter, and directives were issued to mitigate the exaggeration of conditions and bureaucracy; especially with regard to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that were established in order to revitalize the national economy and guide young people in managing their enterprises in a business environment in which the government, ministries and institutions help them. The decision makers reviewed the accomplishments of neighboring countries in terms of diversifying sources of national income, considering one of them made oil equivalent to 40 percent of national product within five years and it has now reached about 85 percent. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman have surpassed Kuwait in this field, while Kuwait is still dependent on oil – exceeding 93 percent of its income, causing great inconvenience for decision-makers in the process of developing the country."

Sources hinted that "those concerned went back to the era of HH the late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem, specifically how he fairly distributed wealth among citizens and opened the country to everyone in order to contribute to the renaissance of Kuwait." They pointed out that the projects implemented at the time and the achievements until the mid-1980s could be considered the foundation of nation building.

On the localization of capital, sources confirmed that the leadership then deliberated on the entertainment issue. They said the Ministry of Information during that period "was keen on organizing various activities during summer and holidays, as an important source of income and an important tributary of domestic tourism beneficial for both the citizens and expatriates."

The decision-making circles also deliberated for a long time on the 'mass migration' during vacations, holidays and other events."

It is noteworthy that the talk is about stopping the habit of spending holidays abroad due to the absence of recreational activities in the country; which prompted more than 400,000 citizens to travel for short vacations and this means the loss of national product reached unreasonable limits.

Sources said the decision-makers condemned the closure of beaches to the public; indicating this is a negative phenomenon since these beaches are State properties and no one should monopolize them.

On the reform map, sources confirmed that the decision-makers discussed the instability of ministerial positions. "No minister can work at full capacity, while the sword of accountability or dismissal threat is pointed at his neck. Kuwait has had 32 governments, in which more than 20 ministers were either dismissed at the request of some MPs or resigned when they did not find any help from the Council of Ministers during interpellation. Some of them resigned or were expelled within a month or less. Decision-makers are discussing this issue, because of the significance of the stability of the ministerial position; while the confrontation with the MPs must follow the criteria. Ministers have the ability to manage their ministries according to the law. They should not be subjected to threats, especially since they have been instructed to apply the law to the old before the young, and not to return to the policy of deals between ministers and parliamentarians because of the corruption it brought to the country," sources clarified.

In conclusion, sources affirmed "the leadership stresses the need to fully benefit from minds and expertise without being limited to a specific group. In developed countries, governments invest in human resources to develop the national product. They do not rely on 'nepotism' or the 'this is our own mindset', which caused corruption."



# August

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## Forum aims to nurture sense of responsibility among young people: Al-Ansari

## 'Gulf youth volunteering enhances cooperation, experiences exchange'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12, (KUNA): Walid Al-Ansari, Director of the Voluntary Work Department at the Kuwaiti Public Authority for Youth, stated that the Gulf Forum for Youth Volunteering, which concluded its proceedings on Thursday in the Omani city of Salalah, offered an avenue for Gulf youth to share their experiences in volunteer work and foster deeper collaboration among them.

Following the forum's conclusion, Al-Ansari communicated via a phone call with the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA). He emphasized that the forum, launched on August 6th under the theme "Essnad" (Support), aimed at solidifying the culture of volunteering among Gulf youth. It also sought to nurture their sense of responsibility, encourage interaction with others, and showcase exemplary models of youth-driven initiatives.

Al-Ansari pointed out that the forum encompassed a series of workshops and lectures in the domain of volunteering. It featured presentations of prominent volunteer efforts undertaken by youth teams in the humanitarian field. Furthermore, participants engaged in field visits to significant volunteer projects within the city of Salalah.

The Kuwaiti delegation comprised a group of outstanding young individuals who specialize in voluntary work. They played a vital role in enriching the discussions and dialogues during the forum. Their contributions also included presenting exceptional volun-



The head of the delegation, Walid Al-Ansari, with the heads of the participating Gulf delegations at the forum.

teer projects from Kuwait. Al-Ansari underscored the Public Authority for Youth's commitment to involving young people in major external forums across diverse youth-related sectors.

Suleiman Al-Khodari, the leader of Kuwait's Voluntary Response and Rescue team, echoed similar sentiments in a statement to KUNA. He highlighted that forum participation entailed showcasing successful experiences of voluntary initiatives from each Gulf country, to be shared and adopted across nations. The event also served as a platform for exchanging innovative ideas in the realm of volunteering.

Farah Al-Shatti, a young volunteer, conveyed to KUNA that her participation in the forum enriched her understanding of the volunteer field and its diverse facets. She praised the Youth Authority's dedication to supporting young Kuwaiti volunteers and involving them in external forums that aid their personal development and encourage ongoing participation in volunteering efforts.

Notably, the forum constitutes a significant initiative overseen by the General Secretariat of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf. It is conducted annually in the GCC countries on a rotational basis.



KUNA photos Part of the conference activities.

## Kuwaiti students opted to work in co-op not to 'waste' summer time

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12, (KUNA): Kuwaiti high school students have opted not to waste the summer free time choosing to work in cooperative stores.

They have been hired according to a program organized by the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies, aim-

ing to empower the students with some work experience and enhance their confidence in themselves.

The Kuwaiti juniors work for four hours a day in 30 stores. The project is carried out in coordination with the ministry of social affairs, upon guidelines from the government.



KUNA photo High school students participating in summer training.

## Bookings online

## 12 event halls reopen for business

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: Beginning from next week, the official spokesman for the Ministry of Social Affairs and Director of the Public Relations Department, Ahmed Al-Enezi, announced the reopening of event halls for business after undergoing renovation, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Al-Enezi explained, based on direct directives from the Minister of Social Affairs and the Minister of Family and Childhood, Sheikh Firas Al-Sabah, the ministry will allow the reservation of 12 halls for events in the various governorates of the country through the 'Occasion House' application.

He stated that the ministry has completed maintenance work for those halls, while work is underway to complete notes in other halls, to be announced later.

He pointed out that the halls that will be available for reservation, some of them are for women and others for men, as follows: Jahra Governorate - Nahar Al-Baghili Hall - Women; Sheikh Ahmed Sabah Al-Ahmad Hall - Men; in Hawalli Governorate, Sheikh Nasser Saud Al-Sabah Hall (Al-Salmiya Association) for Women, and the Mishref Association Hall for men; in the Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorate, the hall of Al-Qurain weddings was allocated for men, the Sheikh Sabah Al-Jaber (Al-Adan) hall for men, and the Sheikh Badr Al-Muhammad hall for women.

In the Capital Governorate the Hamoud Al-Zaben Hall was allocated for women, and Sheikhan Al-Farsi Hall for men, and in Farwaniya, 3 halls were allocated for men - Al-Harbash Hall, Al-Omariya Association Hall, and Al-Firdous Association Hall.



Star astrolabe workshop.



Interactive workshop for children.

## Kuwait National Library organizes captivating workshops for children

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12, (KUNA): Exciting scenes unfolded at the Kuwait National Library as enthusiastic children dived into a world of discovery through captivating workshops. Organized in collaboration with the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, these workshops were a resounding success.

The workshops brought stories to life, sparked interactive exploration, and

even ventured into the cosmos with an enthralling astronomy session.

Participants learned about the vital task of cleaning coastlines and rescuing trapped creatures. The Kuwaiti diving team added an element of aquatic adventure, and young minds found inspiration in constructing imaginative LEGO creations. The workshops left a trail of excited young learners, eager to embrace the world of science, arts, and teamwork.

## KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait has made significant leaps in the realm of youth empowerment ranking 27th in the Global Youth Development Index, Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Aiban has said.

It dedicates special concern for this segment of the Kuwaiti society, carving out all possible avenues for the youngsters to contribute to Kuwait's development, said Al-Aiban, also Minister of Commerce and Industry, marking the International Youth Day, falling on August 12th yearly.

Upon guidelines by the political leadership, the State puts all available resources at the disposal of attaining the youth aspirations and enabling them to be active at the social, economic, sports, cultural, scientific and artistic levels, he added.

The UN-designated International Youth Day is celebrated this year with the theme,

"Green Skills for Youth: Towards a Sustainable World," the Kuwaiti minister said, noting necessity of enhancing the youth skills for establishing a green economy and attaining a sustainable world.

He expressed confidence that the juniors, particularly in Kuwait, are able to lead their communities toward a sustainable world that is friendly to the environment, also noting in this respect that the Kuwaiti juniors have already left an eye-catching mark in the voluntary field works.

Nevertheless, Minister Al-Aiban affirmed necessity of pooling all efforts to aid the youth and pave the way for them to play a vital role for successful access to a more sustainable globe, equipping them with the skills to cope with the green economy in light of the global climatic crisis.

In line with this approach, the Kuwaiti Authority for Youth has worked out special programs for these citizens to help them attain objectives of the sustainable development, enable them to compete in the work market for sake

of achieving objectives of Neo Kuwait Vision 2035.

He congratulated the young Kuwaitis on this global occasion, re-affirming their key role in Kuwait's development.

The State of Kuwait marks the International Youth Day, designated by the UN in 1999, today (Saturday), having earned an eye-catching stake in boosting the youth potentials and supporting their enterprises.

## Occasion

The renewed occasion is celebrated worldwide under the motto, "Green Skills for Youth: Towards a Sustainable World," for disseminating an education for acknowledging the youngsters' role in attaining a more sustainable globe.

Kuwait, along with other states and stakeholders, is shedding light on the youth initiatives, innovations and pioneering solutions to various issues. The Gulf country has dedicated special concern for empowering the junior citizens as a force for stimulating development.

Kuwait has, indeed, coupled words with action at the level of youth empowerment, establishing during era of the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad



KUNA photo Mohammad Al-Aiban, Minister of State for Youth Affairs.

Al-Jaber Al-Sabah a ministry for running their affairs.

Moreover, the government has worked out a task plan to invest in this segment, establishing three sports com-

plexes, regulating handicrafts for the youth, encouraging them to work in the private sector and involve in sports. In this path, it built a complex for creative industries for launching and incubating start-ups.

The State had established the Public Authority for Youth to intensify the efforts for caring for the young nationals and sharpening their skills for securing a better future for the country. The authority provides them with facilities to create, excel and sharpen their skills.

The youth authority set up a series of programs, launching Kuwait award for distinctiveness and creativity, establishing the youth creativity program, the Kuwait youth council for sake of incubating them and guiding them to invest in time.

Moreover, it seeks to find jobs for the junior citizens, encourage them to work in the private sector in coordination with companies and public welfare societies.

Furthermore, the youth authority organizes educational cultural, scientific activities and facilitates the Kuwaitis' participation in local, Arab and international conferences.

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## oil drops

Kuwait crude oil dropped USD 1.13 to USD 90.16 per barrel on Friday compared with USD 91.29 pb on Thursday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said on Saturday.

Meanwhile, the Brent crude forward transactions edged up by 41 cents to USD 86.81 pb and the West Texas Intermediate followed suit, gaining 37 cents to settle at USD 83.19 pb. (KUNA)

## NAPESCO earns KD 3.8m in H1

The National Petroleum Services Company (NAPESCO) posted KD 3.8 million (approx. USD 11.5 million) worth of net profits in the first six months of 2023, at a growth rate of 29 percent as compared to the earnings recorded in the same period of 2022.

The company said in a statement posted on Boursa Kuwait (the national stock exchange), on Thursday, that earning per share reached 39.5 fils.

National Petroleum Services Company (NAPESCO) was founded in

1993 with an authorized capital of KD 10 million (USD 33 million) as a private company offering pumping services to the Kuwaiti energy sector.

NAPESCO has established itself as a leading provider of upstream oilfield services including cementing, stimulation, coiled tubing, nitrogen and down-hole service tools.

In 2001 the company began offering environmental services and today maintains a leading position within the Gulf region in this realm. (KUNA)

## US, UK sanction Lebanese bank's ex-gov

The US on Thursday imposed sanctions on former governor of the Lebanese central bank Riad Salameh and four of his aides due to alleged unlawful actions.

"Today, the United States, in coordination with the U.K. and Canada, is designating the former governor of Lebanon's central bank, Riad Salameh, and four of his close associates who enriched themselves at the expense of the Lebanese people," US State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller said in a press statement.

"As governor of the Banque du Liban (BdL), Riad Salameh used his office to engage in a variety of unlawful self-enrichment schemes with the help of close family members and associates, ignoring Lebanese law and taking privileges not afforded to average citizens, even as the country sank deeper into financial chaos," he added.

He noted that in doing so, Salameh and his co-conspirators placed their personal financial interests and ambitions above those of the Lebanese people.

## Market Movements

11-08-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts		
UAE	- DFM	+0.38	4,064.31	PHILIPPINES	- PSEi	-0.68	6,405.91
JAPAN	- Nikkei	+0.84	32,473.65	EGYPT	- EGX 30	-0.30	17,710.20
PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	+1.26	48,442.58				
SAUDI	- Tadawul	+1.22	11,424.12				

# Business

## The Conversation

# Losing Fitch's top AAA credit rating may portend future US economic 'weakness'

By Hakan Yilmazkuday

Florida International University

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



The formerly pristine reputation of the U.S. government's debt lost a little more luster after another prominent rating agency demoted Uncle Sam from its AAA perch.

What does a downgrade of U.S. creditworthiness like this actually mean?

While the downgrade is unlikely to have much of an impact in the short term, its implications about the state and size of U.S. indebtedness will likely reverberate on Capitol Hill, where stalled negotiations over the budget could mark a step toward the Biden administration's first government shutdown.

Fitch Ratings' decision on Aug. 1, 2023, led to small declines in the stock and bond markets. But as an economist who studies the effects of monetary and fiscal policies, I've got longer-term concerns about the downgrade's implications for U.S. economic growth.

To understand why, you have to look at both the reasons for Fitch's downgrade and what it means for U.S. borrowing going forward.

Just like people, the federal government has to balance the income it takes in and the money it spends for each fiscal year. Most federal income consists of tax revenue.

Since 2001, that revenue has rarely covered enough of

the costs of everything the U.S. government pays for, from roadways to wars. When federal income falls short, the government fills the gap by borrowing money from investors.

That gap has gotten a lot bigger in recent years as the U.S. has spent trillions fighting COVID-19, contending with financial crises and funding several wars. As of Aug. 1, the U.S. Treasury owed US\$32.6 trillion, both to bondholders and other parts of the federal government.

That's part of the reason that Fitch cut the U.S. government's long-term creditworthiness by one notch, from AAA - its highest rating - to AA+. Fitch also cited an "erosion of governance," specifically pointing to recent efforts by conservatives to prevent the U.S. from raising its debt ceiling.

This was not the first time that a rating agency lowered the credit of the U.S. government.

In 2011, Standard & Poor's, one of Fitch's competitors, also downgraded its rating for the U.S. from AAA to AA+. S&P similarly blamed governance issues - that downgrade followed a similar debt ceiling standoff - as well as the burden of rising government debt.

At the time, Fitch issued a warning but it didn't cut the U.S.'s credit rating until now.

The 2011 episode had no long-term effects on financial markets, including Treasury bonds - meaning investors remained happy to continue lending to the U.S. at favorable rates.

Does that mean Fitch's downgrade will similarly have

little long-term impact? Not necessarily.

Any country seeking to borrow money in perpetuity needs lenders who are happy to lend.

For the U.S., that means it needs a constant supply of buyers for Treasury bonds and the other securities it sells. These securities are sold in auctions and then traded on global financial markets.

Investors of all kinds around the world find Treasuries attractive. They're seen as safe, because the U.S. government is considered less likely to default than, say, a company going bankrupt.

Rating agencies like Fitch assess these risks and periodically adjust their credit rating scores based on their assessment on the ability of the federal government - and other borrowers - to keep up with their debt obligations.

"Repeated debt-limit political standoffs and last-minute resolutions have eroded confidence in fiscal management," Fitch said in its announcement, in a reference to recurring fights among lawmakers over raising the debt ceiling.

But if economists and financial analysts deem Treasury debt to be growing riskier, then investors may become less interested in buying them. Alternatively, they may demand a higher interest rate in exchange for taking on the risk that the U.S. may default on its debts.

So, however the market reacts, I believe that this downgrade reflects the real deterioration of America's fiscal standing as well as its ability to safeguard it.

And as economists and financial analysts decide Treasuries are becoming a riskier security to hold - whether because of the size of overall U.S. debt or because political brinkmanship is making a once-unthinkable default more likely - then investors may become less interested in buying them. Or, at least, they may demand the U.S. pay them more to take on the risk, resulting in higher borrowing costs for the government.

Ultimately, this means there will be less money for everything else the U.S. might want to spend money on - or the overall debt load will rise even faster.

To cover its growing borrowing costs, the federal government has few options - none good.

It can borrow more money, which is seen as riskier - like taking out one loan to pay off another - and could result in an even lower credit rating and a continuous spiral of rising borrowing costs. Or it could hike tax rates or cut spending, both of which have political consequences and could be hard to accomplish given the degree of polarization in Congress.

Furthermore, research has shown that higher government debt is generally associated with lower long-term economic growth, which reinforces the problem by reducing revenue and thus requiring more debt.

So, while Fitch's downgrade doesn't signal an imminent financial crisis, it does serve as a warning as Congress engages in its fiscal fights - including the one over the budget that will heat up in September. (AP)

# WS swings after inflation data, ends little changed

## Asian stocks decline

**NEW YORK, Aug 12, (AP):** Stocks swung through shaky trading Thursday following the latest update on inflation across the U.S., only to end up roughly where they started.

The S&P 500 edged up by 1.12, or less than 0.1%, to 4,468.83. It was just the second winning day for the index in the last eight, but it had been up 1.3% in the morning before wobbling between small gains and losses.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 52.79, or 0.2%, to 35,176.15 after giving up most of a morning gain of 455 points. The Nasdaq composite added 15.97, or 0.1%, to 13,737.99.

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

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

Such hopes helped the S&P 500 rally a big 19.5% through the first seven months of the year. But critics have been saying Wall Street latched too quickly and forcefully onto a belief that inflation will continue to cool, the economy will avoid a recession and the Fed has already hiked rates for the final time this cycle. Several economists said again on Thursday that future moves by the Fed are still uncertain, tamping down some enthusiasms.

The Fed has said it will make upcoming decisions on rates based on what data reports say, particularly those on inflation and the job market. Its main interest rate is already at its highest level in more than two decades. Thursday's report likely gives the Fed a reason to hold rates steady at its next meeting in September, before it gets more economic data in the runup to the following meeting that ends Nov. 1, according to Gargi Chaudhuri, head of iShares Investment Strategy, Americas.

"Separating the signal from the noise, most of the components of inflation

## Kuwait requires \$90 per barrel to break even

### A balanced budget is OPEC-Plus' next challenge

By Kamel Al-Harami

Independent Oil Analyst

THE challenge currently facing OPEC+ is how to balance its future budgets without deficits.

In our case in Kuwait, the number needed for a breakeven is \$90 per barrel. Once this figure is achieved, it means we can fulfill all of our requirements during our fiscal year without any interruptions to our government's plans.

Oil prices must reach this level and continue well into next year, or at least until the end of March 2024. With the current rate of expenditure standing at KD 26 billion, it is the highest and biggest jump from previous years. Kuwait's crude oil production is 2.55 million barrels per day; any number below that will cause us a big deficit of maybe KD four billion.

So far this year, the oil prices are within the range of \$70-\$75 per barrel, unlike last year when it was less by \$20 per barrel, making it difficult for oil producing countries to enjoy surplus cash and funds. It was an awesome year indeed.

Also, the oil market is facing a new challenge this year, as the demand is still uncertain. Dependence on China's growth is fading, causing weakness in the demand for oil, and higher interest rates.

The ongoing Russian war and occupation of some parts of Ukraine, followed by the boycotting of its oil by G7 countries, did not result in higher prices as expected. It had an impact last year, but the oil consuming countries are getting used to it.

Now the oil consuming countries are waiting for the winter season in order to witness any impact on the supply of energy, or any shortage. They are counting on some further surge in oil prices, or for the continuation of the current hardening of the oil price, which is heading towards \$100 per barrel.

The question that all are waiting for is related to when OPEC+ will decide to relax its production cuts and move towards relaxing its grip on oil supply, as part of stabilizing the oil prices, and maintaining a balanced budget objective by the end of the year for

its members.

As with most oil producing countries, the main concerns are related to having an oil income that satisfies their governments and avoiding embarrassing questions.

We must highlight the importance of a balanced budget along with ongoing oil prices. It is an occurring annual fact for most OPEC+ members especially those highly dependent on oil revenues and without any real alternative at hand.

Today, the oil prices stand at \$86 per barrel, which can help some of the OPEC+ members, while the rest need more than \$90 and even \$130 per barrel. We therefore still have a long way to go to reach such a level. Nevertheless, we as OPEC+ need to

review and look at our annual expenses, and determine what action must be taken to minimize the ongoing increase in our annual budgets.

The other alternative or choice is to quickly find a new stream of income by finding the real and valid alternative rather than depending solely on oil cash flow. We know some of the GCC countries are doing this. The United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia have recently been doing exactly this and searching for alternatives to oil and gas or fossil fuels.

We in Kuwait should start copying our neighbors soon. The current level of oil price is not far from other GCC countries. Even though we have a smaller population, our expenses are increasing for no reason, as more than 85 percent of our budget goes for salaries and benefits.

The time has come to wake up to the real world and look at ourselves in the mirror.

OPEC+ is facing hard objectives in balancing its annual budgets with a breakeven figure for the oil price. Maybe it is worth persuading on a long-term basis, provided it can justify to its consumers.

It will be a hard task, but a feasible one.  
email: [nafikuwaiti@yahoo.com](mailto:nafikuwaiti@yahoo.com)

## Asia

Asian stock markets declined Friday after U.S. inflation edged higher, fueling unease about the outlook for the biggest global economy.

Shanghai, Hong Kong and Sydney declined. Japanese markets were closed for a holiday. Oil prices edged lower.

The Shanghai Composite Index lost 0.7% to 3,231.05 and the Hang Seng in Hong Kong fell 0.6% to 19,131.11.

The Kospi in Seoul gained less than 0.1% to 2,602.31 while Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 sank 0.2% to 7,344.60. Bangkok gained while New Zealand

and other Southeast Asian markets declined.

## Oil

In energy markets, benchmark U.S. crude lost 6 cents to \$82.76 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract fell \$1.58 on Thursday to \$82.82. Brent crude, the price basis for international oil trading, lost 5 cents to \$86.35 per barrel in London. It declined \$1.15 the previous session to \$86.40.

## Currencies

The dollar was unchanged at 144.72 yen. The euro held steady at \$1.0990.

## 'From eggs to electronics...'

# Consumer inflation eased its grip on US households in July

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

The inflation data the government reported Thursday showed that overall consumer prices rose 3.2% from a year earlier. That was up from a 3% annual rise in June, which was the lowest rate in more than two years. The latest figure remained far below last year's peak of 9.1%, though still above the Fed's 2% inflation target.

The Fed, economists and investors, though, pay particular attention to core inflation figures for signs of where price pressures might be headed. From June to July, core inflation remained a tame 0.2%, thanks to easing prices for such items as used vehicles and electronics. And compared with 12 months earlier, core prices rose 4.7% in July, the smallest such increase since October 2021.

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

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

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

Food prices, which have pressured Americans' budgets for more than two years, rose a mild 0.2% from June to July. Eggs, meat, beer and dairy products all declined in price, though food is still up 4.9% over the past 12 months. Also falling in July were prices of televisions, audio equipment and pet food.

Energy costs rose just 0.1%. Modestly higher gasoline prices were offset by falling electricity prices.

Used-vehicle prices fell for a second straight month, dipping 1.3% from June and 5.6% from a year ago. Those prices had surged last year as a shortage of computer chips disrupted production of new vehicles, forcing more buyers into the used market. The chip shortage has eased, and new-car production has rebounded, thereby reducing demand for used cars and trucks.

On a three-month basis, consumer inflation was an annualized 1.9% from May through July, the slowest such pace in three years. Some economists prefer the three-month figure because it captures inflation trends with less volatility than the month-to-month figures.

Economists say that in the Fed's fight to conquer inflation, the easy

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

Much of the inflationary surge that began in 2021 was caused by clogged supply chains: Ports, factories and freight yards were overwhelmed by the explosive economic rebound from the pandemic recession of 2020. The result was delays, parts shortages and higher prices. But supply-chain backlogs have eased in the past year, sharply reducing upward pressure on goods prices. Prices of long-lasting manufactured goods actually dipped in June.

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

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

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

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

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

Many Americans continue to feel under pressure from higher prices.

"There are some things you can stop buying or slow down on buying," said Mark Dye of Port St. Lucie, Florida. "The cost of junk food has gone outrageously high. It's \$5, \$6 for a bag of chips. And I just think that is ridiculous. And then we pay even more for the healthy stuff."

Likewise, Richard Priedits of Grand Rapids, Michigan, said he's noticed higher costs during his annual vacation out West.

"We are using credit cards a lot more," he said as he stopped at the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area in Nevada. "The hotel was probably about \$100 more ... We filled up the tank this morning. It was like \$90."







## BUSINESS



KFH officials attending to customers at The Avenues.

### KFH demonstrates 'Your Card..Your Dreams Gate' campaign benefits

As part of promoting its customer care and offering unique benefits and banking experience, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has demonstrated the benefits of its recently launched campaign with VISA; (Your Card..Your Dreams Gate) at the Avenues mall to customers and visitors.

The campaign offers 15 customers the opportunity to win their dream trip through three monthly draws during the campaign period.

Each winner will have a complete travel package consisting of:

- Round trip ticket on Business or an equivalent class for international flights to the selected destination.
- Accommodation in a 5-star, or equivalent hotel.
- One companion.

- Transportation from and to the airport.
- Pocket money amounting to K.D 2,000.
- Variety of activities during the trip (available for some destinations).

KFH also allows the winners to pick their preferred travel destinations available which are:

- Japan.
- India (Delhi, Jaipur, Udaipur, Mumbai).
- USA, Mexico & Cuba (New York, Cancun, Havana, Miami).
- Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand (Bali, Singapore, Koh Samui, Bangkok).
- Maldives.
- England (Manchester, London).

- South Africa (Johannesburg, Kruger National Park, Cape Town).
- Egypt (Alexandria, Sharm El Sheikh).
- Austria and Switzerland (Zurich, St. Moritz, Geneva).

The campaign will continue until September 18th, during which all KFH Visa debit, credit and prepaid cardholders can qualify for the draw for every purchase transaction of K.D 1 and more.

KFH Visa credit or prepaid cardholder gets one chance to qualify for the draw for every K.D 1 spent on local purchasing transactions, or e-commerce transactions in the Kuwaiti dinar currency, and ten chances for every K.D 1 spent on international purchasing transactions, or e-commerce transactions made in foreign currencies.

### Enhancing practical skills in a dynamic work environment

## stc's ongoing efforts to empower students through its internship programs

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced its continuous efforts to progressively enhance and strengthen its internship program, which has been largely successful in attracting top talent that align with the Company's dynamic environment. These programs have played a pivotal role in stc's leading position in Kuwait's competitive telecom market, while offering aspiring students and recent graduates a valuable opportunity to gain practical experience that will significantly contribute to their future careers.

As part of its commitment to nurturing talent and fostering growth, stc has consistently focused on providing exceptional internship opportunities under "upgrade" initiative, which serves as a platform dedicated to stc's contributions towards the education sector. The

Company's internship programs have proven to be highly effective in attracting candidates who possess the right skill sets and mindset to excel in stc's fast-paced market. Interns are assigned to different departments based on their academic backgrounds, where they are placed in challenging environments that enable them to showcase their true capabilities. stc organizes such programs throughout the years and has achieved a high success rate in hiring interns that have shown outstanding performance throughout their training period.

Engineer Ahmad Al-Hammad, Chief Human Resources Officer of stc, emphasized the Company's continuous commitment to supporting the education sector, while empowering students and recent graduates. He stated, "At stc, we understand and value the importance of providing students from diverse disciplines with opportunities to gain valuable industry knowledge and hands-on work experience. Our com-



A group photo featuring Ahmed Al-Hammad, Dana Al-Jasem, and Maryam Al-Kindi, the former trainee who recently joined stc's corporate communications department.

prehensive internship programs equip students with the skills and practical experience necessary for their profes-

sional growth and success within the industry and beyond. Additionally, we focus on challenging our interns to

think outside the box and navigate various situations that would foster their problem-solving skills and develop their ability to adapt to a rapidly evolving industry."

stc takes great pride in the success stories that have emerged from its internship program. By attracting and nurturing talented individuals, the Company is making a significant contribution to the development of Kuwait's workforce. The internship program also aligns with stc's ongoing pursuit of attracting the best talent to drive innovation and growth in the telecommunications and digital solutions sectors.

Al-Hammad added, "We are immensely proud of the success we have achieved through our internship programs. The calibre of talent we have attracted has been exceptional, and they have seamlessly integrated into our dynamic work environment. The internships have provided us with a pool of skilled professionals who bring fresh perspectives and ideas to the table,

contributing to our ongoing success in Kuwait's telecom market."

stc's internship programs are open to university students and recent graduates who demonstrate outstanding academic performance and a strong commitment to personal and professional development. The programs provide participants with an opportunity to enhance their competencies, develop effective time management skills, and gain a superior understanding of the job environment. Upon successful completion of the program, interns receive a certificate of achievement and may have the opportunity to pursue permanent career positions based on their performance.

To find out more about stc's events, promotions, and sponsorships, follow stc's official social media platforms, visit one of stc's branches, download mystc mobile application, visit [www.stc.som.kw](http://www.stc.som.kw) or contact the customer service center by dialing 102 for around the clock assistance.

## Gulf Bank educates customers about the appropriate savings, investment channels

In support of the Diraya 'Let's Be Aware' campaign

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: As part of its social responsibility to promote financial literacy across various segments of society, Gulf Bank is introducing its customers to the appropriate savings and investment channels, through its social media platforms, website and various media outlets.

For the third consecutive year, Gulf Bank is continuing to support and actively participate in the Diraya "Let's Be Aware" campaign, which is initiated by the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Kuwait Banking Association. Diraya is an awareness campaign that aims to spread financial literacy in society, raise awareness of the role of the banking sector, and promote the various services that bank offer to their customers.

Elaborating on the process of saving and investing, Gulf Bank's Corporate Communications Officer, Mr. Abdul Mohsen Al-Nassar, explained that saving is about reserving a sum of money for later use, while investing is allocating an amount of money, and placing it in a product or service for the purpose of obtaining profits. AlNassar further



Gulf Bank's Corporate Communications Officer, Abdul Mohsen Al-Nassar

indicated that Kuwaiti banks provide customers with various safe investment products and services, that can help them manage their investments and increase their returns. Some of the investment products and services include:

Deposits and Investment Funds  
A deposit is a sum of money installed by the customer in an account with a bank wherein the bank keeps the deposit and invests it to achieve returns on the deposit amount over a certain period of time. The customer has the right to recover the initial deposit amount after the period specified in the deposit contract.

Investment Fund on the other hand,

is a common investment tool that allows clients' finances to be invested in order to achieve profits. The fund is managed by a manager specialized in this role (for a set fee). The investment funds of banks are subject to the supervision and licensing of the Capital Markets Authority.

Investment Savings Accounts

A savings account is an account in which the customer deposits the amounts they wish to save at a bank, with the bank investing the amount and depositing its returns into the same account after a specific period of time. The difference between an investment savings account and a deposit, is that clients can typically withdraw and deposit into the account at any given time.

Furthermore, AlNassar pointed that Gulf Bank's WISE Investments is a digital investment platform that provides many investment advantages in global markets safely, easily, transparently, and at relatively low cost. WISE Investments enables investors to achieve their investment and saving goals through a service which customizes investment portfolios for clients based on their financial goals and allows clients to access their investments anywhere, and anytime, assisting investors in attaining their financial goals and growing their wealth.

Moreover, AlNassar mentioned that

Gulf Bank also provides customers with the option of opening and depositing into an AlDanah account, the most rewarding savings account in Kuwait since 1998. Gulf Bank's AlDanah account offers monthly opportunities to win KD 1,000 to ten lucky winners, in addition to two quarterly draws with KD 100,000 prizes each, a semi-annual draw prize of KD 1 million and a grand draw prize of KD 2 million. Additionally, he noted that last chance and date to deposit and participate in the annual grand draw is September 30, 2023.

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. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience.

Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining robust developments in sustainability at environmental, social and governance levels through diverse sustainability initiatives, strategically selected to benefit the Bank both internally and externally. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it.

### Success for 'Dar Al Arkan Real Estate Devt'

'Warba' announces the successful closing of sukuk offering of \$600m

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: Warba Bank announced the closing of the Dar Al-Arkan Real Estate Development Company's USD 600 million sukuk offering, with which found both regional and global success, at a value of USD 600 million. The issuance was launched in cooperation with Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank, Al Khair Capital (Dubai), Al Rayan Investments, Commercial Bank of Dubai, Emirates NBD Capital, First Abu Dhabi Bank, JPMorgan, Mashreq Bank, Sharjah Islamic Bank and Standard Chartered Bank. The issuance, which began receiving applications for subscription opened its books on Tuesday, July 18, 2023 and closed on the same day, received great interest from regional and international market participants, as the order book amounted to reached USD 1.64 billion and 2.7x the issuance size.

The Bank said in a press statement that this issuance is the ninth tranche of Dar Al-Arkan Real Estate Development Company's Islamic sukuk program denominated in US dollars, with a value of USD 2.5 billion. These sukuk will be listed on the international stock market of the London Stock Exchange and Nasdaq Dubai.

In this context, Thuwaini Khalid Al-Thuwaini, Chief Investment Banking Officer at Warba Bank, said, "With the confidence of investors the market in hand, we succeeded in participating in covering closing the sukuk issuance amid excellent market participation and reaction, which is a testament to Warba Bank's strategic foresight and collaboration. It's a victory that reflects not only the strength of the offering but also the pulse of the market's confidence and of sukuk at a great value, which confirms the global and regional reputation



Thuwaini Khalid Al-Thuwaini

that Warba Bank enjoys as a result of its remarkable achievements over the past years on different levels, noting that the success of "Warba enthusiasm," in completing this issuance is clear evidence of the Bank's strong credit position, the solidity of its financial position, and the prestigious position it enjoys with regional and international investors, in addition to the efficiency of its operations and the excellence and reliability achieved by the Bank's performance as one of the most prominent banking groups in the region."

Al-Thuwaini pointed out the importance of Islamic financing tools and their role in strengthening global financial markets, which is confirmed evidenced by the level of demand and interest of global investors from all over the world to subscribe to sukuk deals recently in recent sukuk issued by Gulf companies and banks regional corporates and banking institutions. He stressed the importance of the sukuk product as one of the important financing tools in the global markets.

## KIB announces winners of the 'Cruise the World' prize

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) held the first draw of its special 'Surprises for Every Season' campaign, announcing five winners of the 'Cruise the World' prize for the month of July.

The lucky winners are Ali Mubarak Ali Hadi Alshehri, Mamdouh AbdulhadiMohammad Abdulhadi, Ali Ahmad Mohammad Al-Kandari, Najwa Marafie, and Aly Alseehan. The campaign is one of the many ways the Bank is enhancing its customers' banking experience, along with a wide range of exclusive offers, benefits, and prizes throughout the year.

Commenting on the occasion, Khalid Al Hulaibi, Segments Manager at KIB, said: "We are delighted to congratulate the lucky winners of this unique prize, and we wish them a safe journey full of enjoyable experiences. We also want to stress our keenness to offer our Visa cardholders exceptional benefits and experiences that exceed their expectations and fulfill their needs all year long." He added: "This campaign reflects our ongoing commitment to provide an advanced banking experience. Through our cooperation with Visa, we will continue to present our customers with exclusive

prizes and campaigns that offer unparalleled benefits and special promotions designed just for them, all stemming from our main 'Bank for Life' slogan."

"As digital – especially contactless – payments continue to grow in popularity across Kuwait, it is exciting to see promotions like KIB's 'Surprises for Every Season' campaign that reward Visa cardholders and support local businesses. Congratulations to all the winners and I look forward to more valuable partnerships with KIB that support the local government's cashless agenda and efforts to extend the benefits of digital commerce to more consumers and businesses in Kuwait," said Artii Thannki, Head of Fintechs and Partnerships for Kuwait & Qatar – Visa.

The 'Cruise the World with KIB' prize, which comprises a 7-night cruise around European countries for two people on board one of the luxurious Royal Caribbean ships, is the first of the Bank's campaign surprises. To this end, the Bank has in store a great line-up of spectacular prizes for its second draw based on customers' transactions throughout August. The draw, which is set to be held in September, will see one customer winning a SuperJet from Yamaha and another customer receiving four fully paid round-trip tickets to Abu Dhabi and Yas Island. The latter will also win an additional four tickets to access two of Abu Dhabi's best theme parks, including Ferrari World, Sea World, Yas Waterworld, and Warner Bros World. Meanwhile, another three customers will secure a fun-filled, entertaining weekend chalet stay in Kuwait.

The 'Surprises for Every Season' campaign launched with new prizes every month enables all customers who carry KIB Visa credit, prepaid, or debit cards to qualify for the draws automatically without the need to sign up.



Khalid Al Hulaibi



Artii Thannki



Top and above photos from the event

### LuLu Hypermarket holds Indian Independence Day promotion

LuLu Hypermarket, the leading retailer in the region, holds a week-long 'Independence Day' promotion to celebrate Indian Independence Day which falls on August 15.

The promotion, which runs from Aug 9-15 was inaugurated at the Al-Rai outlet of the hypermarket on August 10 by Indian Ambassador H.E. Adarsh Swaika, along with top management of LuLu Kuwait, and representatives of main sponsors of the event.

The inauguration featured a lively traditional music band, as well as colorful cultural performances by students of Indian schools in the country that highlighted the vibrancy and diversity of Indian culture. A special live painting exhibition held on the occasion displayed the amazing creativity and artistic talent of Indian artists in Kuwait. Ambassador Swaika handed mementos to the artists for their brilliant efforts in showcasing

Indian art. The week-long promotion provides shoppers with amazing discounts and offers on a wide range of Indian branded products, including groceries, fresh and frozen meat, fruits, and vegetables, as well as on non-food items, health and beauty products.

Large cutouts and images of historic Indian monuments and landmarks, in addition to displays around the theme of 'Future India'

lined the foyer of the hypermarket to mark the event's patriotic spirit. The creative displays also paid homage to India's rich and ancient heritage, as well as its modern achievements. A stand-out attraction that uniquely captured India's space exploration achievements was an innovative model of Indian spacecraft 'Chandrayaan 3', which is aiming for a soft landing on the moon next week.



**SC blocks Purdue Pharma's bankruptcy deal**

The US Supreme Court on Thursday temporarily blocked a nationwide settlement with OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma that would shield members of the Sackler family who own the company from civil lawsuits over the toll of opioids.

The justices agreed to a request from the Biden administration to put the brakes on an agreement reached last year with state and local govern-

ments. In addition, the high court will hear arguments before the end of the year over whether the settlement can proceed.

The deal would allow the company to emerge from bankruptcy as a different entity, with its profits used to fight the opioid epidemic. Members of the Sackler family would contribute up to \$6 billion.

But a key component of the agreement would shield family

members, who are not seeking bankruptcy protection as individuals, from lawsuits.

The US Bankruptcy Trustee, represented by the Justice Department, opposes releasing the Sackler family from legal liability.

The justices directed the parties to address whether bankruptcy law authorizes a blanket shield from lawsuits filed by all opioid victims. (AP)

**S'pore solar plans major plant in New Mexico**

Singapore-based Maxeon Solar Technologies plans to build a major solar panel manufacturing plant in Albuquerque, pending approval of a loan application with the US Department of Energy, the company announced Thursday.

The factory would employ about 1,800 people to provide photovoltaic solar panels for use in residential, commercial and utility-scale solar arrays.

Maxeon said the plant would be larger than any comparable existing facility in the U.S., equipped to produce panels each year that can generate three gigawatts of electricity.

A company representative said that's enough to equip about 460,000 typical US homes with solar power.

About six gigawatts of solar panels were installed nationwide

in the first three months of 2023, according to the Solar Energy Industries Association.

The proposed solar plant in the southern reaches of Albuquerque would include solar-cell fabrication, panel assembly and warehouse facilities, along with administrative offices.

Maxeon Solar emerged in 2020 as a spun-off company from the residential solar provider SunPower Corp. (AP)

**US probing Virginia fatal crash involving Tesla**

**2 rival robotaxi services win approval to operate in San Francisco**

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug 12, (AP) - California regulators on Thursday approved an expansion that will allow two rival robotaxi services to operate throughout San Francisco at all hours, despite safety worries spurred by recurring problems with unexpected stops and other erratic behavior that resulted in unmanned vehicles blocking traffic, including emergency vehicles.

The state's Public Utilities Commission voted to approve rival services from Cruise and Waymo to operate around-the-clock service. It will make San Francisco first major US city with two fleets of driverless vehicles competing for passengers against ride-hailing and taxi services dependent on humans to operate the cars.

similar services in other congested cities that would benefit from a technology that they contend will be more reliable, convenient and cheaper than ride-hailing and taxi services reliant on human drivers.

During five-and-half hours of public comments at Thursday's meeting, many speakers derided the robotaxis as annoying nuisances at best and dangerous menaces at worst. Others vented their frustration about San Francisco being transformed into a "tech playground" and the equivalent of an "ant farm" for haphazard experimentation.

the streets of San Francisco.

The rising fears about the safety of the robotaxis had come into sharper focus during a preliminary hearing Monday that included a sobering appearance by San Francisco Fire Department Chief Jeanine Nicholson, who warned regulators that the robotaxis had been repeatedly undermining firefighters' ability to respond to emergencies.

To underscore her point, Nicholson cited 55 written reports of the robotaxis interfering with emergency responses. She said she is worried the problems will get worse if Cruise and Waymo are allowed to operate their services wherever and whenever they want in San Francisco - raising the risk of their disruptions resulting in injury, death or the loss of property that could have been saved.



A Waymo driverless taxi stops on a street in San Francisco for several minutes because the back door was not completely shut, while traffic backs up behind it, on Feb. 15, 2023. (AP)

warned of potentially dire consequences if Cruise and Waymo are allowed to expand throughout the city. Tracy McCray, the union president, cited a robotaxi obstructing emergency vehicles responding to a recent mass shooting that injured nine people as a chilling example of how the technology could imperil the public.

**Also:**

**DETROIT:** US auto safety regulators have sent a team to investigate a fatal crash in Virginia involving a Tesla suspected of running on a partially automated driving system.

The latest crash, which occurred in July, brings to 35 the number of Tesla crashes under investigation by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration since June of 2016. In all the cases, the agency suspects the Teslas were operating on a partially automated driving system such as Autopilot. At least 17 people have died.

The safety agency said in documents Thursday that the Tesla ran beneath a heavy truck, but gave no further details.

The Fauquier County Sheriff's office in Virginia said in a statement that on July 19, a Tesla ran underneath the side of a tractor-trailer pulling out of a truck stop, killing the Tesla driver. The department says the truck driver was charged with reckless driving.

Supporters of the robotaxis also stepped up to passionately defend the technology as a leap forward that will keep San Francisco on the cutting edge of technology, while helping more disabled people who are unable to drive to get around town and reducing the risks posed by drunk driving. One speaker predicted that unleashing the robotaxis would create a tourist attraction that could become as popular as rides on the fabled cable cars that have been navigating the city's streets for 150 years.

Waymo says there is so much interest in its robotaxis that it has already built up a waiting list of more than 100,000 people vying to take a driverless ride through

The Public Utilities Commission still decided to approve the expansion by a 3-1 vote. Although the panel consists of five commissioners, only four voted on the proposed robotaxi expansion. Commissioner Karen Douglas was absent from Thursday's hearing for an undisclosed reason.

Both Cruise and Waymo cited their unblemished safety records as proof their robotaxis are less dangerous than vehicles operated by people who can be distracted, intoxicated or just lousy drivers.

Cruise has been currently testing 300 robotaxis during the day when it can only give rides for free, and 100 robotaxis at night when it has been allowed to charge for rides in less congested parts of San Francisco for the past 14 months. Waymo has been operating about 100 of the 250 robotaxis it has available to give free rides to volunteers and employees throughout San Francisco.

But the proposed San Francisco expansion has been facing increasingly

staunch resistance, prompting regulators to postpone two previously scheduled votes on the issue in June and July.

In a May 31 letter urging state regulators to continue to restrict the operations of Cruise and Waymo, San Francisco transportation officials asserted the driverless vehicles rely on a "developmental technology that is not ready for unconstrained commercial deployment."

In a June 22 letter, the president of the union for San Francisco police officers

**AI-driven cost management**

**Unravel Data launches Cloud data cost observability, optimization for BigQuery**

PALO ALTO, Calif., Aug 12: Unravel Data, the first AI-enabled data observability and FinOps platform built to address the speed and scale of modern data platforms, has announced the release of Unravel 4.8.1, enabling Google Cloud BigQuery customers to see and better manage their cloud data costs by understanding specific cost drivers, allocation insights, and performance and cost optimization of SQL queries. This launch comes on the heels of the recent BigQuery pricing model change that replaced flat-rate and flex slot pricing with three new pricing tiers, and will help BigQuery customers to implement FinOps in real-time to select the right new pricing plan based on their usage, and maximize workloads for greater return on cloud data investments.

MineMind to save time, money

**US Steel builds gen AI tool to improve its productivity**

PITTSBURGH, Aug 12: United States Steel Corporation (NYSE: X) ("U. S. Steel") and Google Cloud has announced a new collaboration to build applications using Google Cloud's generative artificial intelligence ("gen AI") technology to drive efficiencies and improve employee experiences in the largest iron ore mine in North America. As a leading manufacturer engaging in gen AI with Google Cloud, U. S. Steel continues to advance its more than 100-year legacy of innovation.

Minnesota Ore Operations facilities, Minntac and Keetac.

When fully operational, MineMind will allow a U. S. Steel technician to reduce the amount of time to complete a work order by an estimated 20%. For example, the application will assist maintenance crews by guiding them through truck repairs, ordering parts and distilling complex information. The application also provides comprehensive references, providing detailed, verified source information to ensure accuracy.

The first gen AI-driven application that U. S. Steel will launch is called MineMind which aims to simplify equipment maintenance by providing optimal solutions for mechanical problems, saving time and money, and ultimately improving productivity. Underpinned by Google Cloud's AI technology like Document AI and Vertex AI, MineMind™ is expected to not only improve the maintenance team's experience by more easily bringing the information they need to their fingertips, but also save costs from more efficient use of technicians' time and better maintained trucks. The initial phase of the launch will begin in September and will impact more than 60 haul trucks at U. S. Steel's

"We've meaningfully accelerated digitization at U. S. Steel through our work with Google Cloud. Faster repair times, less down time, and more satisfying work for our techs are only some of the many benefits we expect with generative AI," said David Burritt, president and CEO of U. S. Steel. "I'm thrilled that the U. S. Steel team is a manufacturing leader in this work."

U. S. Steel has been utilizing innovative technologies throughout their history across its mines and mills; however, this is the Company's first generative AI application. U. S. Steel has used machine learning, vision processing and natural language processing to reduce its energy usage and bolster the Company's "safety first" values, among other applications.

**Recommendations**

Unravel's purpose-built AI for BigQuery delivers insights based on Unravel's deep observability of the job, user, and code level to supply AI-driven cost optimization recommendations for slots and SQL queries, including slot provisioning, query duration, autoscaling efficiencies, and more. With Unravel, BigQuery users can speed cloud transformation initiatives by having real-time cost visibility, predictive spend forecasting, and performance insights for their workloads. BigQuery customers can also use Unravel to customize dashboards and alerts with easy-to-use widgets that offer insights on spend, performance, and unit economics.

"As AI continues to drive exponential data usage, companies are facing more problems with broken pipelines and inefficient data processing which slows time to business value and adds to the exploding cloud data bills. Today, most organizations do not have the visibility into cloud data spend or ways to optimize data pipelines and workloads to lower spend and mitigate problems," said Kunal Agarwal, CEO and Co-founder, Unravel Data. "With Unravel's built-in AI, BigQuery users have data observability and FinOps in one solu-

tion to increase data pipeline reliability and cost efficiency so that businesses can bring even more workloads to the cloud for the same spend."

"Enterprises are increasingly concerned about lack of visibility into and control of their cloud-related costs, especially for cloud-based analytics projects," says Kevin Petrie, VP of Research at The Eckerson Group. "By implementing FinOps programs, they can predict, measure, monitor, optimize and account for cloud-related costs related to data and analytics projects."

At the core of Unravel Data's platform is its AI-powered Insights Engine, purpose-built for data platforms, which understands all the intricacies and complexities of each modern data platform and the supporting infrastructure to optimize efficiency and performance. The Insights Engine ingests and interprets the continuous millions of ongoing metadata streams to provide real-time insights into application and system

performance, and recommendations to optimize costs and performance for operational and financial efficiencies.

Unravel 4.8.1 includes additional features, such as:

- Recommendations for baseline and max setting for reservations
- Scheduling insights for recurring jobs
- SQL insights and anti-patterns
- Recommendations for custom quotas for projects and users
- Top-K projects, users, and jobs
- Showback by compute and storage types, services, pricing plans, etc.
- Chargeback by projects and users
- Out-of-the-box and custom alerts and dashboards
- Project/Job views of insights and details
- Side-by-side job comparisons
- Data KPIs, metrics, and insights such as size and number of tables and partitions, access by jobs, hot/warm/cold tables

**'Tech curbs will hurt global supply'**

**China accuses US of trying to block its 'development'**

BEIJING, Aug 12, (AP) - China accused Washington on Thursday of trying to block its development after President Joe Biden stepped up a feud over technology and security by tightening controls on US investments that might help Beijing develop its military.

**Strategic partnership**

**Qraft, LG explore potential of AI-driven solution in finance**

SEOUL, South Korea, Aug 12: Qraft Technologies, a leading invest-tech company developing artificial intelligence solutions, has formally entered into a strategic technology research partnership with LG AI Research, an artificial intelligence research hub of LG group, with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding ("MoU").

Kyunghoon Bae, Chief of LG AI Research, said, "LG already demonstrated its forecasting technologies on demand forecasting of a global company, and such forecasting models can be valuable tools for the corporate decision-making processes. The partnership with Qraft represents another significant stride toward its application in diverse fields including the stock market."

**Solutions**

Through this partnership, Qraft and LG AI Research intend to collaborate on exploring new ways to leverage both firms' unique and cutting-edge approaches to big data processing and artificial intelligence capabilities.

"Embarking on this partnership with LG AI Research is an honor for Qraft," remarks Marcus Kim, Founder and CEO of Qraft. "LG AI Research is a leading AI research company thriving to make our lives better through advancing state-of-the-art AI technologies. LG AI Research's mission perfectly aligns with our mission at Qraft: Transforming Investing with Artificial Intelligence. We believe the advanced technologies of Qraft and LG AI Research can have a strong impact on the investment management industry and expand the boundaries of applications in this space. Through this partnership, our shared aspiration is to deliver advanced AI solutions together," added Marcus. "We look forward to building a better, AI-driven future."

Qraft Technologies aims to provide investors with a competitive edge through AI-driven investment solutions leveraging cutting-edge artificial intelligence models in collaboration with LG AI Research who offers forecasting and optimization models based on data intelligence, as well as a large-scale multimodal AI model called EXAONE, and other advanced machine learning technologies.

On August 24th, LG and Qraft will hold a joint event at the New York Stock Exchange to unveil details of their partnership and collaborative efforts.

Communication would increase but announced no agreements on disputes. Chinese leaders have demanded the United States change its policies on Taiwan and other issues but have given no indication they might change trade and other policies that irk Washington and China's Asian neighbors.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping's government has announced only small steps to retaliate for Western tech restrictions, possibly to avoid disrupting a multibillion-dollar campaign to create its own processor chip, artificial intelligence and other technology industries.

Chinese rules that took effect Aug. 1 require exporters of gallium and germanium, two metals used in computer chips and solar cells, to obtain govern-

ment licenses. The announcement rattled Japanese and South Korean electronics manufacturers.

The conflict has prompted fears of "decoupling," or the world splitting into separate industrial markets with conflicting standards that mean electronics, auto and other products and components from one couldn't be used in the other. That might hamper innovation and economic growth.

Yellen and other US officials say they don't want "decoupling" but are pursuing "de-risking." They say that includes developing additional sources of raw materials, industrial components and consumer goods to avoid disruptions like those during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**New tool to enterprise customers**

**Jeli.io launches ChatGPT beta for improving incident response and analysis**

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug 12: Jeli.io, the incident response and analysis company founded by former Netflix and Slack engineering leader Nora Jones, has announced they have integrated ChatGPT into their platform. Since launching the company in late 2020, the company has been on a mission to facilitate the collaboration between humans and the technical systems they rely on (also known as "socio-technical" systems). Jeli is at the forefront of leveraging the power of large language models (LLMs) to help teams respond to and ultimate-

ly learn from incidents, and has now opened up their AI beta to enterprise customers.

"The secret to understanding your incidents is hidden in how you make decisions during them - often that data is overlooked because there is so much of it to sift through," said Nora Jones, CEO and Founder of Jeli.io. "Building ChatGPT into many of our products is a means to help organizations key into where, when, and how certain decisions are being made so ultimately they can improve. ChatGPT and other models

today are great at summarizing data and extracting key points out of it - our use of it in Jeli incentivizes incident responders to dig deeper into areas that will yield high return for the organization."

The new 'catch me up' feature leverages ChatGPT to provide new incident responders with a quick summary of an incident as soon as they join a Slack channel to quickly get them up to speed. It also provides various teams across the organization such as support and customer success with key highlights that

they can relay to customers for real-time external communication and status updates.

**Knowledge**

Narrative Builder puts together the story about how events unfolded, using AI to highlight key moments associated with Detection, Diagnosis, and Repair phases of an incident, while surfacing the knowledge possessed by key stakeholders across the organization involved with the incident. Team members can

now work alongside Jeli automation to tag, categorize, and edit on the incident timeline created by Jeli.

Jeli leverages failures and system emergencies as a catalyst to help companies understand how they can improve reliability and reduce recurring issues. Since launching, the company's revenue has increased over 10X and total funding has grown to \$19 Million.

The platform surfaces the coordination costs of incidents, builds expertise amongst team members, and generates recommendations to help address

problems before they become severe. Jeli also combines disparate systems involved in incident response such as Slack, Zoom, and Jira to surface insights across various incidents for a deeper, yet efficient analysis of what went sideways and how to learn from it.

The Jeli.io platform allows users to respond to, manage, and analyze incidents in order to build more resilient infrastructure and teams. Jeli aggregates systemic incident data across the tools and people involved to reveal clear, actionable recommendations for organizations.



The Conversation

Functional foods contain many health-promoting bioactive substances

# Does an apple a day really keep the doctor away?

By Janet Colson

Middle Tennessee State University

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

We've all heard that an apple a day keeps the doctor away, but how true is that?

Apples are not high in vitamin A, nor are they beneficial for vision like carrots. They are not a great source of vitamin C and therefore don't fight off colds as oranges do.

However, apples contain various bioactive substances - natural chemicals that occur in small amounts in foods and that have biological effects in the body. These chemicals are not classified as nutrients like vitamins. Because apples contain many health-promoting bioactive substances, the fruit is considered a "functional" food.

For years, I have taught university classes on nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, carbs, proteins and fats. But recently I developed a course specifically on functional foods. The class explores the various bioactive substances in food and how some may even function like a medicine.

Functional foods are not the same as superfoods. "Superfood" is a buzzword marketers use to promote foods like kale, spinach and blueberries. Labeling them as "super" appeals to the public and increases sales. But superfood is generally meant to imply a food that has superior nutritional value and that is high in nutrients that are beneficial for health. For example, salmon and tuna are considered superfoods because the omega-3 fats they contain have been linked to heart health.

Unique

Superfood advertisements claim that eating the food will improve some aspect of health. The problem is that most of those claims are not based on scientific research, like the criteria for functional foods are.

In addition to the nutrients that our bodies need for growth and development, functional foods contain a variety of bioactive substances, each with a unique function in the body. The bioactive substances can be found naturally in foods or added during processing.

The list of bioactive components in foods grows daily as research expands. Though the components themselves are not new, the evidence-based research confirming their health benefits is.

The carotenoids are the most easily recognizable examples of bioactive substances. They are a group of 850 different pigments that give yellow, orange and red fruits and vegetables their color. Carotenoids primarily function as antioxidants, which means they promote health by helping to prevent damage to the body's cells. Various individual carotenoids may function in different ways.

Beta-carotene is the most well-known carotenoid because of the high amounts found in carrots. Beta-carotene converts to vitamin A in the body after we consume it. Vitamin A is needed for normal vision.

Lutein and zeaxanthin are the yellow carotenoids found in corn and peppers. The two help support vision, especially among older adults.

Research suggests that the carotenoids from foods and the other categories of bioactive substances may help prevent certain cancers and improve heart health. It's important to note that carotenoid-rich fruits and vegetables are associated with reduced risks of cardiovascular disease and some cancers but that carotenoids in supplements offer fewer benefits.

Though the adage about apples and health originated in the 1800s, nutrition is a relatively young science - and the idea of functional foods and bioactive components is even younger.

From the early 1900s to the 1970s, nutrition research focused on vitamin deficiencies. The public was encouraged to eat more vitamin-fortified, processed foods to prevent nutrient deficiency diseases like scurvy, which is caused by a severe vitamin C deficit, or rickets, caused by prolonged vitamin D deficiency.

This emphasis on eating in order to correct nutrient deficiencies had the tendency to cause people to focus on certain nutrients, which can contribute to overeating. This, combined with an increased availability of highly processed

foods, resulted in weight gain, which led to increased rates of diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.

In 1980, the US government published the first dietary guidelines that encouraged people to avoid fat, sugar and salt. Public health messaging encouraged people to replace fatty foods with starchy foods such as breads and pasta.

The logic of this recommendation was that if people consume less fat, they should increase their calories from carbohydrates to ensure adequate calories. That nutritional advice contributed to the skyrocketing obesity and diabetes rates that continue today.

Historically, the Japanese were one of the healthiest populations on Earth. However, as the 21st century approached, many Japanese people had adopted the American diet and developed health problems similar to those in the US.

Concerned

As a result, the Japanese government became concerned about its citizens' expanding waistlines and declining health. To correct this problem, Japan became the first country to introduce the concept of functional foods in the 1980s.

Today, Japan uses the phrase "Food for Specialized Health Uses" for products that can be scientifically shown to promote health.

It has paid off. Japan has more than 1,000 foods and beverages approved as food for specialized health uses, such as hypoallergenic rice. Rice allergies, though uncommon, are a major problem for Japanese people who have them because rice is a staple food.

About half of Japan's health claims relate to improving digestion using bioactive prebiotic dietary fibers.

An apple's natural dietary fibers are one of the bioactive components that lead to its being classified as a functional food. The fiber pectin is found mainly in an apple's pulp.

Pectin functions to reduce the amount of sugar and fat that is absorbed into the body. This helps reduce the risk of diabetes and heart disease.

Apple peels are also packed with fiber that acts as a laxative.

In addition, apples contain high amounts of natural chemicals known as polyphenols that have vital roles in promoting health and reducing chronic disease. More than 8,000 polyphenols have been identified in various plant foods. Because they are mainly in the peel, whole apples are better sources of polyphenols than juice or applesauce.

Anthocyanins are a subclass of the polyphenols that give the apple peel much of its red color. Diets high in anthocyanins help improve heart health and are being studied for use in treating Alzheimer's disease.

Another of the primary polyphenols in apples is phloridzin. Researchers have studied the role of phloridzin in helping to control blood glucose for more than 100 years. Recent studies confirm that it plays an important role in regulating blood glucose levels by decreasing the amount of glucose absorbed from the small intestine and increasing excretion from the kidneys.

So if apples are functional foods that promote health, do they really help keep the doctor away?

Researchers have tried to figure this out. One US team analyzed the apple-eating patterns and number of doctor visits among more than 8,000 adults. Of those, about 9% ate one apple daily. Once adjusted for demographic and health-related factors, the researchers found that the daily apple eaters used marginally fewer prescription medications than the non-apple eaters. But the number of doctor's visits was about the same between the two groups.

If one apple a day is not enough to make us healthy, what about eating two or three?

A group of European researchers found that eating two apples a day improved heart health in 40 adults. And Brazilian investigators found that eating three apples daily improved weight loss and blood glucose levels in 40 overweight women.

While eating an apple a day won't necessarily cut down substantially on prescription medications or doctors visits, it could be one step in the direction of making the transition to eating more healthful, fiber-filled, whole foods.

Apples require no cooking or refrigeration at least for a week or so, and one red delicious apple costs about 50 US cents.

So next time you are in the grocery store, grab some apples and - if you feel like it - try eating at least one a day. (AP)

'A promising shift in brain imaging'

## Hyperfine's 'Swoop' revolutionizes standard of care for neuroimaging

New structure unveiled

### Imperative Care elevates care for patients with 'vascular diseases'

GUILDFORD, Conn., Aug 12: Hyperfine, Inc. (Nasdaq: HYPR), the groundbreaking medical device company that created the Swoop® system, the world's first FDA-cleared portable magnetic resonance brain imaging system, has announced completed enrollment for the multi-site observational study, HOPE PMR (Portable MRI for Children with Neurological Injury - A Pilot Study using Hydrocephalus as an Index Condition).

Children living with hydrocephalus typically undergo at least two brain scans per year to monitor pressure in their enlarged brain ventricles and identify potential shunt malfunctions. With the aim of exploring a safer, more accessible solution for hydrocephalus patients, the HOPE PMR study is assessing the feasibility of integrating the Swoop® system, a brain imaging solution with zero ionizing radiation that is accessible at a child's bedside, into routine inpatient, outpatient, and emergency pediatric care settings. The study used pediatric hydrocephalus as an index condition to assess if Swoop® system images can be used to accurately detect shunt malfunctions and assess ventricular size.

"The Swoop® system represents a promising shift in brain imaging. We believe it has the potential to improve pediatric hydrocephalus management significantly," said Dr. Khan Siddiqui, chief medical officer and chief strategy officer at Hyperfine, Inc. "The insights gathered from this study will inform the viability of the Swoop® system in pediatric healthcare settings and patient care."

Challenges

Dr. Jeffrey Leonard, chief of Pediatric Neurosurgery at Nationwide Children's Hospital, added, "With the completion of the enrollment phase of the study, we are now embarking on the critical task of data analysis and academic publication preparation. Our collaboration with Hyperfine, Inc. paves the way for improvements in brain imaging, benefiting this vulnerable patient population."

Hydrocephalus, marked by an abnormal buildup of cerebrospinal

CAMPBELL, Calif., Aug 12: Imperative Care, Inc., a medical technology company elevating care for people affected by stroke and other ischemic diseases, has announced a new organizational structure designed to accelerate the company's growth across its businesses.

Imperative Care was co-founded in 2016 by Fred Khosravi, serial entrepreneur and managing partner at medical incubator Incept, LLC, and Dr. Nick Hopkins, one of the pioneers of neuroendovascular surgery. The company was founded with a singular focus on transforming stroke care from detection through recovery and making better treatment available to more patients. This focus has since expanded to develop treatments for other devastating ischemic diseases, such as pulmonary embolism and peripheral vascular disease.

Imperative Care is now the parent company of four businesses that share a common purpose to bring more care to more people affected by stroke and other ischemic diseases. These include: Imperative Care Stroke, a business unit focused on bringing life-saving interventional treatments to patients with ischemic and hemorrhagic stroke for the best chance of a full recovery.

Imperative Care Vascular (formerly TRUVIC Medical, which was acquired by Imperative Care in 2021), a business unit advancing innovative treatments for people suffering from devastating vascular diseases, including pulmonary embolism. Kandu Health, a digital health company aiming to change the course of stroke recovery and post-acute care through remote support. Telos Health, a business unit using robotics and automation to optimize vascular intervention with the goal of making life-saving stroke and vascular thrombectomies accessible to more people.

Treated

"Our vision for Imperative Care has always been to bring forward clinically meaningful innovations that are inspired and shaped by physicians and unmet clinical needs impacting patient care," said Fred Khosravi, Chairman and CEO of Imperative Care.

"We believe that the patient is the only constant in the chain of care from detection through treatment and recovery. Through connected innovation, we can look holistically at what the patient needs across the full continuum of care and achieve something meaningful for patients and their families," Khosravi said.

Imperative Care's Stroke busi-

ness has become a market leader over the past three years. More than 30,000 patients have been treated with Imperative Care Stroke products to date, and the company's Zoom™ Stroke Solution is one of the most complete stroke treatment solutions available today. By innovating every part of the ischemic stroke procedure - from access through clot capture - these products are designed to simplify procedures and improve outcomes, with the goal of allowing physicians to achieve complete clot removal and full reperfusion of the target vessel within 10 minutes.

Imperative Care's Vascular business currently has two FDA-cleared products, the Symphony Thrombectomy System for venous applications and the Prodigy Thrombectomy System for peripheral arterial applications, which are designed to remove a wide range of clots in the peripheral arteries and veins. Prodigy is commercially available at select hospitals in the U.S. and Symphony's targeted launch will be initiated in the coming months.

Making stroke and vascular thrombectomy more universally accessible, immediate, and predictably effective is one of the greatest medical challenges of our lifetime.

Although magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is the preferred scanning modality due to its absence of ionizing radiation, practical constraints often limit its use. When MRI is unavailable, care providers must resort to computerized tomography (CT) scans, which carry notable risks. Published research indicates a single pediatric head CT scan could double the risk of radiation-associated malignancy.

Hyperfine, Inc. (Nasdaq: HYPR) is the groundbreaking medical technology company that created the Swoop® system, the world's first FDA-cleared portable magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) system capable of providing brain imaging at the point of care. The Swoop® system received initial US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) clearance in 2020 as a bedside magnetic resonance imaging device for producing images that display the internal structure of the head where a full diagnostic examination is not clinically practical. When interpreted by a trained physician, these images provide information that can be useful in deter-

mining a diagnosis. The Swoop® system has been approved for brain imaging in several countries, including Canada and Australia, has UKCA certification in the United Kingdom, CE certification in the European Union, and is also available in New Zealand.

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# 'Gran Turismo' drifts into cliches, video game aesthetics

LOS ANGELES, Aug 12, (AP) — In 2006, a Nissan marketing executive had a truly insane idea to create a competition and an “academy” to turn gamers into race car drivers. Darren Cox saw an untapped market of potential car-buyers in Gran Turismo enthusiasts — the popular PlayStation racing simulator that first came on the market in 1997. And in the third year of the “GT Academy,” an actual star emerged in a 19-year-old British kid named Jann Mardenborough, who would go on to become a professional driver, just like he dreamed.

It’s a fine and lucrative idea for a movie — an inspirational underdog story in which brands like Nissan and PlayStation, a Sony company which also owns the studio behind the movie, can take partial credit for and help underwrite. And it couldn’t come at a better time, when F1 is exploding in popularity in the United States thanks in part to the Netflix series “Drive to Survive.” But “Gran Turismo” has taken this opportunity and made the cliché version in this year of movies like “Barbie” and “Air,” which showed audiences that “brand” movies don’t have to be basic. They can be fresh, vibrant, funny and entertaining — even when literally focused on the corporate schlubs just trying to earn their keep.

If you don’t know ins and outs of Mardenborough’s story, it’s best not to study up before “Gran Turismo.” The movie, which has gone through several writers and directors over the years it’s been in development, takes immense liberties with its true story and cherry picks things from various points in Mardenborough’s career to make his

debut year as dramatic as possible. The version coming to theaters is credited to screenwriters Jason Hall and Zach Baylin and director Neill Blomkamp (“District 9,” “Chappie”), who likes to amp up the excitement of a car going 200 miles an hour with lots of cuts and close-ups and aerial shots that would surely drive the down-and-out veteran enlisted to train these amateurs absolutely insane.

That veteran, named Jack Salter, is played by David Harbour, who is quite enjoyable in a pretty cliché “tough love mentor with a past” role. He brings life and energy and an amusing voice of reason to this unbelievable story which can’t seem to choose a lane.

## Journey

The first hour leans heavily into the brand mythologizing as it sets everything up and it is dreadful. It’s almost in spite of everything that the second half, which focuses on the actual racing, is more successful. How could it not be? It’s a very pleasing underdog makes good journey, with a very pleasant and empathetic lead actor in Archie Madekwe. His parents, played by Djimon Hounsou and former Spice Girl Geri Halliwell-Horner, are also appealing, if underused and trotted out only for maximum emotional impact. We could have used a little more of the Mardenborough clan and a little less of Jann’s love interest, Audrey (Maeva Courtier-Lilley) who is introduced to another peripheral female character in a 5-second scene that is so out of nowhere and

random that I wondered if it was only there so that the very male film could technically pass the Bechdel Test.

Poor Orlando Bloom gets a little lost in everything as the high-anxiety Nissan marketing executive Danny Moore, who is frustratingly underdrawn and who the movie goes through great pains to avoid making the enemy. That goes to the cocky, model-y young driver who is there to represent the big money side of European racing, in his gold car branded by Moët & Chandon. Instead, Bloom is kind of just a tour guide to the high life, uttering lines like “ever been on a private jet before?” to the kid from Cardiff. But most egregious is the depiction of the Japanese Nissan executives, who are essentially nameless, characterless background actors in suits called on to either nod or look vaguely confused as Danny tries to reassure them that these amateur drivers won’t die.

The movie on the page wants to romanticize the simple pleasures of race car driving outside of the glitz and glamour of the high-rolling industry, and has been directed by someone who doesn’t actually believe that the driving is enough and that it does need all the trimmings of a “Fast and Furious” spinoff to make it exciting to an audience. It’s the MTV cut of Winona Ryder’s documentary from “Reality Bites,” the one the slick marketing guy would make. And I think therein lies the essential incongruity of what amounts to a moderately entertaining, very long Super Bowl spot quality commercial for PlayStation and Nissan.

Film

Variety



This image released by Netflix shows Gal Gadot in a scene from ‘Heart of Stone.’ (AP)

Film

## Globetrotting spy movie revels in its digital wizardry

# Gadot turns superspy in ‘Heart of Stone’

By Jake Coyle

It’s turning out to be quite a summer for superspies and supercomputers.

A month after the action feast of “Mission: Impossible — Dead Reckoning Part I,” in which Tom Cruise faced off with an AI supervillain called “The Entity,” comes a very “MI”-like international espionage thriller with an equally fancy and powerful machine.

“Heart of Stone” stars Gal Gadot as Rachel Stone, an agent for an elite and clandestine intelligence agency called the Charter. Like “Mission: Impossible,” “Heart of Stone” hits glamorous global destinations (the Italian Alps, Lisbon, Senegal, Iceland) and features lengthy action sequences including a wingsuit skydive.

Whereas “Dead Reckoning” pushed old-school filmmaking to extremes for a gripping theatrical experience, “Heart of Stone” revels in its digital wizardry, feels vaguely algorithm-y in its conception and was made for Netflix. Both films, interestingly, are products of the same production company, Skydance.

“Mission: Impossible” was born out of the Cold War, but “Heart of Stone” conjures a peacekeeping spy unit outside of nationhood in the hopes of kickstarting a new franchise uncluttered by governments — a globetrotting spy movie without all those pesky geopolitics; a borderless intelligence agency for a borderless streaming era.

That may sound too harsh. After all, there have been countless lackluster espionage thrillers with little connection to the real world. (“Dead Reckoning,” for all its thrills, has about as much to do with today’s international politics as its star has to do with lengthy interviews with journalists.) And “Heart of Stone,” directed by Tom Harper (“Wild Rose,” “The Aeronauts”), does have a few nifty moves of its own.

The film’s opening sequence begins in a very Bond-like Alpine hotel where Gadot’s Stone is part of an MI6 mission posing as an inexperienced tech, not a field agent. This allows for plenty of “She can do that?” looks when the operation falls apart and Stone begins flashing Cruise-level skills while rushing off with a glowing parachute down the darkened slopes in slinky, snowy chase.

To the credit of Harper, cinematographer George Steel and production designer Charles Wood, the action is generally fluid in “Heart of Stone.” The film’s hand-somest design comes in Charter’s secret weapon: the Heart, the so-named quantum computer with supreme

hacking abilities that can process chance-of-success scenarios in real time. Its operator (Matthias Schweighöfer), like a new-age John King, contorts a room full of pixels with the wave of his hand, while guiding Charter agents from afar.

Also in the mix is Jamie Dornan’s Parker, the leader of the MI6 unit that Stone is initially masquerading in — though his affiliations are also murky. The trouble is kicked off by a hacker of mysterious intentions played by Alia Bhatt, a Bollywood star making her Hollywood debut. Glenn Close pops in as the head of the CIA.

## Soulful

I’m not sure any of them get a chance to do all that much, though Bhatt is charmingly mischievous in her scenes. Not for the first time, the actor I most wish was center stage is Sophie Okonedo, who, as a Charter leader, is the most soulful presence in a not particularly soulful film. Gadot makes for a slinky if unspectacular spy.

The plot, from screenwriters Greg Rucka and Allison Schroeder, revolves around the threat of the Heart falling into the wrong hands. This means that “Heart” is spoken of so much that you have expect the Wilson sisters to turn up eventually.

But there is nothing in the impressively generic “Heart of Stone,” right down that title, that is even a little bit unexpected. All the pieces here are fine but nothing is distinct from dozens of films before it. You would swear that the movie’s star AI wrote it — and even gave itself first billing, too.

“Heart of Stone,” a Netflix release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for sequences of violence and action, and some language. Running time: 123 minutes. One and a half stars out of four.

## Also:

**LOS ANGELES:** Steven Spielberg, Martin Scorsese and Paul Thomas Anderson are stepping up to help curate programming for Turner Classic Movies, amid layoffs and leadership changes that had fans worried about the future of the channel.

Recently Warner Bros. Discovery laid off some top TCM people including General Manager **Pola Changnon** and programming head **Charles Tabesh**, prompting public outcries from the film community who tweeted with the hashtag #SaveTCM and wrote passionate

op-eds about its cultural value.

Under the leadership of WBD CEO **David Zaslav**, the company had stabilized plans for TCM’s future, enlisting Warner Bros. Motion Picture Group co-chairs and CEOs **Michael De Luca** and **Pam Abdy** to oversee TCM, bringing on Spielberg, Scorsese and Anderson as official curators and reversing course on Tabesh’s layoff.

“TCM is a cultural treasure, and we are honored to help steer the future direction of this beloved brand with the partnership of three of the most iconic filmmakers of our time, Steven, Marty, and Paul,” De Luca and Abdy said in a statement.

The strategy, all noted, was led by Zaslav. And Spielberg, Scorsese and Anderson are already working on ideas with De Luca and Abdy.

“We are thrilled that longtime programmer Charlie Tabesh will be staying with TCM and gratified to know that the team is focused on preserving TCM’s mission of celebrating our rich movie history while at the same time ensuring that future generations of filmmakers and film lovers have TCM as a valuable resource,” the filmmakers said in a statement.

TCM’s on-air hosts, like **Ben Mankiewicz**, **Dave Karger** and **Alicia Malone** are expected to stay on too and plans are still in motion for the annual film festival in Los Angeles to continue as well.

Mankiewicz earlier this year spoke to The AP about the channel’s passionate fanbase, from civilians to celebrities like **Tom Hanks**, who mentioned TCM frequently in his recent memoir. Scorsese also famously keeps it on in his editing suite.

“There’s no channel like us where people’s identification is with the channel,” Mankiewicz said. “When you look at people’s social media pages, they’ll be like ‘lawyer, mother, wife, TCM fan.’ No one says that about Showtime. No one says ‘I’ll watch anything on ABC.’ It’s an absurd thing to say but they say it about us.”

A spokesperson for Warner Bros. Discovery said the company “is fully committed to safeguarding, supporting, and investing in (TCM) for the future” and said that the content investment has grown by over 30% this year but that TCM is not immune to “the very real pressure on the entire linear ecosystem.” The changes and cuts, the spokesperson said, mean a more sustainable operation behind the screen and protect the channel’s mission of bringing more titles to the air and “preserving and protecting the culture of cinema.” (AP)

**MIAMI:** Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon, is buying an estate on an exclusive man-made barrier island in Miami known as “Billionaire Bunker,” where he will be neighbors with a growing list of celebrities including **Tom Brady**, **Ivanka Trump** and her husband, **Jared Kushner**.

Bezos, 59, is paying \$68 million for the three-bedroom, waterfront home, which sits on 2.8 acres (1.1 hectares), Fortune magazine and Bloomberg reported. The Amazon founder stepped down as CEO in 2021 to devote more time to philanthropy and other projects.

MTM Star International is listed on Miami-Dade property records as the previous owner of the home. The county website does not list Bezos as the owner, but shows the property sold in June.

**Guillermo Olmedillo**, the village manager of Indian Creek Village, told The Associated Press he has no information about the purchase. The village has a country club and its own police force.

County records show the property previously sold for \$1.4 million in 1982. The home has 9,300 square feet (864 square meters) and a pool.

Bezos is not new to Miami. He graduated from Palmetto High School. (AP)

**NEW YORK:** A 17-year-old was indicted on a hate-crime murder charge in a stabbing that followed taunts and confrontation over a group of men dancing shirtless to **Beyoncé** as they gassed up their car, prosecutors said.

Prosecutors concluded **O’Shae Sibley**’s death was motivated by anti-Black, **Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez** said.

“It’s clear to me, under the circumstances of this case, that in substantial part, this attack was caused because people were offended by Mr Sibley and his friends dancing and celebrating,” Gonzalez said.

The suspect was due in court Friday to answer the charge. It mirrors the charge on which he was arrested last week. If convicted, he faces at least 20 years in prison.

The Associated Press sent a text message to his attorney,

**Mark Pollard**, seeking comment. Pollard’s voicemail box was full. The teen’s grandmother told the Daily News he was defending himself. Prosecutor’s have not released the suspect’s name.

The chain of events that ended in Sibley’s July 29 death began when he and his friends were



Bezos



Brady

dancing at a pump at a Brooklyn gas station, and another group of people began taunting them, authorities said.

Security camera video showed the two groups arguing for a few minutes. Both sides walked away, and then Sibley and a friend returned and confronted one of the others, who had

stayed behind recording on his phone.

In the video, Sibley, 28, could be seen following that person and then lunging at him before the two disappeared out of the camera’s frame. A moment later, Sibley walked backward into view, checking his side, then collapsed to the sidewalk.

“What the video shows is that Mr Sibley was rightfully in a position to speak out and protect himself and his friends from anti-gay and anti-Black slurs, and that what occurred after that was a crime,” said Gonzalez, a Democrat. He noted that Sibley and his friends were unarmed. (AP)



## People &amp; Places

## Music

## Born amid poverty

## Hip-hop at 50: there's pride, still hard times

BRONX, New York, Aug. 12, (AP) - Before it was a global movement, it was simply an expression of life and struggle: a culture that was synonymous with hardship and suffering, but also grit, resilience and creativity.

Hip-hop rose from the ashes of a borough ablaze with poverty, urban decay and gang violence. It was music that "had the sound of a city in collapse, but also had an air of defiance," said Mark Naison, history professor at Fordham University in the Bronx. Block parties and the various elements of hip-hop served as an outlet for creativity and an escape from the hardships of daily life.

The four foundational elements of hip-hop - DJing or turntablism, MCing or rapping, B-boying or break dancing and graffiti "writing" - emerged from the Bronx as a "cultural response to a community that was institutionally abandoned," said **Rodrigo Venegas**, also known as "Rodstarz" of the hip-hop duo Rebel Diaz, made up of two Chilean brothers in the Bronx.

"You want to cut our art programs? We're going to turn the whole city into a canvas. You want to cut our music programs? We're going to turn turntables into instruments. You want to silence our communities? Then we're going to grab these microphones and use our voices," Venegas said.

Subway cars heading into Manhattan were covered in graffiti in the 70s and 80s, after young "writers" tagged their names and messages from top to bottom. At a time when New York City politicians disparaged the Bronx and deemed it unworthy of investment, it was a way for teenagers and young adults to express themselves and take control of their narrative.

"It was a way to feel like we mattered," said Lloyd Murphy, who tagged his name as "Topaz1." "We saw New York City and the trains going by as a billboard to put your name on and say, 'I'm somebody.'"

## Anniversary

Hip-hop eventually expanded across New York City, then to different parts of the country and the world. But as artists and hip-hop giants mark the 50th anniversary of a multi-billion dollar global industry this month, the original birthplace of the movement remains the poorest section of New York City. The Bronx has yet to capitalize off of the culture it created in any significant way.

At the time of hip-hop's inception, the Bronx had the highest poverty rate of not just New York City, but of all 62 counties in New York state. Fifty years later, it holds that same status.

"I do find it ironic that one of the richest parts of American culture comes from a place that is still one of the poorest parts of our country," said Majora Carter, an urban revitalization strategist and founder of The Boogie Down Grind, a cafe in the South Bronx that has images of old hip-hop party flyers from the 70s and 80s lining the walls and classic hip-hop jams playing over the speakers. Carter, 56, grew up just blocks away from where the cafe now sits in Hunts Point and lived the realities of urban blight. Her brother was killed in gang violence and she saw her neighborhood fall prey to drugs, prostitution and violent crime throughout her childhood.

The earliest hip-hop culture was a reflection of those difficult realities in the South Bronx.

"Poverty was the flavor of the day," said Murphy, who also grew up in the South Bronx in the 1960s. He remembers multiple families crammed into public housing units, sometimes up to 15 people living in a two or three-bedroom apartment, sharing the space with rats and roaches and dealing with negligent landlords.

New York City as a whole was facing bankruptcy in the 70s, and the Bronx, which was already suffering from disinvestment, redlining, resident displacement and white and middle-class flight, descended into urban decay. Privately-owned housing buildings across the borough went up in flames, often set ablaze by landlords themselves for insurance money. The Bronx was on fire, and Vietnam veterans - often missing limbs, addicted to heroin and other drugs - found themselves returning home to a war zone. Life in the Bronx was bleak, and Murphy said his neighborhood of Fort Apache was infamous for its violent crime.

"The world was not flowers and butterflies and sunshine, especially if you were living in the Fort Apache section of the South Bronx," said graffiti writer Edward Jamison, also known as "Staff 161." In December, 1972, Jamison painted an entire subway car with an image of the Grim Reaper, "because that's what I knew."

## Protector

Originally, the Fort Apache neighborhood was supported by the Black Panther Party. They worked security and distributed food through programs around the neighborhood. When they left, block crews filled the void. Those turned into street gangs.

"A block crew was the protector of that block and the street gang was the security for the community, more than the police department," Murphy said. "We felt forgotten. We felt like we were our own world where we just had to fend for ourselves. And we did."

It took the murder of peace keeper "Black Benjie" of the Ghetto Brothers, a gang and music group in the South Bronx, for rival gangs to convene and sign a peace treaty. It was this truce that paved the way for block parties to be held in the Bronx, and for residents from different neighborhoods to attend them freely, without fear of street violence.

In the wake of that peace treaty, 18-year-old Clive Campbell, also known as DJ Kool Herc, threw a back-to-school party with his younger sister in the recreation room of an apartment building on Sedgwick Avenue one August day in 1973. Herc introduced the attendees to "the break" - extending the musical beat between verses to allow for longer periods of dancing. A musical phenomenon was born.

"It's very easy to look at the Bronx during this period in terms of deficits, redlining, disinvestment, white flight, the loss of economic opportunity," Naison said. "But during those years, the Bronx was also creating more varieties of popular music than any place in the world."

For those who call the Bronx home today, it can be an uphill battle to counter the narrative that their neighborhoods are a lost cause.

"We're literally trying to give people reasons in our community to feel as though there's something worthwhile about it - that all of the hype that we hear in the media about how awful these neighborhoods are, that there are actually amazing things going on in them," Carter said.



Rapper Lil Wayne performs at Hip-Hop 50 Live, celebrating 50 years of hip-hop on Friday, Aug. 11, at Yankee Stadium in the Bronx borough of New York. (AP)

## Stage

## 'The Shark Is Broken' a moving comedy-drama

## Play on 'Jaws' movie makes a splash

NEW YORK, Aug. 12, (AP) - A rickety boat. Three guys with egos. And a massive, deadly shark. What could go wrong?

Not what you might be expecting with "The Shark Is Broken," the lyrical play that opened Thursday about the trio of actors who enlivened the pioneering Steven Spielberg-directed movie "Jaws."

Set on a boat off Martha's Vineyard during filming in 1974, "The Shark Is Broken" is a moving comedy-drama, mirroring the way the movie segued from horror to playfulness so effortlessly.

It stars Colin Donnell as Roy Scheider, the police chief Brody; Alex Brightman as Richard Dreyfuss, the oceanographer Hooper; and Ian Shaw as Robert Shaw, the shark hunter Quint. The play instantly earns legitimacy because Ian Shaw is Robert's lookalike son and a co-writer.

It's about the backstage frustration of making the first summer blockbuster, of course - one audience member in line at a preview wearing a "Jaws" T-shirt will be pleased - but captures much more in its net.

The long idle hours due to the mechanical sharks' malfunctioning and the onboard anger between actors produce spiky discussions about responsibility, trauma, fatherhood, acting, commerce and alcohol, often lubricated by Scotch.

"It is the grit in the oyster that produces the pearl," Shaw tells his companions, explaining how personal clashes can help fuel their art. He's right - he's often the play's grit, and it has produced a little pearl of a play.

The script - and Guy Masterson's

unfussy direction - never lets interest lag over the play's 90, intermission-less minutes, the tension, humor, depth, silliness and horror coming like waves lapping the boat.

Quint's famous USS Indianapolis speech - "1,100 men went in the water, 316 men come out, the sharks took the rest" - forms the play's backbone as Shaw struggles to initially memorize it, then rewrites it and finally delivers it masterfully.

Ian Shaw co-wrote the script with Joseph Nixon and based it on interviews, books and documentaries. They have made Regular Joes of cinematic heroes, an even harder task for the younger Shaw when it is your late dad you are portraying and creating dialogue for.

## Sensible

His Shaw is a squinty, non-nonsense, Shakespeare-quoting tough guy with financial and alcoholic problems who suffers fools poorly. Brightman's Dreyfuss is a bundle of nervous insecurity - "Am I any good? As an actor?" he asks - while he thirsts for fame and yet also, perhaps impossibly, respectability. His physical humor is awesome.

Donnell as Scheider is the sensible one, a newspaper-reading, controlled pro, inserting dry facts into the discussion, sitting angularly and trying to keep the other two civil. (He finally reveals a delicious vein of frustration in one scene alone when his sunbathing is interrupted).

All three actors - think of them as nebbish, brutish and fastidious - pitch their performances well beyond caricature and more like inspiration, showing the audience their character's quirks only as a way to

understand them in a larger way as flawed and delightful men.

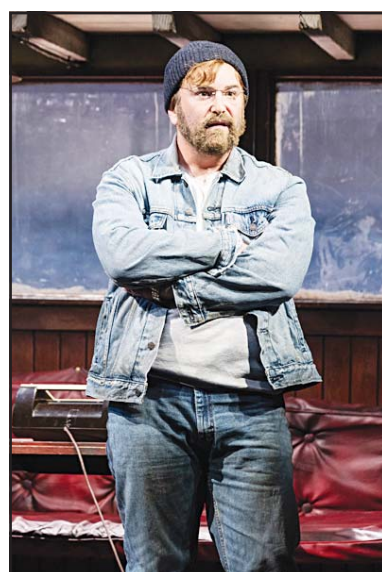
The audience is taken back to the insecurity before the release of "Jaws" and the worry anyone has if the project we're working on is worth it. "Do you really think people are going to be talking about this in 50 years?" asks Shaw. He later offers this poor prediction: "This film is destined for the dustbin of history."

Designer Duncan Henderson creates a messy boat and grounded the costumes into the time period, the mid-'70s when the legal sharks at the US Capitol were circling then-President Richard Nixon. When he is asked what's new one morning, Scheider replies: "War. Disease. Famine. Bombs. Terrorists. Riots. Religious maniacs. You know, the usual."

Some of the highlights include a more-than-sly dig at former President Donald Trump - "There will never be a more immoral president than Tricky Dicky" - and the future of Hollywood: "Mark my words, boys, one day there will only be sequels. Sequels and remakes, and sequels to remakes and remakes of sequels."

Perhaps ultimately, it is a play about passing the torch - embodied perfectly by the sight of one Shaw playing his own father - and saying goodbye to the older generation.

"I fear the future belongs to a generation of self-absorbed neurotics," Shaw tells Scheider when Dreyfuss is notably away. "I think we'll be in good hands, Robert," comes the reply. We are indeed in good hands. There's nothing broken on this stage besides sharks.



This image provided by Matthew Murphy shows Alex Brightman in a scene from the play 'The Shark Is Broken.' (AP)



Shakur



Knight

## Variety

**LAS VEGAS:** Police lapel videos captured the moments a couple was detained by Las Vegas SWAT officers during a nighttime raid at a home in July in connection with the cold case killing of rapper **Tupac Shakur**.

The 24 heavily redacted videos obtained by The Associated Press do not provide a view into the home or identify the couple, whose faces were blurred from view as the officers shouted commands to "come out with your hands up and your hands empty!"

But a copy of the warrant said police were searching on the night of July 17 for items "concerning the murder" of Shakur from **Duane "Keffe D" Davis**, one of the last surviving witnesses to a crime that has fascinated the public for decades.

Authorities have been tight-lipped about their investigation. Beyond a brief statement released last month confirming their raid in the nearby city of Henderson, they haven't released any information about the long-dormant case, including why they had obtained a warrant now to collect items from a man who has long been known to investigators.

Davis, now 60, is a self-described "gangster" and the uncle of one of Shakur's known rivals who was seen as a suspect early on in the police investigation.

The newly released videos showed the couple emerging from the garage, spotlight on them, after a SWAT officer on a bullhorn repeatedly announced their arrival.

"It's the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department," the officer said. "We have a search warrant. You need to come out with your hands up and your hands empty!"

Meanwhile, another officer was on the phone with the woman, asking her to stay calm and to exit through the garage, according to one of the videos.

"I want you to stay on the phone with me," the SWAT officer told her. "Open up that door, OK?"

"Please don't shoot me," the woman responded.

One at a time, with hands on their heads, the man and woman walked slowly down the driveway to the officers

and into a swirl of red and blue police lights illuminating the neighborhood.

"Who you looking for? Me?" the man said while the officers zip-tied his hands behind his back. He was wearing dark shorts, a tank-top and a black shirt.

The officers asked the man for his name, but the video's audio cut off when he answered. He told police only he and his wife were inside the home.

Messages left at phone numbers publicly listed for Davis and his wife were not returned, and it wasn't immediately clear if Davis has a lawyer who could comment on his behalf.

Shakur was gunned down on the night of Sept. 7, 1996, while waiting at a red light near the Las Vegas Strip in a BMW driven by Death Row Records founder **Marion "Suge" Knight**. A white Cadillac

lac pulled up next to them and gunfire erupted, striking Shakur multiple times. The 25-year-old rapper died a week later. (AP)

**SOUTHFIELD, Mich:** A woman in suburban Detroit said she got a scare when she discovered a live frog in a container of spinach purchased from a grocery store.

**Amber Worrick** of Southfield said she bought the sealed Earthbound Farm spinach package earlier this week from a Meijer store, WJBK-TV reported. When she got home, her daughter found a live frog in the container and screamed, Worrick said.

"It was alive and moving," Worrick said. "Just thank God I didn't eat the frog."

Worrick said she immediately returned the package and the frog to the store. Workers there released the frog and gave her a refund, she said.

The TV station's video showed the frog in a sealed container.

**Jennifer Holton**, a spokesperson with the Michigan Department of Agricultural and Rural Development, told the Detroit Free Press that the store shouldn't have released the frog because authorities now don't know whether it's native to the state.

She said the department referred the incident to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Meijer officials said the frog was relocated to a new home outdoors. (AP)



Indian fans prepare to break a coconut before a huge poster of their superstar Rajinikanth, outside a cinema hall as they celebrate the screening of his latest film 'Jailer' in Chennai, India, Thursday, Aug. 10. (AP)



## Health

## 364 die in 2023

## Dengue death toll in B'desh sparks alarm

DHAKA, Bangladesh, Aug 12, (AP): Bangladesh is struggling to deal with higher casualties and infections from dengue this year, with officials warning that the death toll this month could break records.

The **Sheikh Hasina** government's Directorate General of Health Services reports the 2023 death toll from the mosquito-borne illness has reached 364 in the south Asian country. More than 78,000 people have been infected since January this year, it said.

Officials warn that the number of deaths and infections this month could set a new, grim record. In the first 10 days of August, more than 23,000 people were diagnosed with dengue, compared to 43,854 cases during all of July. More than 100 people have died so far this month, over a third as many deaths from the illness during all of last year.



Hasina

In 2022, 62,382 people were infected and 281 people died of dengue, according to government figures.

Climate change leads to growing risk of mosquito-borne viral diseases, EU agency says

Dengue causes flu-like symptoms that most people recover from, but also can rapidly lead to internal bleeding, organ failure and even death.

There generally is no specific treatment for the disease, but vaccines are available. Other countries, such as Cyprus and Bolivia, also have seen outbreaks this year.

Experts say monsoon season could exacerbate the outbreak in the country of more than 160 million people. Intermittent rains in August is one of the major reasons for the outbreak, according to experts. Many people work outside on Bangladesh's numerous construction projects, including residential and big infrastructure projects across the capital city of Dhaka.

Infected people are overwhelming hospitals across the country, but some doctors and nurses are not sufficiently experienced, or trained, in how to treat dengue cases, experts say.

Mohammed Niatuzzaman, Director of Mugdha Medical College Hospital, said on Thursday that they were struggling to provide critical support to serious patients who have other ailments. Many of the critical patients are dying, he said.

## Vulnerable

People with immune suppression — like cancer patients — or people with co-morbidities like diabetes, kidney dialysis or organ transplants are particularly vulnerable, he said.

"People who have weaker immune system are at higher risk to be infected multiple times by a virulent variant (of dengue)," he said.

The Ministry of Health has arranged extra beds in state-run hospitals in Dhaka and outside, but a shortage of IV saline has become a challenge. The authorities have asked the manufacturers to increase their production of IV fluid.

Niatuzzaman said it's critical to fight the disease on multiple fronts.

"It must start from individual level and rise to our collective effort. Doctors are only a part of it. If we work together and everybody shows awareness and acts responsibly, our collective effort will make dengue prevention possible," he said.

Two city corporations in Dhaka opened emergency teams to coordinate anti-mosquito drive and urged the residents to be aware of the breeding possibilities of Aedes mosquitoes, which thrive in the region.

Mobile teams have been deployed to search homes to see if water is stored where mosquitoes could breed.

But local residents gave the government effort mild reviews.

Salma Jahan, a Dhaka resident and mother of a Dengue patient, said that she was worried.

"The government took a lot of measures last time. They applied insecticide in a lot of water bodies and its surroundings in our area. They also went to people's houses and applied liquid insecticide on drains and dirty places. We still have such places but no insecticide is being applied," she said, questioning whether the treatments are even effective.



**Pollution:** The dry season and motorized vehicles are the main causes of the air pollution in Jakarta, Indonesian authorities said Friday, after a Swiss air quality technology company named the city as the most polluted in the world.

Thick smoke and gray skies have appeared every morning for the past few months in Jakarta, the capital city of the world's fourth most populous country.

Jakarta routinely tops listings of the world's most polluted cities, most recently in a ranking by IQAir, which is based in Switzerland.

"In fact, the condition of Jakarta's air quality throughout 2023 has fluctuated quite a bit," **Asep Kuswanto**, head of Jakarta Environment Agency said at a conference on Friday.

A notorious Indonesian animal market has ended its brutal dog and cat meat trade, campaigners say

Indonesia is now in the dry season, which runs from July to September, when air pollution will peak. Air quality in the greater Jakarta area deteriorates as it is impacted by dry air from the eastern side of the country.

## Factor

The use of motorized vehicles is also a major factor. Data from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry said 44% of air pollution comes from transportation, compared to 31% from industry.

Jakarta's streets are clogged with inefficient and polluting vehicles, especially motorcycles. Maintenance standards are poor and rarely enforced. A lack of public transportation means most people are dependent on private vehicles, which can be stalled in traffic for hours at a time.

The city of Jakarta is home to more than 11 million people, with a total of 30 million in the greater metropolitan area. Air pollution has become a sensitive issue, with millions commuting into the city daily from satellite communities.

In 2021, an Indonesian court ruled that President **Joko Widodo** and six other top officials had neglected citizens' rights to clean air and ordered them to improve the poor air quality in the capital.

Cases of respiratory diseases believed to be linked to air pollution are on the rise. The Jakarta health office also acknowledged that there was an increase in health problems caused by air pollution in 2023, compared to 2022.

"It is increased compared to 2022. And it is almost the same condition we found in 2019 and 2018, before the COVID-19 pandemic," **Dwi Oktavia**, head of disease prevention and control at the Jakarta Health Agency, said.

In order to prevent further increases, "we should actively be using public transportation and bicycles," Oktavia said.

On Monday, President Widodo acknowledged that air pollution in Jakarta had been a problem for years. Moving the capital city from Jakarta to Nusantara, on the island of Borneo, is one of the solutions, Widodo said.

First proposed in 2019, Widodo's plan to move the capital would involve constructing government buildings and housing from scratch around the seaport of Balikpapan, about 2,000 kilometers northeast of Jakarta.



In this photo taken from video and released by Roscosmos State Space Corporation, the Soyuz-2.1b rocket with the moon lander Luna-25 automatic station takes off from a launch pad at the Vostochny Cosmodrome in the Russia's Far East, on Friday, Aug. 11. The launch of the Luna-25 craft to the moon will be Russia's first since 1976 when it was part of the Soviet Union. The Russian lunar lander is expected to reach the moon on Aug. 23, about the same day as an Indian craft which was launched on July 14. (AP)

## Space

## First moon mission in nearly 50 years

## Russia launches lunar lander

TALLINN, Estonia, Aug 12, (AP): A rocket carrying a lunar landing craft blasted off Friday on Russia's first moon mission in nearly 50 years, racing to land on Earth's satellite ahead of an Indian spacecraft.

The launch from Russia's Vostochny spaceport in the Far East of the Luna-25 craft to the moon is Russia's first since 1976 when it was part of the Soviet Union.

The Russian lunar lander is expected to reach the moon on Aug. 23, about the same day as an Indian craft which was launched on July 14. The Russian spacecraft will take about 5.5 days to travel to the moon's vicinity, then spend three to seven days orbiting at about 100 kilometers (62 miles) before heading for the surface.

Only three governments have managed successful moon landings: the Soviet Union, the United States and China. India and Russia are aiming to be the first to land at the moon's south pole.

Roscosmos, Russia's space agency, said it wants to show Russia "is a state capable of delivering a payload to the moon," and "ensure Russia's guaranteed access to the moon's surface."

## Competition

"Study of the moon is not the goal," said Vitaly Egorov, a popular Russian space analyst. "The goal is political competition between two superpowers - China and the USA - and a number of other countries which also want to claim the title of space superpower."

Sanctions imposed on Russia after it invaded Ukraine make it harder for it to access Western technology, impacting its space program. The Luna-25 was initially meant to carry a small moon rover but that idea was abandoned to reduce the weight of the craft for improved reliability, analysts say.

"Foreign electronics are lighter, domestic electronics are heavier," Egorov said. "While scientists might have the task of studying lunar water, for Roscosmos the main task is simply to land on the moon - to recover lost Soviet expertise and learn how to perform this task in a new era."

The Luna-25 launched flawlessly from the Vostochny Cosmodrome in Russia's Far East, according to video feed from Roscosmos.

The spaceport is a pet project of Russian President Vladimir Putin and

## Virgin Galactic finally rockets to edge of space with first tourists

TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES, N.M., Aug 12, (AP): Virgin Galactic rocketed to the edge of space with its first tourists Thursday, a former British Olympian who bought his ticket 18 years ago and a mother-daughter duo from the Caribbean.

The space plane glided back to a runway landing at Spaceport America in the New Mexico desert, after a brief flight that gave passengers a few minutes of weightlessness.

This first private customer flight had been delayed for years; its success means Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic can now start offering monthly rides, joining Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin and Elon Musk's SpaceX in the space tourism business.

"That was by far the most awe-some thing I've ever done in my life," said Jon Goodwin, who competed in canoeing in the 1972 Olympics.

Goodwin, 80, was among the first to buy a Virgin Galactic ticket in 2005 and feared, after later being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, that he'd be out of luck. Since then he's climbed Mount Kilimanjaro and cycled back down, and said he hopes his spaceflight shows others with Parkinson's and other illnesses that "it doesn't stop you doing things."

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

He was joined on the flight by sweepstakes winner Keisha Schahaff, 46, a health coach from Anti-

gua, and her daughter, Anastatia Mayers, 18, a student at Scotland's University of Aberdeen. They high-fived and pumped their fists as the spaceport crowd cheered their return.

"A childhood dream has come true," said Schahaff, who took pink Antigua sand up with her. Added her daughter: "I have no words. The only thought I had the whole time was 'Wow!'"

With the company's astronaut trainer and one of the two pilots, it marked the first time women outnumbered men on a spaceflight, four to two.

Cheers erupted from families and friends watching below when the craft's rocket motor fired after it was released from the twin-fuselage aircraft that had carried it aloft. The rocket ship's portion of the flight lasted about 15 minutes and it reached 55 miles (88 kilometers) high.

It was Virgin Galactic's seventh trip to space since 2018, but the first with a ticket-holder. Branson, the company's founder, hopped on board for the first full-size crew ride in 2021. Italian military and government researchers soared in June on the first commercial flight. About 800 people are currently on Virgin Galactic's waiting list, according to the company.

In contrast to Virgin Galactic's plane-launched rocket ship, the capsules used by SpaceX and Blue Origin are fully automated and parachute back down.

is key to his efforts to make Russia a space superpower and move Russian launches from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

A previous Indian attempt to land at the moon's south pole in 2019 ended when the lander crashed into the moon's surface.

The lunar south pole is of particular interest to scientists, who believe the permanently shadowed polar craters may contain water. The frozen water in the rocks could be transformed by future explorers into air and rocket fuel.

"The moon is largely untouched and

the whole history of the moon is written on its face," said Ed Bloomer, an astronomer at Britain's Royal Observatory, Greenwich. "It is pristine and like nothing you get on Earth. It is its own laboratory."

The Luna-25 is to take samples of moon rock and dust. The samples are crucial to understanding the moon's environment ahead of building any base there, "otherwise we could be building things and having to shut them down six months later because everything has effectively been sand-blasted," Bloomer said.



Space tourist Jon Goodwin, (left), an 80-year-old British adventurer and former Olympian, reaches out to hug his wife after his flight to the edge of space aboard Virgin Galactic's rocket-powered plane Unity at Spaceport America, near Truth or Consequences, N.M., Thursday, Aug. 10. (AP)



Lawrence



Mills

## Discovery

**Extinct whale discovered:** A team of excavators from Mansoura University, Nile Delta, Egypt, documented a new discovery of fossils of the geographically widespread extinct family Basilosauridae which lived nearly 41 years ago.

The new basilosaurid genus and species, *Tutectus rayanensis*, dating from the middle Eocene Epoch, were found in Faiyum Oasis, nearly 10 km. southwest Cairo, the University said in a statement on Thursday.

This new whale is not only the smallest known basilosaurid, but it is also one of the oldest records of this family from Africa, the statement said, citing a research paper published by Communications Biology - an open access weekly journal from the London-based Nature Portfolio.

"Tutectus allows us to further test hypotheses regarding basilosaurids' early success in the aquatic ecosystem, which lasted into the latest Eocene, and their ability to outcompete amphibious stem whales and opportunistically adapt to new niches after they completely severed their ties to the land," the paper says.

"Tutectus also significantly expands the size range of the basilosaurids and reveals new details about their life histories, phylogeny, and paleobiogeography," it noted.

Soon after whales originated in the late early Eocene from small quadrupedal terrestrial artiodactyl ancestors in south Asia, semi-aquatic archaeocete whales rapidly dispersed westward to North Africa, West Africa, North America, and South America during the early middle Eocene.

As the late Eocene (Priabonian) progressed, the fully aquatic basilosaurid archaeocetes had replaced amphibious archaeocetes 10 and were the most abundant whales and ultimately extended into the geographic ranges occupied by modern cetaceans.

Basilosauridae was the first family of archaeocete whales known to science, according to the paper.

Basilosaurids were cosmopolitan, anatomically derived, and fully aquatic archaeocete whales that are thought to be close to the ancestry of extant (or crown) cetaceans. (KUNA)



**Offshore wind use by 2040:** Maine will procure at least 3,000 megawatts of electricity from offshore wind turbines by 2040 under a bill signed by Democratic Gov. **Janet Mills**, enough to power about half of the state's electricity load.

Incentives to ensure wind power developers steer clear of lucrative lobster

fishing grounds are included in the law, which puts Maine on a path to catch up with other states that already have offshore wind projects. The law sets a timeline for requests for offshore proposals,

as well as standards for port development and construction jobs.

Unlike other projects in the region, the Gulf of Maine wind turbines would showcase floating platform technology because



An attendant pours water on a child suffering from dengue as she receives treatment at Mugdha Medical College and Hospital in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Thursday, Aug. 10. (AP)



## Rookies, backups and players battling for starting jobs or roster spots get most of game action

# Joint practices provide more competition for NFL starters than preseason games

WASHINGTON, Aug. 12. (AP) — Some of the best competition in the NFL this summer takes place on practice fields.

More teams are holding joint practices and holding their star players out of preseason games. It's been a growing trend since the preseason schedule was shortened to three games.

A total of 27 teams are scheduled to participate in joint sessions this year, up from 23 last season. Thirteen teams are holding joint practices with two clubs, up from seven last year.

The joint sessions allow coaches to see their starters in a more controlled atmosphere with less fear of injury. Meanwhile, rookies, backups and players battling for starting jobs or roster spots get most of the game action.

"I think the joint practices are really going to be a good evaluation tool," Houston Texans general manager Nick Caserio said. "What a lot of teams have done throughout the league, sometimes your most competitive snaps and most competitive reps occur during the course of the week. Maybe you handle

the game a little bit differently."

Texans rookie C.J. Stroud is the only starting quarterback who has taken any snaps in the three NFL preseason games already played. Stroud, the No. 2 overall pick, threw one interception in four pass attempts. No. 1 pick Bryce Young will start for the Carolina Panthers against the New York Jets on Saturday.

Aaron Rodgers hasn't played a down in the preseason since 2018. Justin Herbert has never played in an exhibition game.

The Jets and Panthers faced each other in practice this week ahead of their game. The Jets will do it again next week with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Rodgers will likely get all of his preseason work with his new team in New York's joint practices.

"I'm a big fan of the scrimmages because you get to work against new schemes," Jets coach Robert Saleh said. "You get to work against new verbiage. You get to work against different humans, obviously in a respect-

ful way, but you go in there, you compete under a controlled environment, so you're not trying to make things up. We're not trying to scheme against them. We're still installing our stuff. You're just getting to do it against a different person and a different way of doing things, a different scheme. We're just trying to continue to get better, to be honest with you."

### FOOTBALL

Buccaneers veteran QB Baker Mayfield will start Friday night's preseason game against the Pittsburgh Steelers. Mayfield is competing with Kyle Trask for the starting job. Tom Brady played a few series in the preseason during his three seasons in Tampa Bay.

Two-time Super Bowl MVP Patrick Mahomes will play the first quarter in Kansas City's preseason opener on Sunday. Matthew Stafford didn't play in any exhibition games in his first two seasons with the Los Angeles Rams.



Miami Dolphins wide receiver Braylon Sanders (86) does drills during a joint practice against the Atlanta Falcons at the NFL football team's training facility in Miami Gardens, Fla. (AP)

The Rams will hold scrimmages with the Las Vegas Raiders and Denver Broncos over the next two weeks.

"I think as a competitor you always want to play, but at the same time, I totally understand the choice not to," Staf-

ford said. "Especially with the amount of experiences I've had in this league, I feel like I can get myself ready to play without doing that. And with the addition of all the joint practices that teams are doing, you really get some great work in there while being able to keep in somewhat of a safe environment."

The New York Giants and Detroit Lions practiced together this week leading into Friday night's game. Staying healthy while getting productive work is a priority.

"You have a bunch of competitive people that are hitting each other every day but we are going to try and take care of one another, keep people off the ground, stay away from the quarterback," Giants coach Brian Daboll said. "Just practice the right way like you are practicing against your team but again the competitive juices flow but do a good job of respecting them and look forward to that in return."

Players enjoy facing a different opponent. Coaches see more value in evaluating them.

# AL-leading Orioles edge Astros, extend streak to 76 series without being swept



Philadelphia Phillies' J.T. Realmuto hits a two-run home run against Washington Nationals pitcher Joe La Sorsa during the seventh inning of a baseball game in Philadelphia. (AP)

## Pirates rally past Braves

**BALTIMORE, Aug. 12, (AP) —** Adley Rutschman and Ryan Mountcastle homered, Félix Bautista worked through another shaky ninth inning and the Baltimore Orioles extended their streak to 76 series without being swept, edging the Houston Astros 5-4.

It was 5-3 when Bautista came on to pitch the ninth. Jose Altuve's one-out double and Alex Bregman's walk allowed the go-ahead run to come up, but catcher James McCann caught Yordan Alvarez's foul pop, holding onto the ball as he lost his balance and fell.

Tucker then drew a walk to load the bases, and Yainer Diaz followed with a line drive to the left side. Third baseman Ramón Urías made a dive for it and couldn't catch it, but he did prevent it from going all the way through and only one run came home.

Bautista then retired Jon Singleton on a popout for his 31st save in 37 chances.

Dean Kremer (11-4) allowed two runs and six hits in seven innings for AL East-leading Baltimore. Hunter Brown (8-8) allowed five runs and eight hits in six innings.

Houston got homers from Diaz and Altuve, who also singled and doubled twice.

### BASEBALL

Baltimore took a three-game lead in the AL East over Tampa Bay when the Rays lost to St. Louis later Thursday. Houston fell to 2 1/2 games behind first-place Texas in the AL West.

#### Cardinals 5, Rays 2

In St. Petersburg, Matthew Liberatore didn't allow a run in a career-best eight innings. Andrew Knizner and Tommy Edman homered as St. Louis took two of three games in its series with Tampa Bay.

Liberatore (2-4), making his second start since being called up from Triple-A Memphis, gave up two hits and had a career-high seven strikeouts. He retired his final 14 batters.

The Rays scored twice on two hits,

including Wander Franco's RBI triple, against JoJo Romero in the ninth.

Tampa Bay starter Zack Littell (2-3) allowed three runs and seven hits over six innings.

#### Dodgers 2, Rockies 1

Los Angeles, Max Muncy drew a bases-loaded, two-out walk to force in the go-ahead run in the eighth inning. Clayton Kershaw returned from the injured list and Los Angeles edged Colorado.

It was Daniel Bard's 36th walk in 40 innings for the Rockies.

The NL West-leading Dodgers won their fifth in a row against the division's worst team and extended their lead to 6 1/2 games over the San Francisco Giants.

Kershaw gave up one run and three hits in five innings, struck out four and didn't walk anyone in his first outing since July 27. The 35-year-old left-hander missed 35 games with left shoulder soreness.

Ryan Yarbrough (5-5) got the victory with three innings of relief. Brusdar Graterol pitched the ninth to earn his fifth save. Tommy Doyle (0-1) took the loss.

Elehuris Montero homered for Colorado.

#### Pirates 7, Braves 5

In Pittsburgh, Ke'Bryan Hayes drove in three runs for the third straight game. Liover Peguero knocked in two and Pittsburgh rallied past Atlanta.

Pittsburgh salvaged a split of a four-game series with the NL East leaders by overcoming an early four-run deficit behind Hayes and a strong

effort out of the bullpen by Thomas Hatch (1-0), who worked four scoreless innings in earning his first win in nearly three years. Colin Holderman earned the second save of his career.

Matt Olson hit his 40th home run of the season for Atlanta to move into a tie with Shohei Ohtani for the major-league lead. Orlando Arcia also homered for the Braves and Austin Riley added three hits. Bryce Elder (8-4) gave up five runs and six hits with two walks and five strikeouts in five innings.

#### Phillies 6, Nationals 2

In Philadelphia, Trea Turner, Nick Castellanos and J.T. Realmuto hit two-run homers, leading Philadelphia past Washington.

The Phillies took three of the four games in the series from the Nationals, including Michael Lorenzen's no-hitter on Wednesday night. Philadelphia moved 1 1/2 games ahead of idle San Francisco for the top spot in the NL wild-card race.

The only sour note in Thursday's victory for the Phillies was slugger Bryce Harper leaving the game in the top of the fifth inning with what the club called mid-back spasms. He was undergoing evaluation, the team said.

Matt Strahm (8-3) picked up the victory for the Phillies.

CJ Abrams, Joey Meneses, Keibert Ruiz and Ildemaro Vargas each had two hits for Washington (50-65). Vargas knocked in both Washington runs with two doubles.

#### Tigers 3, Twins 0

In Detroit, Riley Greene homered in the sixth inning and Detroit won

a pitchers' duel to take three of four games against Minnesota.

The Twins, who managed two singles, had won five straight after taking Monday's opener.

Reese Olson (2-5) pitched six scoreless innings, allowing the two hits and three walks while striking out eight. Chasen Shreve pitched the seventh, and converted starter Beau Brieske pitched the last two innings for his second save.

Kenta Maeda (3-7) took the loss despite only allowing Greene's homer in his six innings. He gave up three hits and a walk with four strikeouts.

Zack McKinstry hit a two-run double for Detroit.

#### Guardians 4, Blue Jays 3

In Cleveland, Noah Syndergaard won for the first time since April 30 and rookies Brayan Rocchio and José Tena sparked Cleveland's win over Toronto.

Syndergaard (2-5) allowed one run in 5 2/3 innings and was removed with the bases loaded and two outs in the sixth. Nick Sandlin retired Nathan Lukes on a ground ball to end the inning. Emmanuel Clase pitched the ninth for his 31st save in 39 chances.

Rocchio had RBI doubles in the second and fifth. Tena had an RBI single in the second for his first major league hit and a double in the fifth as the teams split the four-game series.

Alek Manoah (3-9) allowed four runs and four hits in four innings, striking out six and walking three. Whit Merrifield, Brandon Belt and Santiago Espinal had RBIs for Toronto.

#### Red Sox 2, Royals 0

In Boston, James Paxton worked 5 1/3 scoreless innings and five pitchers combined for the seven-hit shutout in Boston's win over Kansas City.

John Schreiber, Josh Winckowski and Chris Martin followed Paxton, and Kenley Jansen retired the side in order in the ninth inning for his 25th save as Boston moved five games over .500 at 60-55 and took three of four games from the Royals.

Alex Verdugo hit a sacrifice fly in the fourth inning to give Boston a 1-0 lead and Adam Duvall added an RBI double in the fifth. Paxton (7-3) scattered six hits with six strikeouts and no walks.

Austin Cox and Taylor Hearn worked the first three innings for Kansas City. Alec Marsh (0-6) went the final five innings, allowing two runs while striking out three.

## 6 weeks until training camps open

# Some teams 'may' not be done making moves

WASHINGTON, Aug. 12. (AP) — Kyle Dubas had just completed the biggest trade of the NHL offseason, landing defenseman Erik Karlsson in a three-team deal that furthers the Pittsburgh Penguins' desire to win now, when he was asked if other moves might be in store.

The team's new general manager and president of hockey operations said he thinks he's done this summer. Still, he acknowledged: "You can never make any promises. You always want to try and improve the team."

Rival GM Brian MacLellan of the Washington Capitals is still busy working the phones, not giving up on the hope of landing a top-six forward before NHL training camps next month.

"We're still talking to agents," MacLellan said after signing Tom Wilson to a seven-year extension. "We're still talking to a few teams about a trade, so we'll see how it pans out at the end."

### ICE HOCKEY

For the second time in three years, Evgeny Kuznetsov is in trade talk chatter. The talented but inconsistent Capitals center changed agents after putting up 55 points in 78 games—more than a 30-point drop from the previous season.

Kuznetsov is 31 and has two more years left on his contract at a hefty salary cap hit of \$7.8 million. The Capitals, who like the Penguins are trying to get back in the playoffs and remain contenders, aren't going to give away the player who led them in scoring on their 2018 Stanley Cup run.

But if something makes sense, Washington could move on from Kuznetsov or trade underachieving forward Anthony Mantha.

"I think we had a few discussions at the draft that might carry forward or might not carry forward," MacLellan said. "We're comfortable with where we're at. We'd still like to change. We'll see where it goes here."

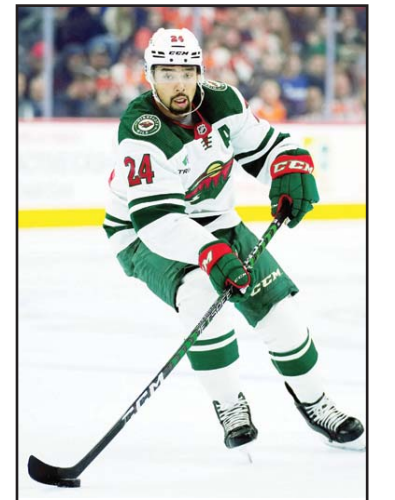
The Carolina Hurricanes and Calgary Flames are also worth watching.

Carolina brought back defenseman Tony DeAngelo following his buy-out by Philadelphia and could look to trade Brett Pesce or Brady Skjei to clear a blue-line log jam. Each player has just a year left on his contract.

"My job as the general manager is just to stay on the phone every day and continue to look to see if we can make our team better - hard to do right now," GM Don Waddell said recently, citing the Hurricanes' salary cap crunch. "But certainly we'll continue to talk to different teams and free agents and see what shakes out."

Elias Lindholm, whom the Hurricanes traded to the Flames in 2018, is entering the final year of his contract. New Calgary GM Craig Conroy has already traded forward Tyler Toffoli to New Jersey as part of the team's retooling process, and Lindholm could be next.

The Winnipeg Jets have yet to trade two key players a year before they would be unrestricted free agents: 2020 Vezina Trophy-winning goal-



In this file photo, Minnesota Wild's Matt Dumba controls the puck during an NHL hockey game against the Philadelphia Flyers, March 23, 2023, in Philadelphia. Dumba has agreed to a one-year, \$3.9 million contract with the Arizona Coyotes, a person familiar with the deal told The Associated Press. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the contract has not been signed yet. (AP)

tender Connor Hellebuyck and top center Mark Scheifele. They bought out former captain Blake Wheeler in the first step of a roster overhaul, but don't expect Hellebuyck or Scheifele to stay in Winnipeg too much longer.

Toronto on Wednesday signed one of the veteran goaltenders left on the market, giving Martin Jones a \$875,000 contract for next season. Jaroslav Halak, Brian Elliott and Aaron Dell are among goalies in their 30s still available.

Phil Kessel, the NHL's ironman fresh off winning the Stanley Cup with Vegas and getting his name on the trophy for the third time, is also unsigned. The 35-year-old forward was a healthy scratch for the vast majority of the playoffs, though his regular-season streak is intact at 1,064 consecutive games played.

Eric Staal, who reached the final with Florida and turns 39 in October, is another veteran option, as is center Derick Brassard. For teams looking for a defenseman, 36-year-old Nick Holden is out there, along with Seth Jones' brother, Caleb, was not tendered a qualifying offer by Chicago and is a young unrestricted free agent at 26.

Among restricted free agents, Anaheim's Trevor Zegras, Philadelphia's Morgan Frost and Edmonton's Evan Bouchard are among those who still need a contract.

Kane underwent hip resurfacing surgery June 1, an invasive operation with a recovery time of four to six months. While that rehab continues, rumors have swirled linking Kane to his hometown Buffalo Sabres, who are on the rise and could use a player with three Stanley Cup rings.

The 34-year-old Kane is expected to garner significant interest around the league from teams hoping he can return to All-Star form.

Longtime Chicago teammate Jonathan Toews is also a free agent, though he could decide to retire at age 35 after missing significant time.

## MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, Aug. 12. (AP) — MLB games results and standings.

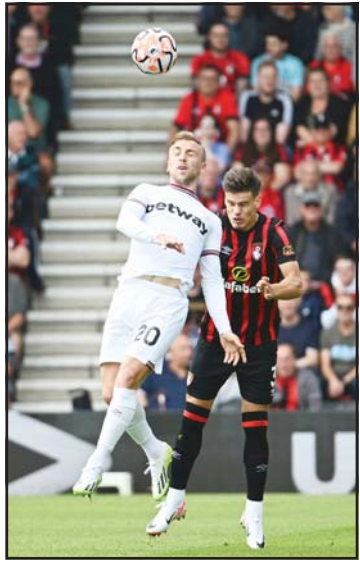
American League				National League					
East Division				East Division					
W	L	Pct	GB	W	L	Pct	GB		
Baltimore	71	44	.617	—	Atlanta	72	41	.637	—
Tampa Bay	69	48	.590	3	Philadelphia	64	52	.552	9-1/2
Toronto	65	52	.556	7	Miami	60	56	.517	13-1/2
Boston	60	55	.522	11	New York	52	62	.456	20-1/2
New York	59	56	.513	12	Washington	50	66	.431	23-1/2
Central Division				Central Division					
W	L	Pct	GB	W	L	Pct	GB		
Minnesota	60	57	.513	—	Milwaukee	62	54	.534	—
Cleveland	56	60	.483	3-1/2	Cincinnati	60	57	.513	2-1/2
Detroit	52	63	.452	7	Chicago	59	56	.513	2-1/2
Chicago	47	69	.405	12-1/2	Pittsburgh	52	63	.452	9-1/2
Kansas City	37	80	.316	23	St. Louis	51	65	.440	11
West Division				West Division					
W	L	Pct	GB	W	L	Pct	GB		
Texas	68	47	.591	—	Los Angeles	68	46	.596	—
Houston	66	50	.569	2-1/2	San Francisco	62	53	.539	6-1/2
Seattle	62	52	.544	5-1/2	Arizona	57	58	.496	11-1/2
Los Angeles	58	58	.500	10-1/2	San Diego	55	60	.478	13-1/2
Oakland	33	82	.287	35	Colorado	45	70	.391	23-1/2



Baltimore Orioles starting pitcher Dean Kremer throws to the Houston Astros in the first inning of a baseball game in Baltimore. (AP)



## SPORTS



West Ham United's Jarrod Bowen, (left), and Bournemouth's Milos Kerkez battle for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Bournemouth and West Ham United at the Vitality Stadium, Bournemouth, England. (AP)

## Luton make losing EPL debut against Brighton

# Everton waste slew of chances and lose to Fulham

LIVERPOOL, England, Aug. 12. (AP) — Everton paid the price for a slew of missed chances by conceding in the 73rd minute to Bobby De Cordova-Reid in a 1-0 home loss to Fulham in the teams' Premier League opener on Saturday.

A new campaign brought new hope for Everton, which has fought to avoid

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relegation in recent seasons. But for all the improvements that manager Sean Dyche has made over the summer, it appears he has not yet solved Everton's problems in front of goal.

De Cordova-Reid tapped in at the far post after Andreas Pereira slid in to get a cross over to the winger.

Everton — the Premier League's lowest scorer last season — was again without striker Dominic Calvert-Lewin and generated twice as many shots (19-9) as

the visitors. Michael Keane's first-half goal for



Bournemouth's Ilya Zabarnyi, (left), and West Ham United's Michail Antonio battle for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Bournemouth and West Ham United at the Vitality Stadium, Bournemouth, England. (AP)

Everton was disallowed as the center back turned the ball into an empty net and celebrated almost apologetically before referee Stuart Attwell, having initially not blown, ruled there had been an infringement in the collision between goalkeeper Bernd Leno and James Tarkowski.

Fulham striker Aleksandar Mitrovic started on the bench after ongoing interest from Saudi Arabia's Al-Hilal.

American defender Tim Ream started in his first competitive match for Fulham since breaking his right arm on April 30 against Manchester City.

### Brighton 4, Luton 1

Joao Pedro and Simon Adingra scored on their debut as Brighton shrugged off Moises Caicedo's ongoing transfer saga by beating Premier League newcomer Luton 4-1 in their season opener.

Pedro, the club's record signing, doubled Brighton's lead following Solly March's first-half opener by converting a 71st-minute penalty after being brought down by Luton captain Tom Lockyer.

Carlton Morris slotted home from the spot at the other end following Lewis Dunk's handball to set up a tense finale but Adingra capitalized on a big error from Pelly Ruddock Mpanzu to make it 3-1 before fellow substitute Evan Ferguson added the fourth in injury time.

Brighton's offseason has been dominated by speculation about Caicedo, with the club this week accepting what would be a record fee for a transfer in Britain of around 110 million pounds (\$140 million) from Liverpool for the star midfielder. However, the deal has yet to be completed, with reports saying Caicedo is intent on joining Chelsea instead.

The 21-year-old Ecuador international was absent from the Amex Stadium as Brighton started its first season that will

feature European soccer.

### Palace 1, Sheff United 0

Odsome Edouard's goal early in the second half earned Crystal Palace a 1-0 opening win at Sheffield United to worsen the gloom at Bramall Lane.

Edouard struck from close range four minutes after the restart in a game that Palace largely dominated. Jordan Ayew found a good position on the right-hand side and sent in a tricky low cross which Edouard stabbed in from close range.

Roy Hodgson's Palace had two further goals disallowed, while Blades goalkeeper Wes Foderingham made a number of saves to keep his side in the game.

Hodgson was involved in a touch-line incident with Max Lowe midway through the second half when the Blades defender — in a hurry to reclaim the ball — appeared to shove the 76-year-old manager in the midriff. But Hodgson played down the incident later, telling the BBC he didn't think it was malicious.

### Bournemouth 1, West Ham 1

Dominic Solanke scored a late goal to help Bournemouth salvage a 1-1 draw against West Ham in Andoni Iraola's debut as manager of the Cherries.

Solanke collected a loose ball in the box, rounded goalkeeper Alphonse Areola, and slotted it into the net in the 82nd minute at Vitality Stadium.

Jarrod Bowen had put the Hammers ahead with a left-footed curler in the 51st.

Iraola was hired in June after Bournemouth fired Gary O'Neil, who was let go despite keeping the team in the Premier League last season with four matches to spare. O'Neil was hired this week as manager of Wolverhampton.

# Sweden oust Japan to set up showdown with Spain

'We will come back stronger'

AUCKLAND, New Zealand, Aug. 12. (AP) — Sweden first knocked off the United States and then bounced Japan to snag a spot in the semifinals of the Women's World Cup.

The Swedes, the World Cup runners-up in 2003 and three-time third-place finishers, eliminated previously unbeaten Japan 2-1 in quarterfinal. With Japan out of the tournament, this year's World Cup will crown a first-time winner.

The sold-out crowd at Eden Park, where Sweden will play in the semifinals on Tuesday against Spain, danced to songs by Swedish rock band Abba as it was played throughout the stadium after the win. Amanda Ilestedt scored a first-half goal and Filippa Angeldal converted a second-half penalty to give Sweden the mild upset and send the Swedes to the semifinals for the fifth time.

"Obviously we were very happy with the win against the U.S., but we knew we had to recharge and think about Japan," midfielder Kosovare Asllani said. "We knew we were going to play a very skilled and technical team, and we didn't want them to have a lot of time on the ball, because that's when they're the best."

Japan had been so prolific with 14 goals in rolling to a 4-0 tournament record, but the Japanese struggled for most of the game to keep up with the taller Swedish team. When Sweden went up 2-0 late in the second, Japan seemed out of the tournament.

But the Japanese finally made a late comeback and seriously pressured Sweden goalkeeper Zecira Musovic, who was fresh off a World Cup-record 11 saves in the win over the United States.

Riko Ueki's penalty attempt for Japan in the 76th minute hit the crossbar and bounced clear of the goal, but Musovic was finally beaten in the 86th minute when substitute Honoka Hayashi's penalty cut Sweden's lead to 2-1.

That was all the Japanese mustered as Sweden advanced to play Spain, which beat the Netherlands 2-1 in extra time earlier Friday. Japan had beaten Spain 4-0 in group play.

Saki Kumagai, playing in her fourth World Cup and Japan's captain, was in tears with the rest of her teammates following the loss.

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"We fought so hard because we wanted it," she said. "We want to go to the next round, of course. We will come back stronger."

Japan's exit means there will be a first-time winner at this World Cup. Japan won in 2011, and previous winners Germany, Norway and the United States were all eliminated earlier in the tournament.

Ilestedt broke through for Sweden in the 32nd minute off a free kick that ricocheted among the players in front of the goal before landing at her feet for the goal. It was the defender's fourth of the World Cup.

Angeldal added the penalty kick in the 51st minute after Fuka Nagano's handball in the box was confirmed by video review.

Japan's run in the World Cup ended with 15 goals, more than any team left in the tournament. Hinata Miyazawa finished with five of those goals to lead the Golden Boot race, matching the team record set by Homare Sawa in Japan's 2011 title run.

Sweden was riding high after eliminating the two-time defending champion Americans on penalties following a scoreless draw on Sunday. The victory came by just millimeters, when goal-line technology showed that Lina Hurtig's attempt crossed the line before it could be saved by American goalkeeper Alyssa Naeher.

Japan, No. 11 in the FIFA rankings, earned a place in the quarterfinals with a 3-1 victory over Norway.

The game was a clash of styles from the start: third-ranked Sweden was



Japan's goalkeeper Ayaka Yamashita, (background center), punches the ball during the Women's World Cup quarterfinal match between Japan and Sweden at Eden Park in Auckland. (AP)

more physical while Japan was more technical. Sweden dominated possession for much of the match and had the better chances.

Angeldal's penalty appeared to rattle the Japanese, who struggled against the taller and more athletic Swedes. Japan didn't get a shot off until the 63rd minute. Japan had scored at least twice in each of its previous games, but had never come back from down two goals in World Cup play.

At the Tokyo Olympics, Sweden eliminated Japan on home soil in the quarterfinals. Sweden advanced to the gold medal game but lost to Canada.

The Swedes have never won a title at either the World Cup or the Olympics.

Jorge Vilda was more interested in the aftermath back in Spain if his team won its Women's World Cup quarterfinal than he was about a rattling 5.0 magnitude earthquake that shook Wellington an hour before kickoff against Netherlands.

Salma Paralluelo was unshaken by the tremor or the high-pressure stakes, scoring late in extra time to give Spain a 2-1 victory and a place in the Women's World Cup semifinals for the first time.

The 19-year-old Paralluelo started the match on the bench for the first time at this World Cup and made her entry just in time to make history. Spain dominated a scoreless first half and 2019 finalist Netherlands had a penalty scrubbed out by the VAR in the 62nd minute after a tussle between Irene Paredes on Dutch forward Lineth Beerensteyn.

Mariona Caldentey scored from the spot in the 81st minute after defender Stefanie van der Gragt was penalized for hand ball as a cross was fired into the area.

Then van der Gragt, moving up front, scored in stoppage time to equalize at 1-1 and send the match into extra time.

Paralluelo broke down the left off Jennie Hermosa's pass in the 111th minute, swiveled past one defender, propped and sent her left-foot shot into the far corner of the net. Spain will meet either No. 3-ranked Sweden or 2011 champion Japan in the semifinals.

Vilda rode the roller-coaster of emotions that fans in Spain and the Netherlands, watching a match that for them kicked off at 3 a.m., and the 32,000 fans in the stadium experienced.

Vilda was confident that fans who watched in the early would not have been disappointed.

He praised Paralluelo, a student athlete who specialized in running the 400-meters before turning to soccer, for filling her role so expertly, particularly at a time when superstar Alexia Puteallas' playing time has been limited.

The Dutch were unusually passive in the first half, at their most dangerous



Spain's Mariona Caldentey reacts after scoring her team's first goal during the Women's World Cup quarterfinal soccer match between Spain and the Netherlands in Wellington, New Zealand. (AP)

## Texans beat the Patriots

# Stroud struggles in his preseason debut

when they sent long balls forward.

Beerensteyn who had celebrated the United States' exit from the tournament at an earlier news conference, was the greatest threat to Spain through the second half and in extra time when she had two good chances but couldn't convert.

Spain also had narrow misses, in the 17th minute when Alba Redondo hit the post twice.

For Netherlands, the penalty that was awarded and then overturned was difficult to come to terms with.

FOXBOROUGH, Mass., Aug. 12. (AP) — C.J. Stroud wouldn't change much about stepping on the field for the first time against an NFL opponent.

Except for one play, Stroud had a short and at times shaky debut that included an interception, Davis Mills threw a 6-yard touchdown pass to rookie Tank Dell and the Houston Texans beat the New England Patriots 20-9 in the teams' preseason opener.

Stroud, drafted second overall out of Ohio State, played the first two series and went 2 of 4 for 13 yards. He rushed twice for 6 yards and was sacked once.

Mills — who started 15 games last season — took over for Stroud and finished 9 of 12 for 99 yards while playing the balance of the opening half. His touchdown pass capped a seven-play, 62-yard drive that ended with Dell juggling and pulling in the score from his back.

Dalton Keene added a 1-yard touchdown run in the third quarter. Case Keenum had a 5-yard TD pass to Alex Bachman in the fourth. Dell ended his night with five catches for 65 yards.

The Patriots gave most of their projected starters the night off, including quarterback Mac Jones.

Backup Bailey Zappe started in his place and went 12 of 14 for 79 yards, playing the entire first half and one series in the third quarter. His best throw of the night was a 27-yard dart to Tyquan Thornton.

Patriots coach Bill Belichick said coming in with several offensive linemen dealing with injuries contributed to the offense being unable to finish some drives.

Rookie quarterback Malik Cun-

ningham, who went undrafted out of Louisville, added a late 9-yard touchdown run. Patriots rookie cornerback Christian Gonzalez had three tackles and forced a fumble.

Stroud is vying with Mills to be Houston's starter. The Texans have mostly split first-team snaps between the two during training camp.

Mills, despite a record of just 5-29-1 as a starter the past two seasons, looked much more comfortable Thursday. Meanwhile, Stroud spent most of his limited snaps under nearly constant pressure from the Patriots defense.

Starting on his own 25 following a game-opening touchback, Stroud came out throwing and completed an 8-yard pass to Nico Collins on the Texans' first play from scrimmage.

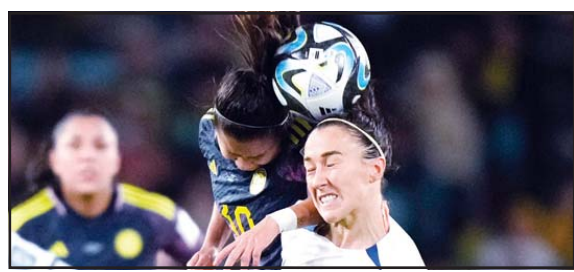
### FOOTBALL

After a few short runs by Devin Singletary gave Houston a new set of downs, Stroud was dropped for a 15-yard sack when he was unable to avoid the grasp of Daniel Ekuale.

Stroud was flushed out of the pocket and scrambled for 4 yards on the next play. Facing third-and-21, he dropped back to pass again, throwing in the direction of Dell. But Jalen Mills read the play from the start, stepped in front and picked it off.

The Patriots took over on Houston's 24, but wound up settling for a 44-yard Nick Folk field goal after their first drive of the night was stalled by Denzel Perryman's sack after three plays.





Colombia's Leicy Santos and England's Lucy Bronze jump for the ball during the Women's World Cup quarter-final soccer match between England and Colombia at Stadium Australia in Sydney, Australia. (AP)

# Sports

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## England, Australia advance to WC semis

France out

**SYDNEY, Aug 12, (AP): Alessia Russo fired England into the semifinals of the Women's World Cup in a 2-1 win against Colombia on Saturday.**

The Arsenal striker's second-half goal completed a come-from-behind win for the Lionesses after Leicy Santos had given the Colombians a first-half lead.

Lauren Hemp equalized before half-time and Russo struck the winner in the 63rd minute as England advanced to the semifinals for the third straight time. It will face co-host Australia for a spot in the final.

Sarina Wiegman is also a step closer to her second consecutive Women's World Cup final after her Netherlands team was runner-up to the United States

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in 2019. England lost in the semifinals in 2015 and 2019, going out to Japan and the United States, respectively.

Wiegman led the Lionesses to victory in the European Championship last year, having won that competition with Netherlands in 2017.

With many of the favorites, including America, Germany, France and Japan, already eliminated, England will be increasingly confident that it can win its first Women's World Cup.

It showed character to come back from Santos' goal in the 44th at Stadium Australia, as well as cope with a partisan crowd that was hugely in favor of Colombia.

Then there was the physical approach of their opponents, who weighed in with a number of heavy challenges. Rachel Daly was sent to the ground after one particularly strong tackle in the first half and Alex Greenwood was caught in the face by Mayra Ramirez' trailing arm.

Yet it was Colombia that suffered an early blow when Carolina Arias injured her left knee and had to be substituted. Later in the half she was seen sobbing on the bench after receiving treatment.

England created the clearer chances with Russo and Daly forcing saves from goalkeeper Catalina Perez.

The game burst into life as it neared half-time, with the crowd going wild when Santos gave Colombia an unex-



Australia players celebrate after winning the Women's World Cup quarterfinal soccer match between Australia and France in Brisbane, Australia. (AP)

pected lead.

Taking the ball on the right of the box, she shaped to cross, but her effort instead flew directly toward goal, catching out England keeper Mary Earps and dipping under the bar.

It sparked an eruption of noise, while Colombia's substitutes ran to join in the celebrations with Santos and the rest of the players.

If going behind for the first time in the tournament came as a shock to England, it didn't show.

In response, the Lionesses produced arguably their most composed play as they controlled possession and probed Colombia's half.

They evened the score after a mistake from Perez in the seventh minute of first-half stoppage time.

The keeper should have easily gathered the ball when Russo mis-controlled in the box, but let it slip out of her grasp and Hemp poked it over the line.

Russo's winner came after England

had dominated the second half without managing to open up Colombia's defense. Georgia Stanway collected the ball around 40 yards (meters) from goal and slipped a pass to the striker, who held off a challenge from Daniela Arias before firing low into the far corner from a tight angle.

Colombia had made history by securing a place in the last eight for the first time and was the last remaining team from the Americas in the tournament.

But it couldn't find an equalizer, with Lorena Bedoya Durango's long-range effort the closest it came to sending the game into extra time.

England will play Australia in Sydney on Wednesday.

Australia edged France on penalty kicks to reach the Women's World Cup semifinals for the first time.

Cortnee Vine took Australia's 10th penalty from the spot and calmly converted to give the Matildas a 7-6 win in the shootout after the quarterfinal match

finished 0-0 after regulation and extra time.

The Australians missed two earlier chances to clinch the dramatic shootout but ultimately it didn't matter as they ended a long curse for tournament hosts. The Australians became the only team other than the United States to advance past the quarterfinals of a Women's World Cup as the host nation.

Australian goalkeeper Mackenzie Arnold kept the Matildas in the game in extra time and made a string of clutch saves in the shootout - before and after missing with her own attempt that could have sealed the win.

Australia had lost all three of its previous quarterfinals at Women's World Cups and went into the knockout game under intense pressure knowing that six of the previous hosts were eliminated at the quarterfinal stage, including France in 2019. Australia is co-hosting the tournament with New Zealand.

The French were playing in the quar-

terfinals for the fourth consecutive time but its only win remains its first, beating England on penalties in 2011 and placing fourth. A 2-1 loss to eventual champion U.S. team finished off their home tournament four years ago.

Both teams had chances to win it in regulation, and star striker Sam Kerr's first meaningful appearance of the tournament triggered a surge in tempo from the Australians when she went on in the 55th minute but ultimately no goals.

The French team celebrated momentarily in extra time when it appeared Australian defender Alanna Kennedy's misdirected header from a corner kick had produced an own goal, but referee Maria Carvajal immediately disallowed it. Carvajal ruled that France captain Wendie Renard had pulled the jersey of Australian forward Caitlin Foord in the area.

It would have been a contentious goal, regardless, with France awarded the corner despite the ball appearing

to go out off Vicki Becho in the 10th minute of extra time.

Becho was in the thick of the late action, firing a shot early in the second period of extra time that Arnold pushed over her right post. The Australian keeper also blocked shots from Grace Geyoro and veteran striker Eugenie Le Sommer late to take the game to a shootout, momentarily quieting the 49,461-strong crowd.

A tension-filled shootout started with Arnold blocking the first shot diving to her right from Selma Bacha.

Foord took Australia's first shot, calmly slotting it past Solene Durand, who went on deep in extra time as France's replacement goalkeeper.

Steph Catley missed with Australia's second shot and Renard stepped up and converted despite a chorus of booing from the crowd to give France a 2-1 lead.

See Also Page 15

Arsenal's opener featured delayed start and nervy finish

## Haaland scores 2 as City open title defense with win

**BURNLEY, England, Aug 12, (AP): Erling Haaland has started his second season in English soccer just like his first — with two goals in a win to open Manchester City's title defense in the Premier League.**

The Norway striker dispatched clinical finishes in the fourth and 36th minutes on Friday as City eased to a 3-0 victory at Burnley, a promoted team managed by City great Vincent Kompany, in the first match of England's top division. Defensive midfielder Rodri scored the other goal.

Haaland enjoyed a spectacular first year at City, scoring 52 goals in all competitions — including 36 in the league — as Pep Guardiola's team won the Premier League-FA Cup-Champions League treble.

He opened last season with a double at West Ham in a signal of what was to come and he made another statement at Turf Moor, even if it didn't completely satisfy Guardiola. The City manager came onto the field at half-time and remonstrated with Haaland as they walked toward the tunnel, even flicking away a camera that was following the pair.

"We are still in the start phase of this marathon but I'm not stressing. I'm relaxed," Haaland said. "I have to keep on developing and enjoy the chaos around me and perform on the pitch."

It wasn't the perfect evening for City, which is bidding to become the first team in English soccer history to win four straight top-flight league titles.

Kevin De Bruyne, starting for the first time since coming off early in the Champions League final with a hamstring problem, lasted 23 minutes before needing to be substituted after pulling up.

Guardiola said it was a recurrence of the same problem.

"It's a pity — he has recovered well but now we have lost him for some time," Guardiola said.

Also during the first half, City defender Rico Lewis was struck by a lighter thrown from the crowd as he lay on the ground near the corner flag after being fouled. Burnley said a fan

had been removed from the stadium by police in an incident that further ruined its return to the Premier League after one season away.

Haaland gave City the lead with his first touch in the game when he latched onto Rodri's nod-down from De Bruyne's right-wing cross and sidefooted a finish into the bottom corner.

His second goal was more spectacular and came after Julian Alvarez laid off a cross from Kyle Walker. With his back to goal, Haaland sent a first-time shot on the turn off the underside of the crossbar and into the top corner.

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Haaland was without a goal in his last six matches for City, including the loss to Arsenal in a penalty shootout in the Community Shield on Sunday.

"I just have to keep on working, keep relaxing and not to focus on negative things," Haaland said.

Rodri, who scored City's winner in

the Champions League final against Inter Milan in June, smashed home the third goal from close range in the 75th minute after Burnley failed to clear a free kick into the area.

Burnley ended the game with 10 men when Morocco winger Anass Zaroury was shown a straight red card for a dangerous tackle on Walker deep into second-half stoppage time. The referee initially gave a yellow card but upgraded it after viewing the pitchside monitor.

City, which gave a debut to center-back Josko Gvardiol as a second-half substitute, next plays Sevilla in the UEFA Super Cup on Wednesday. It's a match between the winners of last season's Champions League and Europa League.

Arsenal beats Forest 2-1 in Premier League opener delayed by ticketing malfunction at stadium.

Eddie Nketiah and Bukayo Saka scored first-half goals as Arsenal looked to be heading for a comfortable win in a game delayed by 30 minutes because supporters couldn't get into the stadium on time.

But substitute Taiwo Awoniyi pulled a goal back on a quick counter-attack in the 83rd to give the visitors hope, although they never came close to an equalizer through seven minutes of stoppage time.

The kickoff was delayed after the club's new digital ticketing system malfunctioned to leave tens of thousands of supporters unable to get through the gates, before the turnstiles were eventually able to open.

Once the game got started, it took Arsenal a little more than 30 minutes to ensure it was an unpleasant return to the Emirates for former Gunners goalkeeper Matt Turner, the United States No. 1 who only completed his move from the London club to Nottingham this week.

Nketiah put Arsenal ahead in the 26th after being teed up by an eye-catching assist from Gabriel Martinelli. The Brazilian winger dribbled down the left flank and then took produced a spin move between two defenders and a backheel flick to Nketiah in the box, whose shot took a slight deflection before sneaking past Turner.

Saka then produced another high-light-reel moment just six minutes later, cutting in from the right and curling a left-footed long-range strike into the far corner past the outstretched Turner.

All three of Arsenal's summer signings started the game, with Declan Rice and Kai Havertz filling in midfield and Jurrien Timber playing in at left-back for the not-fully-fit Oleksandr Zinchenko.

But Timber had to go off with a leg injury early in the second half, while Rice had three efforts on goal saved by Turner.

With Arsenal unable to build on its lead, substitute Anthony Elanga sparked hopes of a comeback when he ran the length of the field on a counter following an Arsenal corner and squared the ball for Awoniyi to finish from close range.

Forest couldn't test Arsenal goalkeeper Aaron Ramsdale again, though, with Arsenal captain Martin Odegaard coming the closest to scoring in stoppage time with a shot over the bar.

## Kane 'buzzing' after Bayern move in pursuit of trophies

**MUNICH, Aug 12, (AP): England captain Harry Kane has left Tottenham behind. Now he's chasing trophies at Bayern Munich.**

The fee for Kane could hit more than 100 million pounds (\$110 million), which breaks the Bundesliga transfer record and is a huge sum for a player who would have been out of contract next year.

After 19 years at Tottenham and no trophies, Kane is almost assured of winning something at Bayern, the German league champion 11 years running. Bayern's also a Champions League contender. Tottenham isn't playing in Europe at all this season.

The 30-year-old Kane could lift a trophy - though hardly a major one - on his first day at Bayern if he plays in Saturday's German Super Cup season-opener against Leipzig. Bayern indicated he will likely play.



Kane

A few months of negotiations came 24 hours of the transfer as public theater. First there was Kane's delayed departure from England on Friday amid conflicting reports over whether he had Spurs' permission to fly to Germany, then a private jet flight tracked by tens of thousands of fans online.

Bayern sent a bright red car to collect Kane, who was tracked by fans filming him through the glass stairwell of the clinic where he took medical tests, while supporters waited late into the night outside club headquarters. Official confirmation of a four-year contract followed Saturday morning.

Kane left open the possibility of one day returning to Tottenham in a farewell message that was "not a goodbye because you never know how things pan out in the future." Still, he seemed to acknowledge that joining Bayern was a step up and that the team where he spent 19 years is no longer among Europe's

best. "I think FC Bayern Munich is one of the biggest clubs in the world and I've always said throughout my career I want to keep improving and keep pushing myself to be the very best," he said in a video released by Bayern. "And I felt like it was the right step in my career to really push myself and test myself on the highest level."

Tottenham challenged for Premier League titles in the mid-2010s under Mauricio Pochettino and reached the Champions League final in 2019 - still the closest Kane has come to a major prize.

Pochettino was fired as manager in November 2019 and since then Spurs has seen the acrimonious reigns of Jose Mourinho and Anto-

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nio Conte, either side of a disastrous four-month spell with Nuno Espirito Santo. Kane's departure leaves new manager Ange Postecoglou to oversee a rebuild.

At Tottenham, Kane became the second highest-scoring player in Premier League history - with 213 goals, 47 behind Alan Shearer.

The reported fee for Kane breaks the Bundesliga transfer record set when Bayern signed French defender Lucas Hernandez from Atletico Madrid in 2019.

Bayern president Herbert Hainer said Kane would be a "real asset to the entire Bundesliga."

"We're very happy about this top-quality new arrival," Hainer said. "The transfer required tenacity, bite and perseverance - my compliments to all those involved in these negotiations at FC Bayern."

Bayern won an 11th consecutive Bundesliga title last season, but only one day returning to Tottenham in a farewell message that was "not a goodbye because you never know how things pan out in the future." Still, he seemed to acknowledge that joining Bayern was a step up and that the team where he spent 19 years is no longer among Europe's