



football

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ARAB TIMES

THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY IN FREE KUWAIT
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soccer

Pages 15 & 16

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2023 / MUHARRAM 29, 1445 AH

emergency number 112

NO. 18367

16 PAGES

150 FILS

Speaker submits visa reciprocity bill



A group of young Kuwaitis embark on a journey aboard a traditional ship as part of the 32nd Pearl Diving Festival. — See Page 2

KUNA photo

'As they do'

Bid to raise business environment

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun has submitted a bill on enforcing reciprocity procedures in granting entry visas for the citizens of foreign countries, matching the visa regulations that these countries apply on Kuwaitis.

According to the bill, the Council of Ministers shall specify the regulations concerning every country in line with the visa regulations and conditions they apply on the citizens of Kuwait. Al-Saadoun pointed out in the explanatory memorandum that some countries enforce tough regulations such as taking fingerprints and other requirements for Kuwaitis applying for a visa. He stressed the need for Kuwait to take the same measures.

MP Daoud Maarefi submitted a proposal for banks to release the financial guarantee that the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) imposed on the owners of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) one year after the money was deposited in the banks. He suggested that PAM should report to the financing institutions in case the SMEs commit violations like hiring workers who are not under their sponsorship or bringing workers to Kuwait without giving them jobs.

In view of the decision of the Constitutional Court to nullify Article 198 of Penal Code number 16/1960, MP Khalid Al-Otaibi submitted a bill to amend this article to be as follows: "Whoever engages in immoral acts in public where he can be seen or heard by other people, deliberately acts like the opposite gender even if he is not suffering from a certain health condition, decorates his clothes or wears clothes which violate the local customs except for cultural purposes and in certain places, will be imprisoned for one year or fined KD 1,000 maximum. The judge has the authority to send the offender to the concerned health centers if necessary. In case the offender repeats the crime within three years after the issuance of the court verdict against him, he will be imprisoned for two years maximum and fined KD 2,000 maximum."

Meanwhile, MP Jenan Bu Shehri praised the decision of HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to suspend the implementation of a resolution on granting exceptional salaries to senior officials. She also lauded the directive to review the retirees' pension.

She disclosed that she will submit a memorandum on the legal and administrative violations associated with the suspended decision; which is the main point of the grilling motion she filed against Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and National Assembly Affairs Essa Al-Kandari.

On the other hand, MP Ahmed Lari has asked Al-Kandari to provide him with the necessary information including the total amount allocated for the salaries and allowances — more than KD 5,000 per senior official and consultant; percentage of this amount compared to the total budget for salaries and allowances; number of officials and consultants receiving KD 5,000 and up; and their percentage compared to the total number of workers.

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Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida delivers a speech during the memorial service for the war dead, as Japan marks the 78th anniversary of Japan's World War II defeat, at the Nippon Budokan hall in Tokyo, Tuesday, Aug. 15, 2023. (AP)

Zahed Matar

Cabinet nod to 'allowances' to micro-enterprise owners

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15, (KUNA): The Cabinet on Monday approved a ministerial proposal to pay monthly social allowance and child allowance to Kuwaiti owners of micro-enterprises.

The Cabinet approved granting monthly social allowance and children's allowance to Kuwaiti owners of micro-enterprises and businesses of a special nature, announced Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Issa Al-Kandari in a statement.

The decision was taken by the Cabinet, chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmed Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, in its weekly meeting held at Seif Palace earlier today.

The step was taken upon a proposal presented by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and in line with the decision of the Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Muhammad Othman Al-Aiban in this regard.

The move aims to improve the business environment in Kuwait, encourages young nationals to have their own micro-enterprises and practice activities of a special nature.

It also aims to cut the financial burdens on the state budget through reducing the number of applicants for employment in state agencies.

The Cabinet also reviewed a number of reports submitted by the Head of the Government Performance Follow-up Agency Sheikh Ahmad Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and a number of the agency's officials.

The reports included a report on the agency's performance for the year 2022 regarding following up the enforcement of ministerial decisions and the implementation of government projects as well as the public opinion poll conducted by the agency to improve the quality of services provided by some government agencies.

The ministers also studied the agency's report on the State Audit Bureau's report on the implementation of the state budget for the fiscal year 2022-2023, and its recommendations for ministries and government agencies to upgrade performance and address shortcomings.



In this image provided by the Russian Emergency Situations Ministry press service, firefighters try to extinguish a fire at a petrol station on a road near Makhachkala, the capital of Dagestan, Russia, late Monday, Aug. 14, 2023. (AP)

Explosion kills 35

A massive explosion at a gas station in Russia's southern republic of Dagestan killed 35 people and injured scores more, Russian officials said Tuesday.

Russia's Health Ministry said 115 people were injured in the blast and subsequent fire, and 35 of them died, including three children.

A total of 65 of those injured, including 16 children, remained hospitalized as of midday Tuesday, the ministry said. Eleven people, including two children, were in grave condition.

The explosion occurred Monday night on the outskirts of Makhachkala, the region's capital. A fire started at a car repair shop and spread to a nearby gas station, triggering the blast.

Families of the dead will receive 1 million rubles (about \$10,000) each and the injured between 200,000 and 400,000 rubles (about \$2,000-\$4,000), Dagestan's authorities said. Russian state media said some of those injured would be airlifted to Moscow for treatment. Makhachkala is about 1,600 kilometers (990 miles) south of Moscow.

The authorities have begun a criminal investigation. Tuesday has been declared a day of mourning in Dagestan. (AP)

Israeli West Bank raid claims 2 Palestinians

TEL AVIV, Aug 15, (AP): Israeli forces shot and killed two Palestinians, including a 16-year-old, in a raid in the occupied West Bank on Tuesday, Palestinian health officials said, the latest violence to shake the region.

Some of that violence has been perpetrated by radical Jewish settlers in the West Bank and on Tuesday, an Israeli court ordered that Jewish settler allegedly involved in the shooting death of a 19-year-old Palestinian be released from detention and placed under house arrest. The ruling follows the release from detention last week of another settler accused of involvement in the same incident who was also transferred to house arrest.

Israel has been carrying out near-nightly raids in the West Bank since last year in response to a spate of Palestinian attacks, fueling tensions in the region and sending the death toll soaring. Tuesday's developments come amid a spike in attacks on Palestinians by radical Jewish settlers, settlement expansion and as Israel is led by a government of ultranationalist settlement supporters.

The Palestinian Health Ministry identified those killed on

Tuesday as Qusay al-Walaji, 16, and Mohammed Nujoom, 25. The statement added that the raid took place in the Jericho area, which has seen heavy fighting over the last 16 months.

The Israeli military said in its statement that Palestinians opened fire at forces operating in the Aqabat Jabr refugee camp near Jericho and the forces fired back.

Meanwhile a Jerusalem court ordered the release to house arrest of Indore, the main suspect in the killing of 19-year-old Qusay Matan, saying there was insufficient evidence to extend his detention. As the Israeli police plan to challenge the decision in court, Indore remained in custody on Tuesday.

But the order highlighted a sense among Palestinians and rights groups that Israel treats radical Jewish settlers in the West Bank with impunity.

In the incident earlier this month, armed Israeli settlers entered the West Bank village of Burqa, torching at least two cars and opening fire at Palestinians who thronged the street. Matan was killed and four other Palestinians were wounded.

Opinion

Seize the sword of backwardness on our necks

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

WHENEVER an optimistic step is taken in this country, some parliamentarians come with suggestions that draw us back to backwardness. They behave as if they are neither the people of this country nor people who followed the country's culture, traditions, and heritage.

They insist on making Kuwait compete with Afghanistan by closing in on itself, or they work on pushing into adopting the Lebanese or Iraqi model in the country, and for each creed and sect to have its own reference, and its state within the state.

The forces of social backwardness were able to impose their vision on the National Assembly, and seek to amend Article 2 of the Constitution as a prelude to amending Kuwaiti values.

That is why they came out to us some time ago with the so-called "negative phenomena", into which they unfortunately dragged parliamentary blocs and the government for us to have a parliamentary committee in this regard.

However, they forgot the Parliamentary Values Committee, which is applicable in the various parliaments of the developed world.

These parliamentarians do not want someone to determine on their behalf how the parliamentary practice should be carried out, but they instead seek to shackle society with the restrictions of their moods.

Today, we are facing proposals that, to say the least, are a regression of Kuwaiti values, and a departure from the constitutional principles, which granted these people the right to speak publicly and to be parliamentarians.

Instead of benefiting from this right, they deviated from us by making themselves the guardians of the people living on this land.

Here we beg to ask - Who gave them this authority? Weren't the governments the ones that submitted to them, hoping to pass deals so that some ministers would not be held accountable?

Yes, the government is responsible for imposing its decision in accordance with the social culture, and not according to a limited vision.

It is the executive authority that the people have accepted to exercise their convictions, not the convictions of some merchants of backward rhetoric.

That is why we beg to ask once again - What does it mean to prevent women from assuming judicial work? Why prevent non-veiled women from running for elections? What about their proposals to restore prior censorship of books, strictly prohibit coeducation, and ban festivals and some concerts?

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Group adapts strategy

DAESH commands thousands in region

UNITED NATIONS, Aug 15, (AP): The Islamic State group still commands between 5,000 and 7,000 members across its former stronghold in Syria and Iraq and its fighters pose the most serious terrorist threat in Afghanistan today, U.N. experts said in a report circulated Monday.

The experts monitoring sanctions against the militant group, also known by its Arab acronym DAESH, said that during the first half of 2023 the threat posed by IS remained "mostly high in conflict zones and low in non-conflict areas."

But the panel said in a report to the U.N. Security Council that "the overall situation is dynamic," and despite significant losses in the group's leadership and reduced activity in Syria and Iraq, the risk of its resurgence remains.

"The group has adapted its strategy, embedding itself with local populations, and has exercised caution in choosing battles that are likely to result in limited losses, while rebuilding and recruiting from camps in the northeast of the Syrian Arab Republic and from vulnerable communities, including in neighboring countries," the experts said.

The Islamic State group declared a self-styled caliphate in a large swath of territory in Syria and Iraq that it seized in 2014. It was declared defeated in Iraq in 2017 following a three-year battle that left tens of thousands of people dead and cities in ruins, but its sleeper cells remain in both countries.

Recruiting

Despite sustained counter-terrorism operations, DAESH continues to command between 5,000 and 7,000 members across Iraq and Syria, "most of whom are fighters," though it has reduced its attacks deliberately "to facilitate recruiting and reorganization," the experts said.

In northeast Syria, approximately 11,000 suspected DAESH fighters are being held in facilities of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, which have played a prominent role in the fight against IS, the panel said. The fighters include more than 3,500 Iraqis and approximately 2,000 from almost 70 nationalities, it said.

Northeast Syria is also the site of two closed camps - al-Hol and Roj - where the experts said some 55,000 people with alleged links or family ties to IS are living in "dire" conditions and "significant humanitarian hardship."

Approximately two-thirds of the population are children including over 11,800 Iraqis, nearly 16,000 Syrians and over 6,700 youngsters from more than 60 other countries, the experts said.

The panel quoted one unnamed country as saying DAESH has maintained its "Cubs of the Caliphate" program, recruiting children in the overcrowded al-Hol camp. In addition, more than 850 boys, some as young as 10, were in detention and rehabilitation centers in the northeast, the experts said.

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait's Ministry of Health announced Tuesday detecting EG.5, a COVID variant belonging to a subset of the virus.

In a statement, the ministry noted that the "expected" detection was not "alarming", as the mutant bug was spotted in around 50 countries.

The country's epidemiological indicators show stability, noted the statement, renewing the call to adhere to prevention guidelines.

ATLANTA: Donald Trump and 18 allies were indicted in Georgia on Monday over their efforts to overturn his '20 election loss in the state, with prosecutors using a statute normally associated with mobsters to accuse the former president, lawyers and other aides of a "criminal enterprise" to keep him in power.

The nearly 100-page indictment details dozens of acts by Trump or his allies to undo his defeat, including beseeching Georgia's Republican secretary of state to find enough votes for him to win the battleground state; harassing an election worker who faced false claims of fraud; and attempting to persuade Georgia lawmakers to ignore the will of voters. (AP)

TOKYO: Japan said Tuesday it will extend \$1 billion in emergency grant aid to the Jenin refugee camp in Palestine, which suffered severe damages from the Israeli military operation.

"Through this grant aid, Japan will implement humanitarian assistance in areas such as sanitation, health and response to unexploded ordnance through the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)," the Foreign Ministry said in a press release. (KUNA)

Day by Day

IN the Levant a popular proverb says, 'Goats infected with scabies do not drink except from the center of the well'. This is exactly what the plane thief did, who implicated himself and offended the reputation of his family and friends.

The plane thief resembles the Jew who returned to his old tricks and thefts.

The 'scabby goat', God willing, will spend time behind bars for breaching trusts and embezzling funds from individuals.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:50 Asr 15:28
 Sunrise .. 05:16 Maghrib .. 18:29
 Zohr 11:53 Isha 19:51

Local

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

Committee formed to assess power demand

High temps drain Kuwait's reserves of electricity, water: MEED

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: MEED magazine reported that the high temperatures are depleting the electricity and water reserves in Kuwait, as the temperature rose to 51 degrees Celsius at the beginning of this month, which raised the electricity load index to 16,940 megawatts, thus violating the maximum load expected for this year of 16,830 megawatts, by 0.7 percent, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to MEED, the expected maximum load for this year is 4 percent higher than the maximum load recorded last year, and therefore, only 8 percent of the reserve capacity remains against the available generation capacity of 18,250 megawatts.

Kuwait's consumption of water on August 2 exceeded its production by 29 million gallons, prompting the government to resort to the strategic reserve to fill the shortage and according to reports, the jump in electricity consumption led to the disconnection of two main transformers in South Surra, which caused power outages in some parts of the Zahra area located in Hawalli Governorate.

The magazine quoted the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy as reassuring citizens that the maximum capacity available in the country's electricity grid this summer is 18,250 megawatts, and that it can safely supply up to 17,660 megawatts.

The Ministry, through the Partnership Projects Authority, had received applications for pre-qualification for contracts for the construction of two independent water and electricity production projects, North Az-Zour and Al-Khairan, where the two projects will together provide a capacity to generate 4,500 megawatts of electricity and more than 150 million gallons of water per day. Thus, the two projects will make a significant contribution to addressing the threatening situation of electricity and water in Kuwait.

The magazine pointed out that the irony is that the two projects were in the initial planning and procurement stages since 2017, but faced long delays during those years. This is the second time in the past eleven months that developers have submitted qualification documents for contracts, while the delays, without explaining the reasons, have caused great frustration among some developers and contractors.

The magazine added that other developers expect stakeholders in the country to approve and speed up the procurement process for combined electricity and water facilities,

while quoting another source as saying that he is not very optimistic, although he has applied for re-qualification.

The magazine pointed out that although Kuwait has pledged to become carbon-neutral by 2060, the country's Ministry of Electricity has not yet made any significant progress in obtaining any new production capacity from renewable energy.

□ □ □

Committee formed: The Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Dr. Jassim Al-Ustad, has issued a decision to form a committee to develop solutions to meet the demand for electric power, headed by the Assistant Undersecretary for the Power Stations Sector, Engineer Haitham Al-Ali, reports Al-Rai daily.

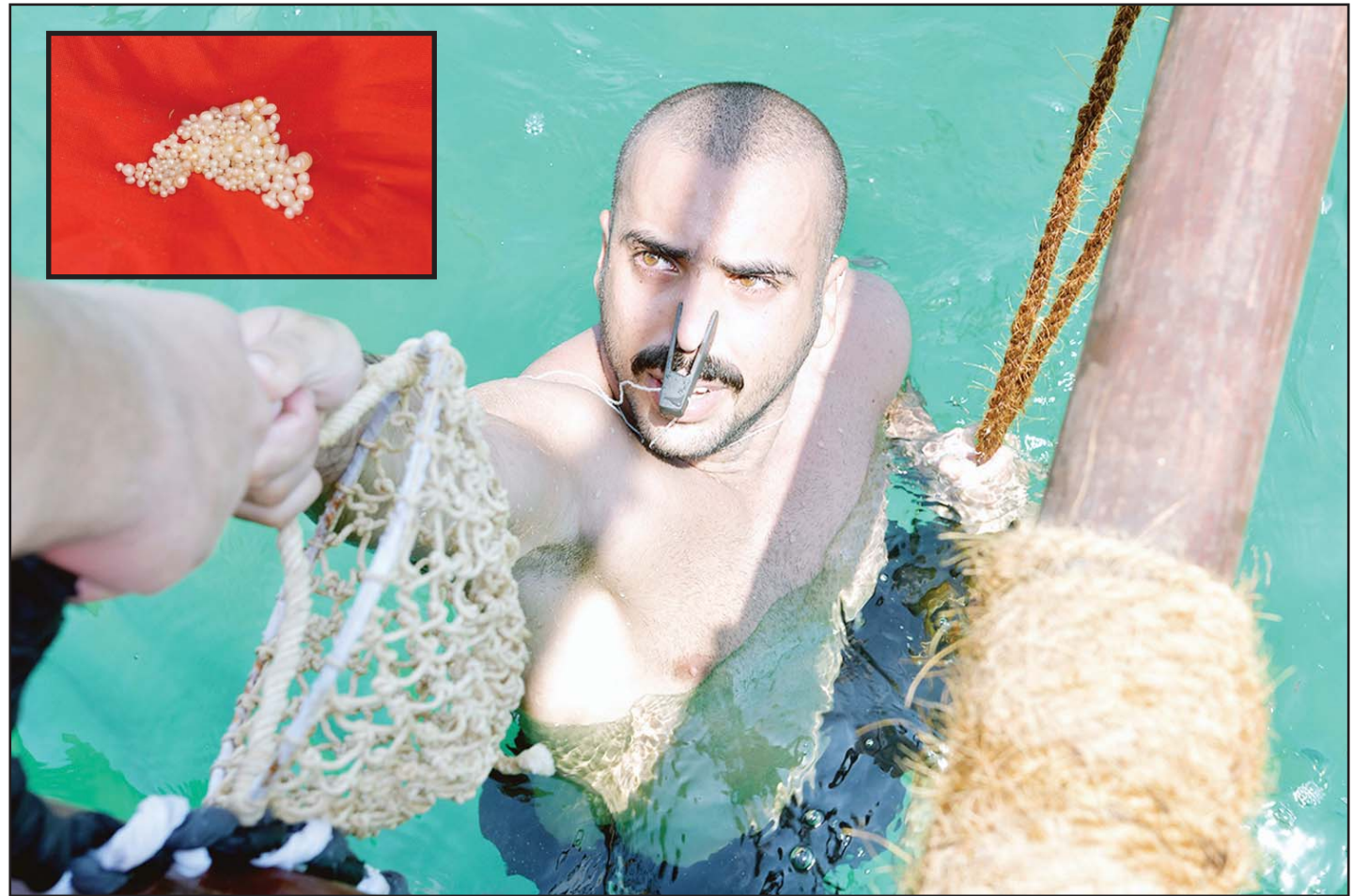
The formation of the committee coincides with what was published by the daily the day before yesterday, regarding the repercussions and fears of the delay in the supply chain of basic components for power production stations and high-voltage cables.

Informed sources told the daily, that "the aim of forming the committee is to develop strategies and find solutions to meet the increasing demand for electricity in the coming years, especially in light of new housing projects and development projects," considering that it is the responsibility of the ministry officials and committee members to evaluate the size of the risks that may result from the lack of production capacity, and work to overcome any obstacles that may impede the implementation of its proposed projects or that it intends to launch in the future.

The sources pointed out that the committee will bear a great responsibility to find solutions to meet the demand for electric energy, especially in light of the high level of annual consumption from 3 percent to 6 percent this summer, compared to last summer, stressing the need for the committee to develop realistic and applicable solutions until the electricity and water production projects, which will be put forward through the Authority for Partnership Projects between the public and private sectors, enter into force.



Dr. Al-Ustad



A young diver is handed over the basket to collect oysters as he prepares to dive. Inset: Some of the pearls collected during the diving trip.

Youngsters revive heritage in hunt for pearls

By Meshari Al-Kanderi

A group of Kuwaiti youngsters are commemorating the lives of their forefathers, as they embarked on a journey on board traditional ships,

took up the roles of their ancestors and set out on the 32nd diving trip. The people of Kuwait had taken up pearl diving as a profession, they braved the harsh sea conditions and put up with long arduous journeys to meet life's demands and provide for their families. (KUNA)

Hike in budget for subsidies

KD 36.9m allocated for farmers, fishermen

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Official figures showed an increase in financial allocations for government subsidies in the general budget by about 34.7 percent, bringing their cost to KD 5.94 billion during the current year, compared to KD 4.41 billion during the last fiscal year, which is an increase of KD 1.532 billion, reports Al-Qabas daily.

According to the official data issued by the Ministry of Finance, the reason for the increase in the amounts allocated for subsidies is due to the following factors:-

- Increasing the amount of partial payment of the dues of the Kuwait Petroleum Company.
- Increasing student grants, and subsidies for food and construction materials.

According to the visual presentation of the Ministry of Finance regarding the budget law for the 2023/2024 fiscal year, the amounts allocated for spending on subsidies will include several sectors such as:-

1 - Energy and fuel subsidies

The total support provided for energy and fuel in the budget for the current fiscal year amounted to about KD 3.53 billion, an increase of KD 1.18 billion over the total support provided for this item in the previous year, which at that time amounted to KD 2.35 billion. This also includes fuel subsidies for Kuwait Airways Corporation.

2 - Educational support

The government support for education amounted to about KD 965.3 million, an increase of KD 128.6 million compared to the support allocated for the same item in the last fiscal year, amounting to KD 836.7 million. The amounts spent in this item are directed to scholarships, tuition fees subsidies, student rewards, and summer and spring courses.

3 - Social support

The government increased allocations for social support provided for social care, marriage grants, aid for unions and associations of public benefit, reduction of living costs (food supplies and building materials), the Public Authority for the Disabled Affairs and Zakat House subsidies to reach about KD 582.9 million in the current fiscal year, which is an increase of KD 60.2 million for the appropriations of the last fiscal year amounting to about KD 521.9 million.

4 - Housing support

Housing support in the general budget allocated for spending on payment of rent, interest on real estate loans, and mortgage exemption expenses decreased by about KD 7.8 million, bringing the total allocation for it in the 2023/2024 budget to about KD 352.1 million, compared to the allocation of about KD 359.9 million for the same item last year.

5 - Health support

The total amounts allocated for spending on health support in the general budget, which are the amounts allocated for spending on providing health services to citizens abroad, amounted to about KD 246.4 million, which is an increase of KD 53 million over last year's allocations of KD 193.4 million.

6 - Economic support

The economic support allocated in the general budget to provide support to the Central Bank of Kuwait in order to intervene in the money market witnessed a remarkable increase. Its total amounted to about KD 167 million, compared to KD 72.8 million allocated for the same purpose in the last fiscal year.

7 - Sports support

In a trend that reflects the interest in sports activity in Kuwait, the government increased the support allocated to help sports clubs and local activities by about KD 19.2 million to reach KD 64.4 million, compared to about KD 45.2 million in the 2022/2023 fiscal year.

8 - Agricultural support

An amount of KD 36.9 million has been allocated in the general budget to provide support to farmers and fishermen, which is an increase of KD 1.9 million over what was spent on them in the budget of last year.

Meanwhile, at a time when all economic studies confirm the necessity of directing government support to the eligible groups and achieving benefit from it, the biggest challenge remains in directing and spending support to improve the development of the quality of education, health services, productive sectors, research and development, as the increase in support that is not directed to those who are eligible has adverse effects on economic growth, causing high rates of unemployment and decreased productivity.

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Hot and relatively humid specially over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind with speeds of 08-35 km/h.
By Night: Hot to rather hot and

humid specially over coastal areas with light to moderate southeasterly wind to light variable wind with speeds of 08-32 km/h with a chance for mist forming over some areas.
Station **Max Exp** **Min Rec**
 Kuwait City 45 36

Kuwait Airport	46	31
Abdaly	46	30
Jahra	47	35
Salmiyah	40	34
Ahmadi	39	34
Nuwaisib	45	29
Wafra	48	30



AC units are repaired at one of the schools.

Plan underway since June

Schools gear up for new year

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: An engineering source outlined the plan of the Educational Facilities and Planning Sector in the Ministry of Education to equip schools and prepare for the 2023/2024 academic year. He revealed that the implementation of the plan began in June and will continue until September, reports Al-Rai daily.

He explained that schools were inspected and reports were prepared concerning school facilities in the electricity and civil fields, and sent to maintenance companies for necessary action.

The electricity work is minimal, as it usually relies on inspecting the lighting in classrooms and school facilities and replacing some of them if necessary. As for civil works, engineers prepare reports on school floors, paint for the walls, and the condition of ceilings and toilets. The Engineering Affairs Department in the ministry then addresses the contracting company. Unfortunately, the companies implement the simple requests in a friendly manner, but refuse to take the necessary action for the difficult requests with high costs until the issuance of official approvals to extend the contracts. Therefore the lack of sufficient budget in the Department of Engineering Affairs prompted the companies not to implement some work, even through subcontractors.

Regarding the condition of air-conditioning in schools, the source described it as "the problem of problems in the summer season".

Conditions

He said, "Despite the difficult weather conditions, and the inability to inspect about 900 schools and maintain them at 100 percent, we have carried out preventive maintenance for a large number of units since June. This included washing the unit, checking the gas level, replacing spare parts, then operating the unit and ensuring its coolness. This was followed by preparing reports regarding the matter and sending them to the administration."

The source indicated that approvals to extend air-conditioning maintenance contracts reached companies through the WhatsApp

application, and they were not officially notified about them yet.

He said, "The large number of works that have been done will create problems. Considering the fact that the school air conditioners are closed for a few months, and will be started in September, we are surprised by many malfunctions. This is known and expected annually, because when an air conditioner is closed during summer period, the device starts leaking.

Reports

We wrote reports in which we asked to operate the units on an interval basis. However, the Ministry of Electricity and Water refused. We said we agree with the school guards to operate them at least at night, and they said most of the guards are on vacation and travel to their countries during this period."

In addition, the source revealed, "A committee has been formed to determine the condition of school buildings and departmental buildings affiliated to the ministry and to prepare notes regarding their need for regular maintenance, radical maintenance, or demolition and reconstruction. Schools are visited and reports are written about them, but unfortunately the lack of a budget stopped all our work. When we raised the matter to the competent authorities, they told us that contracts and tenders will not be approved before November, based on hints from the senior leadership in the ministry."

He stressed that the priorities for the implementation of demolition and reconstruction of schools have not been determined in any of the educational zones so far due to the lack of sufficient budget for their implementation.

The source indicated that the cost of demolition and reconstruction varies according to the educational stage (kindergarten, primary, middle, and secondary), but ranges usually from KD 4 million to KD 7 million per school. He affirmed that the plan for the educational facilities sector to hire Kuwaitis for engineering jobs comes in implementation of the correspondence received from the Civil Service Commission (CSC) regarding reducing the number of expatriate engineers.

Attack on Iran shrine condemned

HH Amir condoles with Russian Pres

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Tuesday sent a cable of condolences to the Russian President Vladimir Putin over the victims of the massive explosion of a gas station in Dagestan that resulted in many deaths and casualties.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir prayed Almighty Allah to bestow mercy on the victims' souls, wishing speedy recovery to the injured.

Kuwait Crown Prince condoles with Russian Pres. on gas station explosion victims in Dagestan

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Tuesday sent a cable of condolences to the Russian President Vladimir Putin over the victims of the massive explosion of a gas station in Dagestan that resulted in many deaths and casualties.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince prayed Almighty Allah to bestow mercy on the victims' souls, wishing speedy recovery to the injured.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent on Tuesday a cable of condolences the Russian President Vladimir Putin over the victims of the massive explosion of a gas station in Dagestan that resulted in many deaths and casualties.

In another development, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed on Monday Kuwait's strong condemnation of deadly militant assault on Shah Cheragh Shrine in Iran's southern city of Shiraz on Sunday.

In a statement, the Ministry voiced Kuwait's unequivocal rejection of all forms of violence and terrorism.

It underscored the importance of multilateral work to counter the terrorism scourge and its implications.

It extended Kuwait's condolences to the government and families of the victims and wished the wounded people speedy recovery.

A gunman opened fire on people at Shah Cheragh Shrine in Shiraz, killing one person and wounding eight others.

Deportation for 'joke' with security

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: An engineer of Arab nationality was arrested at the Kuwait International Airport and referred to the Jeeb Al-Shuyoukh Police Station on Sunday on charges of reporting a bomb hoax, reports Al-Qabas daily.

According to security sources, the engineer, while passing through security checkpoints at the airport, told the checkpoint officers that his luggage contains a bomb. His luggage was immediately searched meticulously but

nothing of explosive nature was found in them.

Necessary legal measures were taken, and he was referred to the police station where he confessed that he was joking with the security officers.

The sources revealed that the officers have referred a letter in which they recommended that he be deported from the country administratively.

The sources said, "Airport security is a red line and it is not permissible to tamper with it, even in jest".

4.74 m citizens, expats occupy facilities

Increase in residential buildings

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: According to a report issued by the Modon Group, the number of private and investment housing facilities increased to more than 173,500 facilities by the end of 2022, which are inhabited by about 4.74 million citizens and expatriates. This number represents about 81 percent of the total number of facilities in Kuwait, which is estimated at about 215,000, reports Al-Rai daily.

The report, which was based on the data of the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI), explained that the number of investment housing establishments (residential buildings) has increased to about 12,500 buildings, which include about 400,000 apartments, inhabited by at least two million expatriates, representing about two-thirds of the expatriate population. It takes into account the fact that the majority of domestic workers live with Kuwaiti families in private housing. Also, a number of non-Kuwaiti families live in private housing facilities, and a number of non-Kuwaiti workers stay in farms and some other pro-

duction facilities.

The report indicates an increase in the density of investment housing facilities, with an average of 154 individuals per building and six individuals per apartment. Also, there are about 70,000 vacant apartments, i.e. 330,000 static apartments, in addition to the high densities in collective housing facilities for security personnel and company workers.

It explained that private housing facilities are distributed among the six governorates of Kuwait in close proportions, but investment housing facilities, which are mostly inhabited by non-Kuwaitis, witnessed a relative concentration in a limited number of governorates. Hawally ranked first with 43 percent, followed by Ahmadi in second place with 25 percent, Farwaniya in third place with 21 percent; thereby bringing the total share for the three governorates to 89 percent.

Accordingly, the three governorates - Hawally, Ahmadi and Farwaniya - have an estimated share of 74 percent of the total non-Kuwaiti population in Kuwait.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Does OPEC+ want to reach the break-even price for its members?

"DOES 'OPEC+' want to achieve a desired goal for its members in that the price of oil covers the annual budgets of their countries, and not achieve any deficit in its financial revenues in the short term, until, for example, another alternative is found and the pressure on the single oil resource is removed," columnist **Kamel Al-Harami** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"As of now, we observe that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has successfully reached a break-even price of \$80 per barrel and beyond. However, this might not be sufficient for the upcoming four months. This situation applies to all members of the organization whose fiscal year budgets conclude at the end of the present year.

"For instance, in Kuwait, a break-even price of \$90 per barrel is necessary. In the current fiscal year, we have allocated a budget of 26 billion dinars for expenditures and costs, set to conclude by the end of March next year. This is coupled with a consistent crude oil production rate of 2.5 million barrels per day. With the maintenance of oil prices at their current level, we may eventually attain the desired parity price.



Kamel Al-Harami

"Currently, the organization has achieved a price of \$87 per barrel, with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia achieving its required parity price. This trend is expected to continue for several more years, albeit with extensions. The UAE and Qatar have also managed to attain their respective targets. However, the concern lies with the majority of the organization's members whose break-even prices exceed \$90. This poses an urgent and challenging situation for countries like Algeria, Nigeria, Iraq, and Iran.

"Nevertheless, these nations can potentially mitigate their break-even price by increasing their oil production, necessitating a decisive move from the petroleum organization. Even in Kuwait, we have not yet reached the essential \$90 threshold. Unlike neighboring countries, we haven't actively sought alternative financial returns. Our primary focus has consistently remained on our sovereign wealth fund.

"Despite the current oil price of \$87, attributed to the efforts of OPEC+ and its reductions, it might not align with the expectations of oil-consuming countries. These countries could perceive 'OPEC+' as the driver behind financial inflation and the resulting increase in bank interest that has spurred price inflation. Nonetheless, 'OPEC' continues to stand its ground despite external factors, such as global economic recession and declining indicators, which can lead to reduced global consumption rates. This, in turn, might impact daily oil production and consumption, potentially causing a decrease in barrel prices.

"The organization has now solidified its monthly and periodic coordination, with Russia's participation adding value to OPEC as the second-largest oil-producing country. This enhanced unity has led to substantial stability in oil prices, favoring member nations.

"The alignment, understanding, and comprehensive commitment among organization members to production quotas have resulted in major producers sacrificing significant daily production to establish a balanced equation and price range that benefits their respective budgets. This could signal the emergence of a novel mechanism for determining barrel prices based on transparent founda-

tions and a fresh perspective.

"Yet, a looming concern for Kuwait is the potential for excessive spending, given the continued safeguarding of oil prices. This anxiety arises from the possibility that we might neglect other important considerations. This apprehension is mirrored in our budget reaching 26 billion dinars.

"Despite being the lowest in terms of prices compared to neighboring nations, any attempt to increase costs, like raising gasoline or electricity prices, is met with opposing voices. This scenario has even led to the inadvertent smuggling of cheap gasoline abroad.

"While oil prices are on the upswing, resulting in financial surpluses as witnessed last year, the upcoming eight months appear secure from future deficits within the current price range. However, the question that arises is: what lies ahead? Will there be genuine development or just a continuation of the familiar cycle of inflation in future budgets? Presently, Kuwait falls short in attracting foreign investments or joint oil ventures compared to neighboring nations, primarily in the pivotal petrochemical sector."

Also:

"Following a recent statement from a state official indicating the lack of implementation of Kuwait Vision 2035, especially after six years since its inception in 2017, concerns have arisen regarding the plans and strategies outlined in committees for economic, financial, and administrative reform," columnist **Dr Ghadir Muhammad Asiri** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Significant sums of money have been expended on structuring and planning, along with financial waste in lavish meetings that have yielded no tangible results or practical implementation of the plans documented on paper. This situation has globally garnered classification as the squandering of state funds by numerous departments, which amounts to political appeasement and conciliation.

"The ambition for economic reform exceeded Kuwait Vision 2035, encompassing earlier advanced strategies. By retracing the steps of the country's economic transformation and recalling the economic plans that remained stagnant without oversight or accountability for non-execution, it becomes evident that numerous committees initiated this trajectory, but their practical implementation remained unrealized.

"The committee for Kuwait's economic path reform was initiated in 2001, and the Kuwait plan to evolve into a financial and commercial hub in 2006 also struggled to achieve the envisioned objectives. Additionally, both the Tony Blair Report of 2008 and the McKinsey Report of 2012, for which significant funds were expended, did not materialize into realistic and feasible development plans, as asserted by the government official.

"Subsequent to the introduction of the economic and financial reform document in 2016, implementation witnessed a decline due to multifaceted factors, including political instability and fluctuating ministerial formations. The influx of successive ministers with diverse approaches and visions has negatively impacted practical application. Further challenges arise from plans that no longer correspond with current national conditions and lack alignment with the transient mindset of certain legislators. The volatile and unsteady political atmosphere further hinders the feasibility of implementing these plans.

"An essential hurdle in executing Kuwait's plans is the intricate overlap of

competencies and mechanisms, rendering ministries incapable of fully implementing them due to potentially exceeding their practical capacity. Among the prominent recommendations highlighted in various reports is the need for reform in education, health, and tourism sectors. However, these have ceased to be priorities for the executive authority due to overlapping jurisdiction.

"Former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair stated in the preface of the submitted report that, after evaluating the current situation, 'Kuwait today needs to make a fundamental decision about its future'.

"He also underscored that 'the political system is paralyzed due to the recurrent deadlock between the government and the National Assembly.'"

"Kuwait demands a radical shift in its approach and a transformation in the legislator's mindset while framing laws, as well as a government that can keep pace with global advancement and commercial globalization. Boldness is crucial to instigate positive change that translates Kuwait's aspirations into tangible reality. Neighboring nations have faced comparable challenges, but their proactive measures propelled them to the global forefront in practical implementation and feasible plans. This revival has instilled confidence among their citizens through application rather than mere policy drafting."

□ □ □

"Artificial intelligence applications are currently used in many fields, such as self-learning devices, self-propelled vehicles, machine translation programs, some factories and certain medical matters for the benefit of humanity," columnist **Dr Adel Al-Mishal** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"The program continued, confirming what researchers and leaders in the technology sector have warned about — the grave dangers of artificial intelligence to society and humanity, considering the positive and negative aspects.

"Artificial intelligence research began in the United States in the 1950s. It has witnessed tremendous development in recent years. Then, this civilizational boom spread to all continents in the world, in varying proportions based on the capabilities of each country.

"Artificial intelligence resulted in major changes in buying and selling between the individual and the primary point of sale without going to a store. You can order anything you want through applications while you are in Kuwait to receive a product made in China or Brazil. Many studies have predicted that the size of the global artificial intelligence market will reach more than \$15 trillion by 2030. It is even expected to exceed that amount.

"Since there is a market for artificial intelligence, a technical race preceded it among the giant companies in this field. Some researchers at Microsoft unveiled a model of artificial intelligence capable of analyzing images and content, solving visual puzzles and recognizing visual text.

"In developing countries, the use of artificial intelligence has become uneven from one country to another, depending on the development of each country and the extent of government interest in it, which makes it vulnerable to the consequences of piracy. This is in addition to the fact that artificial intelligence needs material resources that could be given priority over infrastructure, food security and others."

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary

Power hackers sent to jail

21 caught in drug trafficking



The suspects in police custody.

Bills, readings manipulated

During the investigations into the criminal network that successfully breached the systems of the Ministry of Electricity and Water, leading to its apprehension by the Ministry of the Interior, numerous details and unexpected revelations have emerged, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.

It has been discovered that the perpetrators manipulated meter readings and fabricated bills for consumers, all in exchange for monetary gains, as confirmed by the Ministry of Interior's official statement.

Reliable sources told the daily seven employees, all Arabs, who were associated with a meter-reading company whose contract has expired the ministry, earned substantial amounts of money through their illicit activities.

Reports suggest that officials from the customer service sector identified hacking attempts during the evening hours, after the departure of the assigned employees from their work duties following which swift measures were taken to counteract these actions.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: The Public Prosecution has ordered the imprisonment of the members of the network that hacked the electricity systems, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The daily has learned from an informed source that all the suspects arrested by the Ministry of Interior have been remanded to police custody for 21 days, pending further investigation. They are being held at the central prison.

The source pointed out that all the seven defendants against whom the pretrial detention decision was issued are Arab nationals. A decision will be issued soon to arrest and bring other persons for interrogation and take their statements.

The Ministry of Interior announced in a statement last week that the Criminal Security Sector, represented by the Anti-Cybercrime Department, had managed to control this criminal network, which illegally entered and tampered with the electricity and water meter reading systems.

It stated that the arrest of this gang came based on directives and direct interest from the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled, and in cooperation with the Ministry of Electricity.

The Ministry of Electricity stated that last June, the customer services sector monitored an attempt by people to enter the automated system for calculating electricity and water consumption bills, using the names of some employees who use the system, and the site used for the system was tracked and the surveillance cameras were unloaded.

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21 caught with drugs: The Criminal Security Division, comprising the General Department for Drug Control and the General Department of Criminal Investigation, successfully apprehended 21 individuals of various nationalities in 14 separate operations. These individuals were found in possession of approximately 7 kilograms of assorted narcotics, 790 psychotropic drugs, 500 pills of liquid GHP (Gamma-Hydroxybutyrate), 171 bottles of wine, ammunition, and cash.

In an official statement issued on this Tuesday, the Ministry's General Department of Relations and Security Media revealed that the suspects admitted ownership of the confiscated items, acknowledging their intent for drug trafficking and personal usage. Consequently, both the suspects and the seized contraband were handed over to the appropriate authorities for further legal actions.

The statement reaffirmed the Ministry's ongoing commitment to combat drug traffickers and smugglers. It underlined the continuous and vigorous security measures implemented to apprehend individuals involved in the illicit trade and use of narcotics, with the aim of safeguarding society from these perilous threats.

Emphasizing the collective responsibility to eradicate drug peddlers and promoters, the Ministry urged cooperation with law enforcement personnel and encouraged reporting of any suspicious activities through the emergency Hotline at 112 or the dedicated Hotline for the General Administration for Drug Control at 1884141. (KUNA)

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233 violations recorded: The inspection teams in the Occupational Safety Center at the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) recorded 233 violations of the law banning work under the direct heat of the sun from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm during summer for the months of June and July, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.

PAM stated that its inspectors reinspected the violating establishments, and they confirmed that 204 violation files were completed.

Regarding the violations recorded in July, the authority revealed the number of first-time violations totaled 85, in addition to the re-inspection during which 72 facilities were found to have complied with the directive.

The authority received 17 violation reports in July, highlighting the recent decrease in the number of violations compared to those recorded in June and July.

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37 illegals nabbed: The Public Relations and Security Media General Department at the Ministry of Interior revealed that the Criminal Investigation General Department, in coordination with the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), recently carried out a sudden inspection campaign targeting delivery vehicles and bicycles in Ahmadi and Farwaniya Governorates; resulting in the arrest of 37 individuals who violated the Residency and Labor laws, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

Other Voices

'Healers', 'jinn', naive women

By Ahmad alsarraf

The BBC conducted an investigation in which it revealed a hidden world of sexual abuse and exploitation by men who work as "spiritual healers" or "healing by casting out spells", which is a common practice in the Arab and Islamic worlds, especially among the poor and uneducated classes. Most of the victims, of course, are women, who are more inclined to believe that some people can solve their problems, treat their diseases, and expel evil spirits from their bodies.



alsarraf

This type of religious or spiritual treatment is not something new. It has been practiced by clerics belonging to different religions for thousands of years, east and west.

The testimonies collected by the channel, from 85 women, over a period of more than a year, showed the naming of 65 therapists in Morocco and Sudan, where these practices are widespread. The women tell various stories of abuse.

One of them says that she was depressed, so she visited a spiritual healer in a town near the house, when she was in her mid-twenties, and that the healer told her that the depression was caused by the "jinn" that possessed her. And he asked her, while they were alone, to smell the musk, but it was a kind of anesthetic that made her lose consciousness, and he assaulted her while she was a "girl."

The therapist told her that what he had done was the only way to get the jinn out of her. And she discovered after a few weeks that she was pregnant, so she had a complete breakdown and thought of suicide, and when "I told the raqi or the therapist about the pregnancy, he replied that the jinn made her pregnant."

The channel said that many of the women it spoke to were afraid that they

would be blamed if they reported their mistreatment, and therefore few reported what had happened to their families, let alone the police. Some of them also said that reporting what happened might push the jinn to take revenge on them.

In Sudan, a woman told us that her husband left her to live with a second wife, and she found herself at a loss, and asked for help from a therapist, and she thought he would give her treatment, but he surprised her by asking to have sex with her, and to use "body fluids" to make a potion that she would feed to her husband so that he would return to her! He asked her to keep the secret, but she refused the idea and left.

As it turned out, from talking with 50 Sudanese women about their experiences, they were subjected to abuse at the hands of a well-known cleric, whose name and photo were mentioned in the investigation, and due to the lack of evidence of their words, an employee of the channel pretended that she needed treatment, and the therapist told her that he would pray for her and he prepared for her a bottle of "healing water," known as "Al-Mahya," so that she could take it home and drink from it.

Then he approached her and put his hand on her stomach, so she scolded him and ran away in terror. When confronted with the clergyman, he immediately ended the interview.

Women in our societies are widely exposed to injustice, and need more than others to be intensively educated about these dangers, because school curricula lack this kind of awareness, perhaps because of the religious aspect of the issue.

What exists in Morocco, Sudan, Egypt, and others, is similar, albeit in a less widespread way. I have heard many stories of exploitation, and some have been subjected to injuries and disabilities, and sometimes to death at the hands of these healers, and the stories of some of them are known, and they were circulated in the courts.

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Need to take action: Dr Al-Fraih

Vulnerable, abandoned kids

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: The President of the National Society for the Protection of Child Rights, Dr. Siham Al-Fraih, confirmed that what was published by **Al-Qabas** in its issue last Tuesday, under the title "270 Forgotten Patients in Hospital Wards", is a matter that requires attention, and should not be overlooked, but the necessary measures must be taken towards it, especially since some of them need treatment in health facilities, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.



Dr. Al-Fraih

Al-Fraih added that the humanitarian duty requires returning these cases to the homes in which they lived, with their relatives and families to be loved and shown kindness, noting the need to shed light on the cases of people with special needs in hospitals, and to treat them as soon as possible. It is reported that their families receive the financial allocations but the patients remain vulnerable and are forgotten.

She went on to say, that what increases the feeling of sorrow and pain is that there are forgotten children in these hospitals, some of whom were left immediately after birth and deprived of their most basic rights, in addition to depriving them of education.

Among these children are those who have reached the ages of eight and 10,

and who should be taught to read and write.

The association has asked more than once several parties to communicate with the Ministries of Health and Social Affairs, to provide appropriate solutions for this group of children.

Dr Al-Fraih pointed out that it is obligatory for the civil authorities to invite the relevant official government agencies to take the initiative to address this humanitarian issue, after the families of these patients deliberately neglected them, and abandoned leaving them vulnerable to neglect and deprivation.

She stressed on the importance of communicating with the embassies of the forgotten expatriate patients in the country's hospitals, and talking to them in this regard so that they can take initiatives and not abandon their citizens in public hospitals, and work to transfer them to their countries.

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Over 100 complaints: The latest statistics released by the Ministry of Public Works revealed that its Sanitary Engineering Sector received 110 complaints in July, reports **Al-Anba** daily which obtained a copy of the statistics.

According to the statistics, the Capital Governorate got the highest number of complaints with 25, followed by Ahmadi with 22, Farwaniya with 20, Mubarak Al-Kabeer with 18, Jahra with 14 and Hawally with 11.



HAPPY Independence DAY

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HH Crown Prince and HH Prime Minister send similar cables

HH Amir congratulates India, South Korea on national days

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Tuesday a cable of congratulations to the President of India Droupadi Murmu on her country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir wished the president good health and the people of India progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince

Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to President Droupadi Murmu on her country's National Day.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished the president good health and the people of India all progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable of con-

gratulations to President Droupadi Murmu on her country's National Day.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad sent on Tuesday a cable of congratulations to South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol, on his country's National Day, wishing him good health and for his country and people progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince

Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad also sent a cable of congratulations to President Yoon Suk-yeol, on his country's National Day, wishing him good health and for his country and people progress and prosperity.

Also, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf sent a cable of congratulations to President Yoon Suk-yeol, on his country's National Day.

Indian Embassy in Kuwait marks Independence Day

Ambassador pays floral tribute to Mahatma Gandhi's statue

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: The Embassy of India in Kuwait commemorated the 77th Independence Day of India. The event took place within the premises of the Embassy, located in the Daiya Diplomatic area.

The official program commenced at 0800 hrs at the Embassy premises. It began with a ceremonial floral tribute paid to the statue

of Mahatma Gandhi by the Ambassador of India to Kuwait, HE Dr Adarsh Swaika. This was followed by the hoisting of the National Tricolor flag and the rendition of the Indian National Anthem.

On this significant occasion, the Ambassador read out the message to the nation by the President of India.

The Ambassador in his address to the hundreds of Indians who had gathered at the embassy premises, expressed gratitude towards the leadership and government of the friendly State of Kuwait for the consistent support in strengthening and deepening India-Kuwait bilateral relations. He also acknowledged the special care extended to the Indian Community in Kuwait.

The Ambassador also highlighted the Embassy's collaborative efforts with the community in advancing India-Kuwait relations and addressing matters of concern.

He emphasized the various initiatives undertaken by the embassy, encompassing the promotion of trade, investment, culture, and tourism. The Ambassador also underscored the expansion and reinforcement of institutional cooperation across different domains. He outlined various measures adopted to ensure the well-being and welfare of the Indian Community in Kuwait.



Ambassador Dr Swaika paying floral tributes to the statue of Mahatma Gandhi.



A view of the audience during the celebration.

'Kuwaitis granted multiple entry tourist visas to India'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Indian Ambassador to Kuwait H. E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika has unveiled the services provided to Kuwaitis traveling to his country, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a statement to the daily, Dr. Swaika disclosed that the Indian Embassy grants multiple entry tourist visa to Kuwaitis. The ambassador explained that this visa allows Kuwaitis to visit India several times within the validity period of the visa — up to six months. Kuwaitis can also visit neighboring South Asian countries and they can enter or exit India several times, he added.

He pointed out that the embassy issues several types of visas depending on the purpose; including a tourist visa, commercial

visa for businessmen, student visa and work visa.

He stated that those planning to travel to his country must first submit the visa application online, then submit documents and pay the corresponding fees at the embassy's consular services and visa centers in three locations in Kuwait. He confirmed that in general, visas are granted to Kuwaitis within one day.

He revealed the number of visas issued since the beginning of this year (an average of eight months) has reached 5,000; while the number of tourist visas issued in the past year reached 6,000. He went to say that the peak tourism season in his country is during winter.

'Barbecuing permitted on public beaches within specific controls'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Fahd Al-Shula issued a ministerial decision approving the new municipal waste management and public hygiene regulations, which included 33 new articles, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The ministry said in a press release that the new regulation cancels Ministerial Resolution 190 of 2008 regarding the hygiene regulations and its amendments.

The ministry pointed out what is most prominent in the new regulations is Article 10, paragraph (b), which stipulates that it is permissible to barbecue on public beaches

according to the controls and places that are determined provided a decision in this regard is issued by the Director General of the Kuwait Municipality.

It indicated that the new regulation prohibits barbecue on sidewalks, streets, roads, squares, public squares, public facilities, state-owned lands and public parks.

The ministry pointed out that Article 12 prohibits the owners of neglected and damaged vehicles, marine boats, homes, mobile prefabricated chalets, and the like from leaving them in the streets, on the sidewalks, and in open public areas and squares.

Seize the

Continued from Page 1

What is the rationale behind the criminalization of tattoos and cosmetic surgery, the strictness in using swimming pools and hotel clubs, and other such proposals that were put forward by a group of MPs who seem to be living in the Middle Ages when the church used to determine who was a believer and who was an atheist, which led to several revolutions in Europe that overthrew regimes and the power of the church?

From the past experience when the parliamentary practice was based on the principle of "scratch my back and I scratch yours", these "wannabe" politicians were able to pass a large part of their goals. They neither paid any attention to the social cost resulting from that, nor the financial losses incurred by the state as a result of preventing coeducation, nor the repercussions on the national economy due to the systematic closure of the country.

To be frank, these strict controls were the top factor in increasing the demand for narcotics. There was also the temporary emigration abroad with each opportunity given, and the extent to which that entails the national product.

This reminds me of what Ibn Khaldoun said more than 700 years ago, and here I repeat what I wrote on February 13, 2021 - Ibn Khaldoun was neither a soothsayer nor augur. He was just a man who understood the condition of societies and their people, and was blessed with the knowledge and sciences of his time.

Seven centuries ago, he wrote, "When nations fall, many astrologers, beggars, hypocrites, pretenders, scribes, cacophony singers and average poets appear, along with agitators, mouthpieces, palm readers, horoscope readers, revelers, politicians, meddlers, satirists and opportunists."

We say this over and over again because remembrance benefits the believer.

Therefore, the Kuwaiti government and people must confront such kinds of proposals because they work on the basis of "give and take" until they have the upper hand, and they then rule according to their vision.

This is a major catastrophe that everyone should pay attention to; not only those who oppose the parliament, but the government and all people, because the sword of backwardness will be hanging on their necks, and therefore the deals between the government and those parliamentarians will not work.

Al-Sabah about the announcement of the US Department of Defense in February 2022 about a potential agreement with Kuwait to establish the new headquarters of the Ministry of Defense at a total cost of \$1 billion.

Al-Damkhi wants to know if the Ministry of Defense conducted a study to determine the total number of buildings, services and infrastructure needed for military and civilian purposes; and if the study includes the estimated cost and possible extension of construction works in the future. If yes, he requested for a copy of the study. If no, he inquired about the reasons for not conducting such a study.

He also asked if the Engineering Department reviewed the conditions, terms and qualifications for establishing the new headquarters of the ministry and military buildings as per the Amiri Decree issued on June 15, 1969 on organizing the ministry and Ministerial Resolution number 1467 for the year 2007. If no, he wants to know the reasons for not implementing the Amiri Decree and ministerial resolution.

He inquired if the ministry obtained the budget needed for the implementation of the project from its finance counterpart; if the project is included in the program of the government for fiscal 2022/2023; and if approvals were obtained from the State Audit Bureau, Legal Advice and Legislation Department, Bureau of Financial Controllers and Council of Ministers for the memorandum of understanding signed with the US Department of Defense for the design and construction of the new headquarters of the ministry.

He wants to know the legal basis for combining the design and construction works in one agreement, which violates Article 39 of Public Tenders Law number 49/2016; rationale behind the signing of an international agreement on the establishment of a local building — a violation of Decree number 95/2017 on forming purchase committees for military equipment and contracting projects, as well as Chapter Two of law number 49/2016 on the establishment of the Central Agency for Public Tenders, particularly the provision on obtaining the lowest price and the best offer.

MP Marzouq Al-Ghanim forwarded queries to HH the Prime Minister about the interview of MP Hassan Jawhar that was uploaded YouTube on Sept 11, 2022; in which Jawhar states he had in his possession the evidence of the alleged transfer of about KD150 million from secret bank accounts to the bank accounts of some incumbent and former ministers.

He wants to know the measures that HH the Prime Minister took after receiving the file from Jawhar, names of current and former ministers involved in the case, amount transferred and date, and legal basis of the money transfer.

Speaker submits

Continued from Page 1

MP Adel Al-Damkhi has forwarded queries to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahd

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Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 57.173/-net	BHD 128.000/-net
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Promo period from 1st – 31st August 2023

Terms & conditions apply*



Sadaaqa poster

Sadaaqa presents Dawood Hussein

Sadaaqa, the show that documents and celebrates India-Kuwait friendship, is proud to present the prodigiously talented Dawood Hussein. Mr Hussein is one of Kuwait's leading actors and comedians who has enthralled audiences across the Middle East for over four decades. Few can lay claim to the kind of popularity he enjoys in the region.

Apart from acting, Mr Hussein has also hosted several shows, including the very popular 'Your Weight in Gold' broadcast by Abu Dhabi satellite channel. During Ramadan, he is a visible figure on Kuwait television on a show called 'gergian' that has been running for decades. He has acted in films from across the Arab world, including Egypt, UAE, Syria and Lebanon. Mr Hussein's professional journey began in 1977. Performing arts is a challenging field in Kuwait, and he navigated that with grace. Kuwait and India have been inextricably connected for centuries long before the involvement of the West. The connections go back to the times of the Indus Valley civilization and reflect amongst others in culture, language, food, and trade.

Dawood Hussein's journey as an actor has been deeply influenced by India and its films. He rose from ordinary circumstances and grew up watching Hindi films both at home and at the Al Firdaus theatre. Watching films, observing the actors, and following their diction and mannerisms was one way the young Kuwaiti boy dealt with the tedium of everyday life. He adopted an Indian neighbour as his 'Ma' and went on to pick up fluent Urdu from her and his Indian brothers.

Here in this episode of Sadaaqa, he speaks about Hindi films and their influence on his life as an actor, Hindi film music of the seventies and eighties and how the music and rhythm never left him and the importance of the close relationship between Indians and Kuwaitis.

"Mujizat Al-Shifa": Propolis helps relieve asthma symptoms

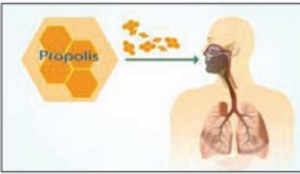
The nutrition consultant at Mujizat Al-Shifa Company said:

Propolis has bioactive compounds that have anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties and anti-harmful oxidants. All of these

advantages are attributed to the use of propolis in alternative medicine for patients with asthma and chronic obstructive respiratory diseases. Therefore, a study was conducted by academic doctors from the University of Belgrade, Slovakia, to ascertain the effect. Therapeutic treatment of propolis on humans with chronic respiratory obstruction such as asthma and emphysema, carried out by Professor Zozuha with his colleagues in April 2022.

She added: The study was conducted on forty of these patients who suffer from severe complications in their sick condition. The treatment of the patients included antibiotics, cortisone, and a mucolytic drug (Anastyleysteine). Half of the patients were given, in addition to this treatment, 80 mg of pure propolis twice a day for a month. Examinations were conducted for them before and after the study, which included measuring levels of indicators of oxidative stress, levels of antioxidants in the blood, and levels of indicators of microbial, allergic, or immunological inflammation.

And she concluded: The results resulted in a clear improvement in the results of patients who were treated with propolis over patients who were treated with conventional treatment only.



Estimated cost of e-prescription system project amounts to 5.335 million dinars

Systems vary in price based on technical specifications

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadi, revealed that the estimated cost of designing, supplying, and implementing the electronic prescription system amounts to 5.335 million dinars, saying such systems vary in price based on the technical specifications of each system and the brand, and this

what the special technical study has shown, reports Al-Rai daily.

In response to a parliamentary question by MP Abdulaziz Al-Saqabi, Al-Awadi said, "the calculation of the estimated value of the project was made through technical offers from different companies, and the cost was calculated in the aforementioned amount, based on the ministry's needs."

He pointed out that one of the most important reasons for postponing and delaying the electronic

prescription project and its application, "Wasfa", is the Covid-19 pandemic that the world went faced and the length of routine protocol procedures in issuing and awarding tenders, as the procedures for offering them began on April 27, 2020, and that the electronic prescription tender documents are available with the Central Agency for Public Tenders.

The five features of the electronic prescription system include preventing wastage and wrong dispensing of medicines, reducing waste of public money, ensuring the safety of patients by linking it with the regulatory authorities, a unified system for editing and dispensing prescriptions and managing medicine stocks in hospitals and health centers.



Group photo during the World Health Organization's anniversary celebration.

Ministry of Health proud

Kuwaiti students' win awards at WHO arts competition

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait is proud of the three students that won awards at the World Health Organization's (WHO) arts competition for schools students, which coincided with the organization's anniversary of establishment under the title "75 years of improving public health", said a state official on Tuesday.

Speaking during a WHO celebration held at the UN House in Kuwait, Health Minister Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi said that the winners -- Abdullah Al-Saffar, Yousef Ibrahim, and Ali Al-Mutairi -- had done very well and proudly represented their country in this competition featuring the participation of 2,000 individuals.

The win reflected Kuwaiti youth keenness on promoting health and medical services both regionally and internationally, affirmed the minister who also commended WHO on its celebration of establishment on April 7, 1948.

On his part, Dr. Assad Hafeez -- WHO Representative in the State of Kuwait -- noted that the competition, in which 35 students won, had reflected the youth's health awareness and social responsibility.



Photos during the World Health Organization's anniversary celebration held at the UN House in Kuwait.

KUNA photos

He commended the Kuwaiti winners for their artistic vision and keenness on promoting health care awareness, revealing that the WHO office in Kuwait had received over 100 entries for the competition.

Speaking on part of the Ministry of Education, representative of the ministry's undersecretary Ali Dashti affirmed that encouraging the youth to

take health matters seriously was the important goal of the competition, indicating that the Ministry of Education was interested in cooperating with other state entities in this regard.

He also commended the Health Ministry for its role in spreading awareness in regards to health and combating disease.

He also congratulated WHO for celebrating its 75th anniversary.

He also congratulated WHO for celebrating its 75th anniversary.

JOINT OPERATIONS WAFRA



SAUDI ARABIAN CHEVRON INC. (SAC) - KUWAIT GULF OIL COMPANY

Joint Operations (Saudi Arabian Chevron Inc. / Kuwait Gulf Oil Company), announces the under-mentioned Public Tenders for procurement of materials.

Kuwaiti and Saudi Merchants, registered with either Company wishing to participate in any of the under-mentioned Tenders are invited to collect the Tender documents from Purchasing Section, Purchasing & Logistic Division, Administration Building, Ground Floor, Joint Operations, Wafra, during the official working hours from 16 AUG 2023 up to 29 AUG 2023 FOR S.NO 1 TO 3 AND TO TILL 12 SEP 2023 FOR S.NO 4 TO 5 for a non-refundable fee mentioned against each tender.

Tender Fees to be deposited in the National bank of Kuwait (NBK) Account No. 1001132057. Saudi Suppliers can collect the tender documents from Saudi Arabian Chevron office in Al-Khobar Telephone No.: (013) 8645104 - Fax No.: (013) 8985436

The closing date for the following Tender will be on **Monday, 4 SEP 2023 @ 09:00 AM FOR THE S.NO 1 TO 3 AND Monday 18 SEP @ 9:00 AM FOR S.NO 4 TO 5**

S.NO.	TENDER NO.	MATERIALS	FEES (IN KD)
1	2872138 - R1	CROSSOVERS	15
2	2871884 - R1	DATA FAULT AND POWER RECORDERS (SIEMENS - FUJITSU - MEINBERG) OR EQUIVALENT	35
3	2881385	DISTRIBUTION TRANSFORMERS	15
4	2881788	COUPLINGS SLEEVE AND INSERT SLEEVES (TUBOSCOPE VETCO INTL - CCB INTL)	15
5	2881792	VALVES (GATE - BALL - CHECK)	15

Notes: Gate Passes are required for Suppliers entering JO-Wafra Administrative Offices to collect the tender document and gate pass processing time is 48 hours. Please send request for gate pass along with legible copies of Authorization letter, Civil ID, Car Registration, Supplier Registration (KGOC or SAC) to e-mail HBJH@chevron.com and ZIQB@chevron.com at least 48 hours prior to arrival.

For additional information, you may contact:

Telephone No.: **23983639** - Ext : 2502 - 3477

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Ford lures Apple executive

Ford has hired away a key Apple executive to run a new business unit that will sell software-related subscription services to vehicle owners.

The Dearborn, Michigan, automaker said Monday it hired Peter Stern, who was Apple's vice president of services. He'll be president of Ford Integrated Services, a unit that will combine software and hardware into services.

At Apple, Stern oversaw Apple TV plus, iCloud storage, Apple Books, the arcade and fitness operations and other businesses, Ford said in a statement Monday.

Stern started Monday and reports directly to CEO Jim Farley. Stern also will expand Ford's BlueCruise hands-free partially automated driving system, as well as productivity and safety and security services, the state-

ment said. Asked if people are getting tired of paying for subscription services, Stern said people will buy single services and bundles as long as they see the value.

"When we do that right, customers will sign up not only for individual, ala carte services, but I think we'll also create bundles of services that make it really easy for customers to get the most out of their vehicles," he said. (AP)

UBS to pay \$1.44b to settle 2007 fraud case

UBS will pay U.S. authorities \$1.44 billion to settle the last lingering legal case over Wall Street's role in the housing bubble of the early 2000s, which ultimately led to the 2008 financial crisis and Great Recession.

The Swiss bank agreed to pay a civil penalty over how it handled the sale of 40 mortgage-backed securities issued in 2006 and 2007. The settlement argues that UBS bankers gave false and

misleading statements about the health of the mortgages in those bonds to the buyers in violation of federal securities law.

For example, UBS bankers knew that the underlying mortgages in these bonds were poorly underwritten or violated consumer protection laws. The bonds in question ended up with substantial losses for investors.

With the UBS settlement, the last remaining outstanding legal

case from the Great Recession has now come to a close, the Justice Department said. Banks paid collectively more than \$36 billion in civil penalties for their conduct related to the mortgage crisis, but that does not include other settlements that banks have made to state and local authorities as well. The financial crisis and subsequent recession is still being felt today in many parts of the country in depressed housing values. (AP)

Market Movements

15-08-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts		
JAPAN	- Nikkei	+0.56	32,238.89	UAE	- DFM	-0.19	4,051.19
PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	+0.31	48,594.86	SAUDI	- Tadawul	-0.70	11,412.88
PHILIPPINES	- PSEI	+0.11	6,335.91				
EGYPT	- EGX 30	+0.38	17,965.32				

Business

Trip kicks off a week before GOP debate

Biden heads to battleground Wisconsin to talk about the economy

WASHINGTON, Aug. 15, (AP) — In a show of preemptive counter-programming, President Joe Biden on Tuesday travels to Wisconsin to highlight his economic policies in a state critical to his reelection fortunes, just a week before Republicans descend on Milwaukee for the party's first presidential debate.

His trip comes on the eve of the anniversary of the Inflation Reduction Act, major economic legislation that he signed into law with great ceremony but polls show that most people know little about it or what it does.

Wisconsin is among the handful of critical states where Biden needs to persuade voters that his policies are having a positive impact on their lives, and he is expected to visit frequently to make his case.

Biden plans to tour Ingeteam, a clean energy manufacturer of onshore wind turbine generators in Milwaukee, to talk up provisions of the law that spends hundreds of millions of dollars to boost domestic manufacturing and clean energy, lower health care costs and crack down on wealthy tax cheats. Ingeteam plans to hire 100 workers using Bipartisan Infrastructure Law money to start producing EV charging stations domestically, according to the White House.

Also timed to Biden's trip, multinational tech firm Siemens is set to announce that it will start manufacturing solar inverters in Kenosha County using tax incentives from the IRA law.

Administration officials say the trip is meant to recognize the effects of the law,

which passed Congress on party-line votes.

"The president and his team are excited to bring that message to the American people throughout the week," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Monday.

Critics of the legislation say provisions of the law could end up increasing inflation. Former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers said during a virtual Peterson Institute for International Economics event in July that while he supported the IRA, the Biden administration's overall economic agenda is "increasingly dangerous."

"I am profoundly concerned by the doctrine of manufacturing-centered economic nationalism that is increasingly being put forth as a general principle to guide policy," Summers said.

Vice President Kamala Harris and top Cabinet officials will be fanning out across the country this week to talk about the Inflation Reduction Act and its provisions. Biden has scheduled an anniversary event at the White House on Wednesday.

The president's stop in Wisconsin comes shortly before Republicans hold their first presidential primary debate in Milwaukee on Aug. 23. Former President Donald Trump — the leading Republican candidate in polls so far — has yet to say whether he will boycott or hold a competing event.

Charles Franklin, director of Marquette Law School Poll, said the trip could help Biden win support from independents, who make up about 10% of voters in

the state.

"What he really needs to do is get independents in the state to like him a bit better," Franklin said. "Coming and talking about his achievements, about factories that are working with American jobs — all of that is a good reason to come to speak to those folks in the state who are not partisans."

"Because Democrats are already behind him," Franklin said, and "Republicans are almost certainly not going to cross over." Democratic gains helped decide a critical state Supreme Court race this spring that moved Wisconsin's highest court under liberal control for the first time in 15 years.

Republicans, though, will compete aggressively in the state, selecting Milwaukee as the site of its 2024 national nominating convention.

The 2020 Democratic convention was supposed to be held in Milwaukee too, but it largely unfolded virtually because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Biden is one of a string of administration officials making stops across the U.S. this week to promote the legislation's anniversary.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen on Monday spoke in Las Vegas at an International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers union hall about "the early results of bold federal action through the IRA" and the administration's climate agenda.

"The IRA is driving economic growth, expanding economic opportunity and bolstering our resilience," she said.

Criminal case against driver ends

Legal, ethical questions on 'Autopilot' endure

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 15, (AP) — A criminal prosecution against a Tesla driver in Los Angeles County will end on Tuesday, the final step of a case believed to be the first time in the U.S. prosecutors brought felony charges against a motorist who was using a partially automated driving system.

But the conclusion of driver Kevin Aziz Riad's case is offering little solace to Lorena Ochoa, whose spouse was one of two people killed in the 2019 crash in a Los Angeles suburb. She believes both Tesla and Aziz Riad, who received probation as punishment, should face harsher consequences.

Aziz Riad faces a restitution hearing on Tuesday, where a judge will determine how much money he owes the families of Gilberto Alcazar Lopez and Maria Guadalupe Nieves-Lopez. Aziz Riad was using Autopilot, and the case has raised legal and ethical questions about the technology, particularly as Tesla sales grow and more automakers equip cars with similar systems.

The victims' families have separately filed civil lawsuits against Aziz Riad and Tesla that are ongoing.

Tesla says on its website that its cars require human supervision and are not autonomous, but critics say the electric vehicle maker continues a misleading marketing campaign implying that vehicles using Autopilot can drive themselves.

"They make cars that they know cause accidents, and they don't care," said Ochoa, Alcazar Lopez's spouse, in an interview in Spanish last week. "Families are broken, lives are lost and they don't care."

Authorities say Aziz Riad, a limousine service driver, was at the wheel of a Tesla Model S that was moving at 74 mph (119 kph) when it left a freeway and ran a red light on a local street in Gardena, California, on Dec. 29, 2019. The Tesla struck a Honda Civic at an intersection, and Alcazar Lopez and Nieves-Lopez died at the scene.

Tesla says Autopilot technology can keep a car in its lane, maintain some distance from cars in front of it and make lane changes. But Autopilot has had trouble with stopping for emergency vehicles parked on roads, and it's also under investigation by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for braking without driver input.

U.S. safety regulators are probing Tesla's partially automated driving systems in at least 35 crashes and 17 deaths nationwide since 2016. The automaker did not respond to requests for comment.

Experts saw the felony charges for the deaths of Alcazar Lopez and

Nieves-Lopez as a warning for drivers who use systems like Tesla's Autopilot that they cannot rely on them to control vehicles and could face prosecution if a tragedy occurred.

Aziz Riad, the Tesla driver, pleaded no contest to two counts of vehicular manslaughter with gross negligence. Despite facing more than seven years behind bars, a judge sentenced him to probation in June.

Ochoa blames both Aziz Riad and Tesla for her spouse's death. She had hoped Aziz Riad would go to prison and feels probation was too lenient.

"How can there be justice if the person who took the life of the father of my children, of my husband, is free and is not paying for the mistake he made?" she said. "It is not fair."

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office defended the plea deal in a statement, saying the disposition "was arrived at taking into account all of the evidence and materials presented in the case."

The couple had separated but co-parented their three children and remained on good terms. In 2019, Alcazar Lopez was living in Los Angeles with their eldest. He was a good father, Ochoa said, and looked out for his family even though the spouses were apart.

Alcazar Lopez and Nieves-Lopez had been on their first date when the crash occurred.

Bryant Walker Smith, a University of South Carolina law professor who follows automated vehicles, says the law has to balance two arguments that are both correct. One is that people should be held accountable for mistakes if they fail to control a two-ton vehicle. Another is that in Aziz Riad's case, there's no evidence he intended to kill anyone.

Arthur Barends, Aziz Riad's criminal defense lawyer, said he is "comfortable" with probation given his client did not mean to do anything wrong.

The question of civil liability is even more complex. Is Aziz Riad responsible for the deaths, since he was behind the wheel, or is Tesla?

It's possible to argue Tesla engineers should know that people will become too reliant on driver-assist systems and trust them too much, Walker Smith said.

For years, he and others have said Tesla can do more to make its technology safer. Their suggestions include limiting Autopilot use to freeways, as well as upgrading a driver-monitoring system that currently allows drivers to "check out" while behind the wheel. Walker Smith also wants Tesla's technology to shut down faster if it determines drivers are not watching the road.

Wall Street falls with markets 'worldwide'

Weak economic data from China cited

NEW YORK, Aug. 15, (AP) — Stocks worldwide were falling Tuesday as China's faltering recovery raises worries for the rest of the global economy.

The S&P 500 sank 0.8% in midday trading after data showed a deepening slump in July for the world's second-largest economy. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 274 points, or 0.8%, at 35,033, as of 11:25 a.m. Eastern time, and the Nasdaq composite lost 0.7%.

Coming into this year, the expectation was that China's economy would grow enough after the government removed anti-COVID restrictions to prop up a global economy weakened by high inflation. But China's recovery has faltered so much that it unexpectedly cut a key interest rate on Tuesday and skipped a report on how many of its younger workers are unemployed.

Worries about the knock-on effects for the rest of the global economy are weighing on Wall Street, where stocks have already been retrenching in August. The pullback follows a gangbusters first seven months of the year that critics called overdone.

In the U.S., the economy has remained more resilient than expected despite higher interest rates. A report on Tuesday showed growth for sales at U.S. retailers accelerated by more in July than economists expected.

"U.S. retail sales are charging ahead, and a lot of that may be on charge cards," said Brian Jacobsen, chief economist at Annex Wealth Management. "Still, the U.S. consumer is showing few signs of slowing down."

The strong retail sales report raises hopes that the U.S. economy can keep growing and avoid a long-predicted recession. But on the downside for markets, it could also raise the Federal Reserve's resolve to keep interest rates high in order to fully grind down inflation.

The Fed has already hiked its key interest rate to the highest level in more than two decades. High rates work by bluntly dragging on the entire economy and hurting prices for investments. "Numbers like today's just make it more likely that rates will remain higher for longer, even if the Fed doesn't hike them next month," said Mike Loewengart, head of model portfolio construction at Morgan Stanley Global Investment Office.

Treasury yields initially rose following the retail sales report, approaching their highest levels since the 2007-09 Great Recession, before easing.

A faltering Chinese economy could mean less demand for oil and other commodities.

The price for a barrel of U.S. crude oil dropped 2% to \$80.89. Prices also fell for Brent crude, the international standard, and for copper.

The declines meant stocks of energy and raw-material producers were among the biggest losers in the S&P 500. Miner Freeport-McMoRan fell 2.9%, and Exxon Mobil's 1.8% drop was one of the heavier weights on the index.

Banks were also falling, continuing a rocky run since the high-profile failures of several during the spring that were caused in part by higher interest



A person walks in front of an electronic stock board showing Japan's Nikkei 225 index at a securities firm Monday, Aug. 14, 2023, in Tokyo. Asian stock markets tumbled Monday after mixed U.S. economic data revived worries the Federal Reserve might hike interest rates again. (AP)

Buffett's firm invests in biggest homebuilders while reducing GM stake in 'portfolio' moves

OMAHA, Neb., Aug. 15, (AP) — Warren Buffett's company appears to be betting on the housing market picking up because Berkshire Hathaway bought more than \$700 million worth of homebuilder DR Horton's stock this spring along with smaller stakes in fellow builders Lennar Corp. and NVR Corp.

Berkshire revealed those new investments Monday in a quarterly filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission that shows the conglomerate's holdings as of the end of June.

Investors always watch Berkshire's moves closely because of Buffett's remarkably successful track record over the years, but these filings don't make clear which moves Buffett made and which ones were handled by one of the Omaha, Nebraska-based company's two other investment managers.

Buffett typically handles all the big

investments in the \$350 billion portfolio worth \$1 billion or more. The three homebuilder stakes together are worth around \$800 million.

Berkshire holds nearly 6 million DR Horton shares, 152,572 Lennar shares and 11,112 NVR shares.

Buffett's company made a number of other tweaks to its portfolio during the second quarter including reducing the size of its General Motors and Globe Life stakes while adding to its Capital One investment.

Berkshire almost halved its GM stake from 40 million shares to 22 million. And it reduced its Globe Life investment to 2.5 million shares from the previous quarter's nearly 6.4 million.

Berkshire Hathaway now owns nearly 12.5 million Capital One shares, up from 9.9 million in March.

Buffett's company also eliminated smaller investments in Marsh & Mc-

Clennan, McKesson Corp. and Vitesse Energy.

Berkshire's biggest holdings in Apple and Bank of America stock remained unchanged.

Several of Berkshire's other moves in the quarter were previously disclosed including adding even more Occidental Petroleum shares, reducing its Chevron stake and unloading most of the Activision Blizzard it shares Buffett bought as a bet that Microsoft's acquisition of that video game maker would go through.

In addition to its stock portfolio, Berkshire owns dozens of businesses outright including BNSF railroad, several major utilities and an assortment of insurance companies led by Geico. It also owns a number of manufacturing and retail firms such as Precision Castparts, See's Candy and Helzberg Diamonds.

ing between gains and losses after Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway disclosed it bought stakes in several of them. Other investors often try to copy the famed investor's moves, and D.R. Horton rose 2.3%.

Europe

In early trading, the FTSE 100 in London fell 1.2% to 7,417.72. The CAC 40 in Paris declined 1% to 7,277.68 and the DAX in Frankfurt lost 0.8% to 15,781.86.

Asia

Asian stock markets were mixed Tuesday after China reported weak July consumer and business activity and its central bank cut a key interest rate to shore up the struggling economy.

Shanghai and Hong retreated while Tokyo and Sydney gained. Oil prices rose. The Shanghai Composite Index fell

0.3% to 3,169.18 after official data showed growth in Chinese consumer spending and factory output slowed more than expected. The People's Bank of China cut its interest rate on one-week loans to banks. The Hang Seng in Hong Kong lost 0.8% to 18,622.55.

Oil

In energy markets, benchmark U.S. crude gained 8 cents to \$82.59 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract fell 68 cents on Monday to \$82.51. Brent crude, the price basis for international oil trading, gained 11 cents to \$86.32 per barrel in London. It lost 60 cents the previous session to \$86.21.

Currencies

The dollar declined to 145.46 yen from Monday's 145.52 yen. The euro gained to \$1.0916 from \$1.0904.



Clouds are reflected above the company logo on the hood of a Tesla vehicle outside a showroom in Littleton, Colo. A criminal prosecution against a Tesla driver in Los Angeles County will end on Tuesday, Aug. 15, 2023, the final step of a case believed to be the first time in the U.S. that prosecutors brought felony charges against a motorist who was using a partially automated driving system. (AP)

ex-Lebanon central bank governor assets frozen

Lebanon's interim central bank governor Monday froze the accounts of the bank's embattled former chief and close relatives and associates days after the United States, United Kingdom and Canada slapped sanctions on them.

Wassim Mansouri's decision was made public following a meeting of the central bank's Special Investigation Commission. The commission is in charge

of fighting money laundering and terrorism financing. It named former Gov. Riad Salameh, his son Nady, brother Raja, close associate Marianne Hoayek and former partner Anna Kosakova.

Mansouri ordered all accounts in Lebanese banks and financial institutions of the five individuals be frozen. It also lifts bank secrecy requirements of the individuals at the request of judicial authorities.

Riad Salameh's mobile phone was off when contacted for comment by The Associated Press.

Salameh, 73, ended his 30-year tenure on July 31 under a cloud of investigation and blame for his country's historic economic crisis.

France, Germany, and Luxembourg are investigating Salameh and close associates over alleged financial crimes, including illicit enrichment and the laundering of \$330 million. (AP)

Russia's central bank makes huge interest rate hike

Russia's central bank made a big interest rate hike Tuesday, an emergency move designed to fight inflation and strengthen the ruble after the country's currency reached its lowest value since early in the war with Ukraine.

The ruble has lost more than a third of its value since the beginning of the year as Moscow increases military spending and Western sanctions weigh on its income from energy shipments. The flagging

currency does not mean the Russian economy is in freefall - though it is facing challenges, including rising prices for households and businesses, according to analysts who study Russia.

A lower exchange rate allows Moscow to transfer the dollars it earns from selling oil and natural gas into more rubles to pay pensions and run government agencies. But the drop in value went a bit too far, and officials are now

tightening it up, analysts say.

While over time sanctions will erode long-term economic growth, the recently weaker ruble "does not imply an underlying economic crisis, it doesn't suggest Russia is about to fall off a cliff," said Chris Weafer, CEO of Macro-Advisory Partners.

The central bank hiked its key rate 3.5 percentage points to 12% after announcing a meeting of its board of directors a day earlier as the ruble declined. (AP)

The Conversation

Underpaid and overlooked, migrant labor provides the 'backbone' of Maryland Eastern Shore's local economy

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

By **Thurka Sangaramoorthy**,
American University

Every summer, people flock to Maryland to eat blue crabs. Named for their brilliant sapphire-colored claws, blue crab is one of the most iconic species in the Chesapeake Bay. The scientific name for blue crabs, *Callinectes sapidus*, means "beautiful savory swimmer."

In restaurants and at home, diners pile steamed and seasoned blue crabs in the middle of a table covered in paper. Then, using small mallets, knives, bare hands and fingers, they break open the hard shells and extract the juicy meat from inside.

It is a messy experience, especially with Old Bay seasoning and beer known locally as Natty Boh, one that is quintessentially Maryland.

Though many people know firsthand how difficult it is to pick and clean crab meat, they often don't realize how crab is processed when it is sold in stores already picked and cleaned. Most people also may not know that crab picking is a livelihood for many, mainly poor, women.

For generations, African American women from Maryland's rural, maritime communities labored for crab houses on the Eastern Shore.

Today, fewer than 10 crab houses are left on the Shore. The workforce consists of mainly female migrant workers from Mexico who do the grueling job of picking crab for eight to nine hours a day, from late spring to early fall. They make on average of US\$2.50 to \$4.00 for every pound of crabmeat they pick.

That pay is roughly one-tenth to one-twelfth of the wholesale price of one pound - or about a half of a kilogram - of the seafood they pick, which is \$35 to \$44. In comparison, the Maryland minimum wage is \$13.25 an hour, while the federal minimum wage is \$7.25.

Over 2.1 million migrants and immigrants work in jobs growing and processing food in the United States, playing an essential role in feeding Americans.

As an anthropologist and global health researcher, my work has shown that they are part of an increasing trend in rural America. Since 1990, immigrants have been moving to small towns and rural regions at unprecedented rates, accounting for 37% of the overall rural population growth from 2000-2018.

Some rural counties, like Stewart County in Georgia and Franklin County in Alabama, have experienced growth rates of over 1,000% in their foreign-born population, which have boosted their local economies and mitigated rural population decline.

Maryland's rural Eastern Shore, for instance, has experienced a rapid rise in immigration since 2000. From 2010 to 2019, migration was the primary source of population growth, with the foreign-born population increasing by 90%.

Many immigrants come to this region to find work in agriculture, poultry and seafood processing. Some come directly from Mexico, Central America and Haiti.

Typically, farm workers have temporary visas and arrive in late spring and early summer and stay through the growing season. Migrant Mexican women who work in crab processing also follow the same seasonal employment pattern. Others, like those working in poultry processing plants, have settled here more permanently, either as undocumented or permanent residents.

Immigrant workers in rural regions work dangerous jobs and are exposed to pollution, deplorable living conditions and limited safety training.

Additionally, immigrant workers are among the lowest paid and lack access to health information, preventive care and medical treatment. Dry skin, cuts, scrapes, rashes, chronic pain and broken bones are common among immigrants who work in agriculture, poultry and seafood processing.

These workers also suffer from numerous invisible injuries such as discrimina-

tion, verbal harassment and physical exploitation.

Despite the daily risk of harm, migrant workers in rural regions have limited access to health care and rely on mobile clinics, local health departments and community health centers.

But these facilities are not equipped to handle specialty care or emergencies. Nor are many of them easily accessible due to location or hours of operation. In addition, many workers cannot afford to miss work or are afraid to tell their supervisors that they need care.

Some avoid health providers altogether because they are not treated well or feel misunderstood.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the notion of "essential" workers became part of the nation's vocabulary as a way to describe people required to continue in-person work under lockdown conditions. They included food industry workers.

The pandemic exposed the disproportionate numbers of immigrant workers in the agriculture, poultry and seafood industries in rural America.

It also revealed how policies enacted during the pandemic to protect public health and essential workers did little to prevent people from working in dangerous workplace conditions without adequate safeguards.

Unable to self-quarantine at home, many food production workers got sick or even died as a result of working in crowded conditions without personal protective equipment and adequate ventilation.

In many ways, the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the long-standing crisis of health care for immigrants in rural America.

But despite evidence that close to 2.5 million foreign-born people live and work in rural America, very little information exists on these people's health.

This inattention by lawmakers is harmful and dangerous because it leaves health care providers and social workers with little understanding of immigrant experiences in small towns and sparsely populated rural communities. (AP)

Modi says India's economy will be among top 3 in world within 5 yrs

'When poverty decreases in a country, power of the middle class increases'

NEW DELHI, Aug 15, (AP): Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India's economy will be among the top three in the world within five years, as he marked 76 years of independence from British rule on Tuesday.

Wearing a flowing, multi-colored turban, Modi addressed the country from New Delhi's 17th century Mughal-era Red Fort, saying his government had lifted over 130 million people out of poverty and that India's growing prosperity was an opportunity for the world.

"When poverty decreases in a country, the power of the middle class increases considerably," he said. "In the next five years, I promise India will be among the top three economies in the world."

His statement comes after reports last year from S&P Global and Morgan Stanley forecast that India's economy would overtake Japan and Germany's to become the world's third largest by 2030. They said India's economic boom will be driven by offshoring, investment in manufacturing, growing digital infrastructure and energy transition.

India's \$3.5 trillion economy surpassed the United Kingdom's last year to become the fifth largest. Modi said he was confident that when India marks 100 years of independence in 2047, it will do so as a developed nation.

The government forecasts India to grow by 6-6.5% this fiscal year, putting it among the world's fastest-growing large economies.

But despite steady economic growth, the Modi government has struggled to quash unemployment concerns and is under pressure to generate enough jobs, especially as it faces a general election in 2024, which Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party is favored to win.

The unemployment rate has grown over the last year, reaching 8% last month, according to the Center for Monitoring the Indian Economy.

Modi did not address these concerns in his speech, instead lauding India's journey over the decades.

"We are lucky to have democracy, democracy and diversity," he said, after noting that India was now the most populous country in the world according to some estimates. The Indian government is yet to release official population data, and its last census is from 2011.

Modi highlighted India's rise on the global stage and said a new world order was emerging after the COVID-19 pandemic.

"India is becoming the voice of the global South. We are bringing the promise of stability to the world," he said, adding that all eyes would be on India as it hosts the G-20 Summit in New Delhi next month.

The prime minister also reiterated calls for peace in the northeastern state of Manipur, where a near civil war has



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks at 17th century Mughal-era Red Fort monument on country's Independence Day in New Delhi, India, Tuesday. (AP)

Economic slump deepens

China skips giving update on surging youth unemployment

BEIJING, Aug 15, (AP): China's government skipped giving an update on a politically sensitive spike in unemployment among young people as official data Tuesday showed an economic slump deepened in July.

Meanwhile, the central bank unexpectedly cut a key interest rate in a sign of growing official urgency about shoring up economic growth that fell sharply in the three months ending in June.

Youth unemployment is sensitive after a survey in June found a record 21.3% of potential urban workers aged 16 to 24 couldn't find work after an economic rebound following the end of anti-virus controls fizzled out.

Publication of unemployment by age group is suspended while the National Bureau of Statistics considers how it measures data, according to a bureau spokesperson, Fu Linghui. Fu said a survey found overall unemployment among urban workers was 5.3%, up 0.1 percentage points from June.

"The employment situation is generally stable," Fu said at a news conference.

Growth in consumer spending decelerated to 2.5% over a year earlier in July from the previous month's 3.1%, according to Fu.

Growth in factory output slowed to 3.7% from 4.4%, according to Tuesday's data, as export demand plunged after U.S. and European central banks raised interest rates to cool inflation. Investment in factories, real estate and other fixed assets rose 3.8%, down from June's 3.4%.

"A decision to discontinue the youth unemployment figures just after they hit a record high doesn't inspire confidence," said Capital Economics in a report.

raged for months and killed over 150 people. He said the country stands with the people of Manipur and that resolution can only be achieved through peace.

Since clashes between two dominant ethnic groups erupted in early May, residents in Manipur have protested against the state government, ruled by Modi's party, and called for the firing of its chief minister.

Over 50,000 people have fled the

state, where violence has persisted despite a heavy army presence. Armed mobs have torched buildings, massacred civilians and looted weapons from state armories.

But for three months, the strongman leader was largely silent on the conflict in Manipur. His role, or lack thereof, sparked a no-confidence motion against his government in Parliament. Modi defeated the motion last week, after appealing for peace in Manipur for the

first time since the conflict began.

India celebrates its Independence Day a day after its neighbor Pakistan. The two separate states came into existence as a result of the bloody partition of British India in 1947.

The process sparked some of the worst communal violence the world has seen and left hundreds of thousands dead. It triggered one of the largest human migrations in history and some 12 million people fled their homes.

Rightist who admires Trump comes first in vote

Argentine peso plunges

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, Aug 15, (AP): The Argentine peso plunged Monday after an anti-establishment candidate who admires former President Donald Trump came first in primary elections that will help determine the country's next president.

Javier Milei rocked Argentina's political establishment by receiving the biggest share of primary votes for presidential candidates in the October general election to decide who leads a nation battered by economic woes.

Milei, 52, wants to replace the peso with the dollar, and says that Argentina's Central Bank should be abolished. He has said that climate change is a lie and has characterized sex education as a ploy to destroy the family. He has also said that the sale of human organs should be legal.

Gun ownership is severely restricted in Argentina. Milei proposes the "deregulation of the legal market" for weapons and "the protection of its legitimate and responsible use by the citizens," according to his party's electoral platform.

Argentina's government decided to devalue the local currency by 20% early Monday morning after the surprising Sunday showing. Two mainstream political coalitions have traded power for a decade in Argentina. The country is now the latest where voters have picked an outsider candidate to express anger against the status quo.

Operators were watching nervously Monday as the value of the peso also decreased in the parallel, or blue, market, dropping 12% by early afternoon.

Milei said the government was trying to blame his victory for the depreciation of the currency.

"One of the things the government is trying to convey is that devaluation and all these things are our fault," Milei said in an interview Monday with cable news channel LN+.

The drop in the value of the peso means that already-high inflation will accelerate, making getting to the

end of the month even harder for ordinary people.

"The more the dollar rises, the more expensive things become," Marta Gisela Barrera, a 29-year-old urban recycler who has trouble buying enough food for her four children, said on Monday morning. "I don't know what's going to happen anymore."

Argentina requires that citizens vote, with a symbolic financial penalty for not voting, and 69 percent of the country's 35 million voters went to the polls, each choosing candidates for positions ranging from local councilman to president. It marked the lowest participation for presidential primaries since the current system was set up in 2009.

The major parties had contested races to be its presidential candidate. Milei was uncontested, and got a few points more than the candidates of parties that have dominated Argentine politics.

After doing much better than expected, the upstart candidate with long sideburns and shaggy hair who gained notoriety and a rockstar-like following by angrily ranting against the "political caste" is now a real contender for the presidency.

"We've had 40 years of failures, don't tell me this time will be different. The central problem is that the solution to the problem is in the hands of the same problem, which is the politicians," Milei said in the LN+ interview.

In Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro was president from 2019 to 2022, and had a similar anti-left and anti-social justice orientation. Right-wing populists are also making inroads with a tough-on-crime message, most notably in El Salvador, where the popularity of President Nayib Bukele has soared amid a crackdown on gangs that has led to human-rights abuses.

If he were to win "my allies would be the United States and Israel," Milei said, adding he would move Argentina's embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, following in Trump's footsteps.

Testimony from Sam trusted inner circle will be used to convict him: prosecutors

NEW YORK, Aug 15, (AP): Testimony from FTX founder Sam Bankman-Fried's "trusted inner circle" of former executives at his collapsed cryptocurrency empire will be used to prove at an October trial that he misappropriated billions of dollars from his investors to fuel his businesses, make illegal campaign contributions and enrich himself, prosecutors said Monday.

The drop in the value of the peso means that already-high inflation will accelerate, making getting to the

Prosecutors made the assertions in papers filed in Manhattan federal court, where Bankman-Fried is charged with defrauding investors in his businesses and illegally diverted millions of dollars' worth of cryptocurrency from customers using his FTX exchange. He has pleaded not guilty.

The court filing, in which prosecutors describe evidence they plan to present to jurors, came three days after Bankman-Fried was sent to a federal jail in Brooklyn to await trial by Judge Lewis A. Kaplan, who said

there was probable cause to believe he had tried to tamper with witness testimony at least twice since his December arrest.

It also came on the same day that prosecutors filed a streamlined indictment that contains the seven charges Bankman-Fried faces at the Oct. 2 trial - but there's no longer a campaign finance charge for now, though it could go to trial later if they are found to conform with the terms of an extradition treaty with the Bahamas.

Still, prosecutors said in the latest indictment that Bankman-Fried misappropriated customer money to help fund over \$100 million in political contributions in advance of the 2022 election. The indictment said he sought to "maximize FTX's political influence" and use "these connections with politicians and government officials to falsely burnish the public image of FTX as a legitimate exchange."

Japanese economic growth surges on strong exports and tourism

Japan's economic growth jumped at an annual pace of 6% in the April-June period, marking the third straight quarter of growth as exports and inbound tourism recovered.

Real gross domestic product, which measures the sum value of a nation's products and services, grew 1.5% in the fiscal first quarter for the world's third largest economy, the Cabinet Office said Tuesday.

The annualized pace shows what the growth would have been if what was marked during the quarter had continued

for a year. The rate outpaced what analysts had forecast at 3.1% growth.

The latest quarter showed the strongest growth since October-December 2020, when Japan's GDP grew 1.9% on-quarter, and 7.9% annualized rate.

Exports grew 3.2% in the three months through June, according to the government. Auto exports have grown lately, after a period in which they had stalled on the shortage of computer chips and other parts. Production was cramped because of social restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Also contributing to quarterly growth was the return of tourism, as social restrictions eased, and borders opened to inbound travel. Tourism revenue contributes to export growth in such GDP data.

On the negative side, private consumption stalled, declining 0.5% compared to the previous quarter. Public demand, which includes government spending, rose 0.3%.

Some analysts think signs of recovery will prompt Japan's central bank to take

action on a policy change and move toward higher interest rates.

The Bank of Japan has taken a super-easy monetary policy for years, at zero or below-zero interest rates, to jumpstart an economy beset by deflation, the opposite of what the world is worried about lately, or inflation.

Deflation can be lethal, signaling stagnation. Japan has a shrinking population caused by an extremely low birth rate.

But recent data show the economy may be gradually picking up and wresting itself

out of stagnation and deflation. Complicating matters is that high interest rates can make borrowing more expensive and contribute to a slowdown, just when the economy is starting to rebound.

"The data is likely to provide the Bank of Japan with more room for normalization, although the initial short-lived bounce in the Japanese yen seems to reflect some market expectations that patience from the central bank is still the likely stance," said Yeap Jun Rong, market analyst at IG. (AP)

Kuwait Insurance Company achieved KD 5.11 million net profit during the first half of 2023

Gross Operating Profit increased to KD 4.66m

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Kuwait Insurance Company announced an increase in gross operating profits for the first half of the current year, amounting to KD 4.66 million (US\$ 15.22 million), equal to 72.5%. The net profit for the current period amounted to KD 5.11 million (USD 16.69 million), with Earnings Per Share of 27.66 fils (US Cents 9.03). The Shareholders equity has increased by KD 4 million (US\$ 13 million) to reach KD 134 million (USD 437 million) compared to the same period last year.

The Gross Written Premium for the current period amounted to KD 29.23 million (USD 95.5 million), which shows an increase of KD 1.44 million (USD 4.70 million), equal to 5.2%, while insurance expenses decreased to KD 10.76 million (USD 35.16 million) for the current period, which shows a decline of 13.9% compared to the same period last year.

Mr. Sami Sharif, CEO, stated that, the new accounting standard IFRS 17 has been applied to the results of the first half of this year, as well as, to the results of the first half of last year, retrospectively, to make them comparable. Mr. Sharif, who is also an actuarial expert, added that the implementation of the new accounting standard may lead to the emergence of fluctuations in profits that may be positive or negative, during the first two years, and these fluctuations will decrease and gradually normalize by the end of the second year of its implementation.

Mr. Sharif also said that the successes we are achieving, are the results of huge effort made in the previous years to build the foundation, which has enabled us to enjoy the sustainable growth in profits and in premiums. Also, due to the excellent marketing campaigns throughout the year, the company has won the award for "the most innovative marketing campaign in the insurance sector in Kuwait for the year 2022", from the esteemed British magazine "International Finance". This institution specializes in launching annual classifications in the fields of economy and business. The company also launched its new electronic application. "Kuwait-KIC" on smart phones, as the com-

pany seeks to provide fast and simple services to its users.

Mr. Sharif mentioned that in addition to the sales and profits, the company still maintains the Credit Ratings from AM Best and Moody's credit rating agencies as A- (Excellent) and A3 respectively, both with a stable outlook and we are proud in continuing with these ratings as we lead among the various local and regional companies of the insurance sector.

We still look forward to accomplishing a lot in the coming period to enable the company to face challenges that may arise in the future from regional and global developments. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed in achieving our goals, including the Board of Directors, the shareholders, and the company's employees.



Sami Sharif



AUB Qadsiyah-Branch



AUB Bayan branch

Bank dedicated to achieving the 17 SDGs

AUB branches in Qadsiyah, Bayan receive LEED GOLD Certification

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Ahli United Bank (AUB) is thrilled to announce that two of its branches; Qadsiyah and Bayan received the prestigious LEED GOLD v4.1 O+M: Existing Buildings Rating System - Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification. This esteemed recognition is developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), the most widely used green building rating system and an international symbol of excellence.

The Buildings awarded the LEED Gold are characterized by their reduced carbon footprint and creating a healthier environment. Additionally, they contribute to reducing operational costs and prioritize sustainable practices.

On this occasion, Mrs. Jehad Al-Humaidhi, Chief Executive Officer and Board Member of Ahli United Bank said, "We are proud to have achieved LEED Gold for our Qadsiyah and Bayan branches, as AUB is the first Kuwaiti bank to receive this prestigious certification in the Existing Buildings Rating System. This significant accomplishment places the bank at the forefront of institutions committed to sustainability



Eng. Khaled Al-Shatti



Jehad Al-Humaidhi

principles in a professional and proficient manner, while also emphasizing its dedication to making a positive impact on the environment".

"Ahli United Bank takes great pride in its longstanding and enduring approach of prioritizing sustainability as a key element in its business model. In line with this commitment, the bank is dedicated to achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. The bank firmly believes in the importance of having an active role for banking institutions in the environ-

mental and social sphere, in addition to their economic role", added Al-Humaidhi.

"We consider the attainment of LEED Gold Certification as a momentous milestone in our journey to elevate sustainability standards within our operations. It represents the culmination of collective efforts that involved all bank employees, as we aimed to meet the required standards and achieve highly positive outcomes", Al-Humaidhi emphasized.

On his part, Eng. Khaled Al-Shatti, the General Manager of Property and

Technical Facilities at Ahli United Bank, said, "We are delighted with the attainment of this prestigious certification, which serves as a crowning achievement for the efforts and commitment of AUB in adopting and implementing global standards that ensure a healthy and ideal working environment for employees and customers alike. Our receipt of this certification reflects the success of our endeavors in leveraging modern technologies to preserve the environment and reduce emissions through the execution of sustainability-supportive projects."

Al-Shatti further emphasized, "Given the exceptional importance of climate protection and the crucial role that buildings play in this regard, Ahli United Bank has worked diligently and earnestly to uphold its commitment to the measures and guidelines aimed at reducing carbon footprint. Our efforts have been geared towards creating a healthier working environment for both employees and customers."

For more information about Ahli United Bank's sustainability initiatives, please visit the bank's official website: www.ahliunited.com.kw.

Sustainability, community welfare

KIB organizes workshop on ESG essentials in banking for its staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: In a new effort to reinforce its commitment to society, sustainability and the planet, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) organized a comprehensive workshop that discussed environmental, social, and governance (ESG) essentials in the banking industry. The workshop, which addressed staff members across all departments and job grades, was delivered in cooperation with the American University of Kuwait's (AUK) Center for Continuing Education (CCE). This workshop comes under the umbrella of KIB's dedication to the overall development of its staff, in addition to its role as a proactive advocate of sustainability in Kuwait.

In a bid to offer a well-rounded educational experience for the attendees, the two-day workshop addressed a wide range of topics that cover all aspects of ESG essentials and practices in the banking industry. The topics discussed included everything from definitions and examples to the benefits of implementing a strong ESG plan, the history of ESG, and how countries in the region and around the world turn ESG principles into actionable strategies. Other topics highlighted the relationship between sustainability, risk, and strategy, as well as how to integrate ESG considerations in a coherent plan that bolsters business performance.

Commenting on the workshop, Siham AlKhorayef, Manager - Learning and Development at KIB, said: "Sustainability begins and ends with people. It begins with the people who are aware of the importance and benefits of sustainability, and it ends with the people who are enabled to live a better, more fulfilling life, thanks to the inclusive sustainable considerations that consider the welfare of the entire social ecosystem and not just its strongest players."

AlKhorayef went on to explain that, as the Bank's most valuable resource, human capital management is among the scopes of business that have advanced greatly in light of ESG principles implementation. "Contrary to the popular interpretation of sustainability, ESG goes far beyond eco-friendly practices," AlKhorayef added. "It's about utilizing every resource, from staff to community talents and national resources, in a balanced way that guarantees welfare for all."

On his part, Nawaf Najia, Executive Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, noted: "Our commitment to sustainability is reflected in our continued efforts to ensure that ESG practices are engrained in the planning and execution of every product, service, or even community initiative. That's why it is pivotal that every staff member is well-versed in the nuances of ESG and their modern application. In doing so, we are taking confident strides toward a stronger economy, a more enabled society, and an overall better quality of life for all."

It serves to note that KIB is the first and only bank in Kuwait to



KIB's Nawaf Najia



Siham AlKhorayef

have endorsed the United Nations (UN) Global Compact. By joining the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative, KIB pledges its commitment to adopting and spreading ESG practices and standards within the institution and across the community.

About KIB
Kuwait International Bank (KIB) is a bank that operates according to the Islamic Shari'ah, based in the State of Kuwait. Incorporated in 1973, and originally known as Kuwait Real Estate Bank, KIB made the transition to its current Islamic operating model in 2007. In 2018, KIB embarked on a new phase of its journey full of innovation and development. As part of its new strategic direction, the Bank focuses on offering a next-level customer experience under the slogan: "Bank for Life".

Through a network of branches spread across the State of Kuwait, KIB offers a broad range of banking products and services, as well as innovative digital banking solutions in line with international best standards. As part of its duty towards the community, the Bank also encompasses a leading social responsibility program that aims at positively impacting all members of the community through a wide range of impactful initiatives and activities.

Today, KIB has taken concrete steps in implementing its new strategic objectives. The Bank has cemented its role as a key player in the local banking industry and has continued to maintain its strong financial performance; enabling it to be globally recognized for its strong credit rating and financial position.

KFH: 'Jameati' Investment Plan secures higher education for children

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Considering its pioneering role in offering unique solutions and innovative products, Kuwait Finance house (KFH) has continued its distinction in fulfilling customers aspirations and providing the best investment plans and solutions according to the highest international standards.

As part of its keenness to meet customers' aspirations in terms of securing the highest levels of education for their children, which is the best investment, KFH designed the long-term investment plan (Jameati) to prepare the children for a bright future.

The investment plan for university education Jameati provides solutions that enable customers to save monthly amounts, and provide higher investment profits on savings, in addition to takaful coverage.

Among the conditions of the investment plan is that the age of the son or daughter must be less than 14 years, and the age of the customer must be between 21 and 61 years. The investment period ranges from 4 to 18 years.

The advantages of Jameati investment plan include the following: the investment amount, or monthly payments may be amended at any time and the amounts shall be automati-

cally transferred on monthly basis from the customer account to Jameati investment plan account. Also, the customer may withdraw 60% of the balance in the first year and 60% every year after the first withdrawal. The saving amount and accrued profit during the investment period shall fall due upon expiration of the investment plan. The investment plan can be cancelled at any time and the invested amount and profits accrued on the date of closing shall be refunded to the customer.

The long-term investment plans provided by the bank are Jameati, which meets the purposes of university education for students of 18 years of age, where the customer can set a target amount for the plan, and the amounts are invested and profits are deposited annually, and all accumulated profits when it is time for children begin their freshmen year in the university. Also, Injaz is a multi-purpose saving plan, through which young people can plan and achieve their future dreams by starting to invest their savings until the right time comes to achieve their goals, such as establishing a private project or buying a suitable house and other aspirations. Furthermore, Rafaa, which is a long term investment plan for children to help par-

Plan for their educational future
with KFH investment plans

JAMEATI
Higher Education Investment Plan

KFH-Jameati

ents cover the expenses of their marriage. And «Themar», which helps to enjoy a comfortable retirement life after working for many years, as the customer can determine a certain goal and the amounts paid are invested, all of which are due when the plan ends by reaching the retirement age.

Long term investment plans offered by KFH encourage and inspire customers to enhance future planning and saving culture, determine family spending priorities and enhance chances of increasing family income through innovative and flexible solutions with rewarding investment returns.

Gen Z less enthusiastic about artificial intelligence

Investing 'summer vibes' drives interest in cruise, AI stocks

DALLAS, Aug 15: With summer travel booming, all four generations - Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X and Boomers - invested heavily in popular cruise lines in Q2, according to the Q2 2023 Apex Next Investor Outlook (ANIO). The study utilizes data from Apex Fintech Solutions ("Apex"), the fintech for fintechs powering innovation and the future of digital wealth management. The data also reinforced the continued powerful interest in AI, with major rallies and investments in Nvidia, C3 AI, and Palantir.

tional trends and are not investment advice. Key report findings include:

- Everyone loves cruises
- With cruise lines announcing record bookings, Q2 saw a significant shift in investment focus towards cruise lines, with Norwegian Cruise Lines (NCLH), Carnival Corp. (CCL) and Royal Caribbean Group (RCL) receiving heavy investments across all generational cohorts.
- Gen Z is less enthusiastic about AI
- Millennials and Gen X are enthusiastic about AI, with C3 AI (AI) moved up the lists 18 and 27 points, respectively. Boomers doubled down on Palantir (PLTR), moving it up 24 spots. Only Gen Z held back from jumping on the AI bandwagon.
- COVID's over - at least from an investing standpoint
- All four generations jettisoned biotech stock Moderna (MRNA), falling down the ranks across ages.
- Technology stocks are a preferred choice across all generations

Across all generational cohorts, technology stocks maintain a strong lead in equity investments among these Top 10 Stocks: TSLA, AAPL, AMZN, NVDA, MSFT, META, GOOGL/GOOG, AMD, BRK.B, and SOFI.

■ Gen Z took a cautious approach in Q2

Gen Z appeared to scale back in bullish trading patterns compared to Q1. Possible reasons for this cautious approach may include the First Republic Bank crash, negative press surrounding AI from Google, and the departure of a prominent figure in the AI industry.

■ Gen Z still likes crypto and digital

Gen Z's three hottest, climbing-the-ranks stocks in Q1 include a crypto-economy company (COIN); a Bitcoin ecosystem provider (MARA), and a cybersecurity business (CRWD).

"What's remarkable about our Q2 ANIO report is how many investing stereotypes were broken," comments Connor Coughlin, Chief Commercial Officer, Fintech at Apex Fintech Solutions. "The multi-generational invest-

ing interest in cruise stocks is a great example. But also, despite perceptions around the 'meme stock' generation, it was actually Gen Z that appeared to be more conservative in Q2, even holding back on investing in AI stocks. As such, better understanding the changing needs and behaviors of retail investors is going to continue to be critical for advisors and fintechs."

Apex Fintech Solutions is a fintech powerhouse enabling seamless access and frictionless investing. Apex's omni-suite of scalable solutions fuel innovation and evolution for hundreds of today's market leaders, challengers, change makers, and visionaries. The Company's digital ecosystem creates an environment where clients with the biggest ideas are empowered to change the world. Apex works to ensure their partners succeed on the frontlines of the industry via bespoke custody & clearing, advisory, institutional, digital assets, and SaaS solutions through its Apex Clearing™, Apex Advisor Solutions™, Apex Silver™, and Apex CODA Markets™ brands.

DEF CON

Elite recognition

CMU team wins 7th hacking 'Olympics'

LAS VEGAS, Aug 15: The winning team in DEF CON's Capture-the-Flag (CTF) competition history, Carnegie Mellon University's Plaid Parliament of Pwn-ing (PPP), was back at it again, as the team defended its title, earning its seventh victory in the past eleven years.

PPP joined forces with the University of British Columbia's Maple Bacon and hackers from CMU Alum startup Theori.io (The Duck), playing under the name Maple Mallard Magistrates (MMM).

DEF CON's three-day flagship competition, widely considered the 'Olympics' of hacking, brought together some of the world's most talented cybersecurity professionals, researchers, and students, as twelve of the world's top teams (who qualified from a field of 1,828 teams) attempted to break each other's systems, stealing virtual flags and accumulating points while simultaneously protecting their own.

As the number of cybersecurity attacks continues to increase worldwide, competitions like DEF CON's Capture-the-Flag provide the opportunity for leading cybersecurity engineers to measure up against one another, learning and developing new techniques as they work through various challenges.

Carnegie Mellon students, faculty, and alumni once again demonstrated the University's prowess in cybersecurity, finishing in the top spot on the leaderboard at the end of days one and two, and holding on in the competition's final 24 hours to secure the victory. For the win, the team earned eight black badges, the most elite recognition in hacking.

"It feels great to win once again, and the team is incredibly pleased that we built and maintained a lead throughout the entire contest," said Jay Bosamiya, PPP's team captain for DEF CON Capture-the-Flag, a Ph.D. student in Carnegie Mellon's Computer Science Department, and member of CMU's CyLab Security and Privacy Institute. "Our victory as MMM shows how well our three teams work together."

Impact

"It's hard to understate the impact our students have in cybersecurity," said David Brumley, Professor in CMU's Electrical and Computer Engineering Department. "Aside from DEF CON, CMU students were the first to hack a Tesla and the iPhone, have founded multiple successful companies like Theori, ForAllSecure, and Comma, and have become professors at top universities. Graduates of CMU's cybersecurity programs are simply among the best in the field, and DEF CON is just one very specific way that proves it."

PPP was first formed in 2009 and began competing at DEF CON in 2010. The team's previous wins came in 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2019, and 2022, with second-place finishes in 2015, 2018, 2020, and 2021. The team runs and competes in several cybersecurity competitions each year and recently defended its title at the MITRE embedded Capture-the-Flag event (eCTF).

Members of PPP contribute to Carnegie Mellon University's annual student-focused hacking competition, picoCTF, developing challenges of varying levels of complexity. picoCTF has long been the go-to CTF for middle and high school students looking to build and hone their cybersecurity skills, and in recent years has expanded to include an undergraduate leaderboard, as well as several country and continent-specific leaderboards.

Home to the CyLab Security and Privacy Institute, US News and World Report's top-ranked undergraduate cybersecurity program, and several world-class graduate programs and courses, Carnegie Mellon University continues to lead the way in cybersecurity education and research.

The College of Engineering at Carnegie Mellon University is a top-ranked engineering college known for its Advanced Collaboration culture in research and education. The College is well-known for working on problems of both scientific and practical importance. Our "maker" culture is ingrained in all that we do, leading to novel approaches and transformative results. Our acclaimed faculty have a focus on innovation management and engineering to yield transformative results that will drive the intellectual and economic vitality of our community, nation, and world.

Innovators

Carnegie Mellon, cmu.edu, is a private, internationally ranked research university with acclaimed programs spanning the sciences, engineering, technology, business, public policy, humanities, and the arts. Our diverse community of scholars, researchers, creators, and innovators is driven to make real-world impacts that benefit people across the globe. With a bold, interdisciplinary, and entrepreneurial approach, we do the work that matters.

The first DEF CON took place in June 1993 and today many attendees at DEF CON include computer security professionals, journalists, lawyers, federal government employees, security researchers, students, and hackers with a general interest in software, computer architecture, hardware modification, conference badges, and anything else that can be "hacked". The event consists of several tracks of speakers about computer- and hacking-related subjects, as well as cyber-security challenges and competitions (known as hacking wargames). Contests held during the event are extremely varied and can range from creating the longest Wi-Fi connection to finding the most effective way to cool a beer in the Nevada heat.

Other contests, past and present, include lockpicking, robotics-related contests, art, slogan, coffee wars, scavenger hunt, and Capture the Flag.

Data privacy concerns and building larger user base

Musk aims to turn 'Twitter' into an everything app, but it's not so easy

By Kristen Schiele

University of Southern California

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

Elon Musk's recent rebranding of Twitter as X is a step toward the CEO's goal of developing an "everything app." Musk's vision is for X to mark the spot for all your digital needs - to chat with your friends, order groceries, watch videos and manage your finances, all on one platform.

His recent announcement might have left you wondering what an everything app is and whether you need really one. If everything apps are so great, why isn't there one that's widely used in the US already?

As someone who studies how consumers use social media and what that means for digital marketing, I find the idea of an everything app intriguing. I think that an everything app has the potential to be widely adopted in the US if it's well designed and is valuable to its users. But there are lots of obstacles standing in the way of success - from data privacy concerns to building a larger user base.

An everything app, also known as a "super app," provides a wide range of features - from social networking to online shopping and financial services. Essentially it's a fusion of many apps you may often use, like Instagram, Uber, WhatsApp and PayPal.

The intended goal of an everything app is to simplify daily tasks by saving time and effort needed to use multiple platforms. Through partnerships with third-party servicers, everything apps create an ecosystem where users can switch between different tasks without having to leave the app or install any others on their devices.

Convenience

Over the past few years, everything apps have gained popularity, particularly in some Asian countries, as users appreciate the increased efficiency and convenience of having all their contacts and favorite app features in the same place.

WeChat, known as Weixin in China, is considered one of the first successful everything apps. This multifunctional app offers communication services - messaging, calling and social media - as well as many financial services, like mobile payment for peer-to-peer transactions and WeChat Pay, which helps users manage bill payments and investments.

WeChat's widespread popularity has transformed the way people in China communicate and conduct daily tasks. It has become an essential app for over 1 billion users and is an important marketing tool for many businesses.

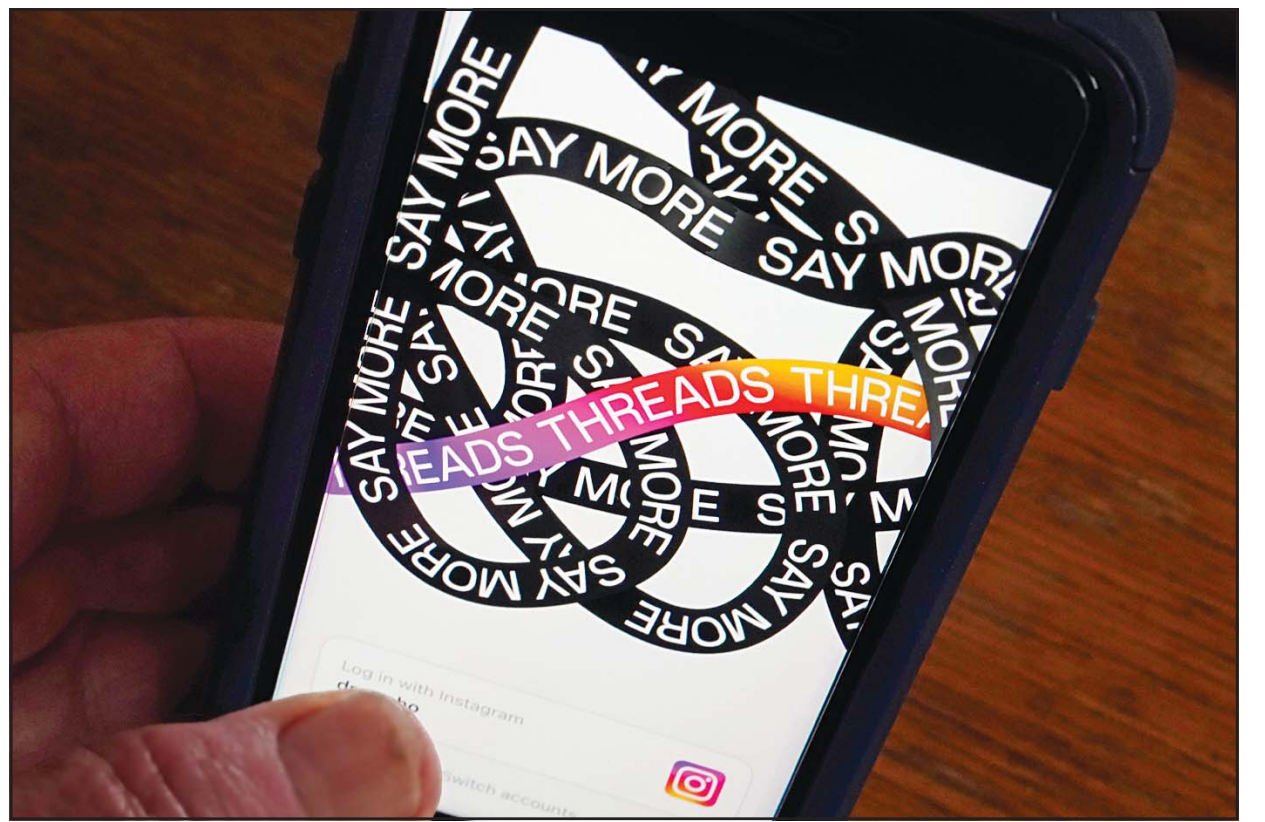
Other examples of everything apps include Line in Japan and KakaoTalk in South Korea. But the very thing that makes an everything app so appealing - putting everything in one place - is also a source of concern.

In order to function, an everything app needs to collect an extensive amount of data, including your personal information, your contact lists, your location and even how much you use the app.

Users are often not fully aware of how much of their data is collected and shared. When was the last time you carefully read through an app's privacy policy? Some apps retain data for extended periods of time, even after a user has abandoned the app. Storing so much data in one place also increases the risk of a breach.

This extensive amount of tracking raises concerns about surveillance and user profiling, especially in countries with weak data protection laws. An everything app may be subject to government surveillance and data requests, further compromising users' privacy. The app may also share this data with third-party service providers.

WeChat has been criticized for its data collection, political censoring and surveillance. Research has found that WeChat complies with government and police requests for data and information, so it can be used as a surveillance tool and for content censorship. Some countries have banned or are considering banning WeChat



This photo, taken in New York, on July 6, 2023, shows Meta's new app Threads. As of Aug. 7, the number of people who used Threads daily hovered around 10 million on Android phones, down from 49 million when it launched a month earlier, according to research firm SimilarWeb. (AP)

Text-based platform not that appealing for Gen Z

For Zuckerberg's Threads, real rival is still TikTok ... not the former Twitter

WASHINGTON, Aug 15, (AP): Threads, the simple, bare-bones text-based social network created by Facebook owner Meta, burst onto the scene during a particularly bad week for the rival then still known as Twitter. It quickly amassed 100 million signups - a huge feat for a newcomer in the space - and was dubbed as a "Twitter killer."

By week two, though, signups began to drop off. As of Aug. 7, the number of people who used Threads daily hovered around 10 million on Android phones, down from 49 million when it launched a month earlier, according to research firm SimilarWeb. Is Mark Zuckerberg's latest venture just a flash in the pan? That depends on whether it can hold its own against its biggest rival. And no, that's not X, the former Twitter. It's TikTok. And the odds are not great.

"Mark Zuckerberg may have temporarily been distracted in his sparring with Elon Musk, but the real battle for Meta is with TikTok," said Insider Intelligence analyst Jasmine Enberg. "And Zuckerberg still really needs to watch his back."

It's true that before TikTok took over the role of digital town square and "originator of trends," Enberg noted, the role was held by Twitter. But many of the biggest trends now come from people who came of age in the TikTok era - Gen Z and even younger kids and teens. And just as with stodgy Facebook, Twitter usage is also declining among teens, according to data from the Pew Research Center. As such, text-based social media platform may not be all that appealing to the TikTok generation, where dances, makeup tips, outlandish

recipes - not to mention the whole idea of de-influencers - spread via videos rather than the written word.

Regardless of format, though, Threads' biggest challenge is "being able to find a unique identity outside of being a Twitter alternative and outside of the expansion of Instagram," Enberg said.

For now, it's not clear it has one. The app amassed a massive initial user base, including well known celebrities and brands, precisely because it is an expansion of Instagram. To sign up for Threads, you need an Instagram account, and it's easy to toggle back and forth between the two.

Connections

Instagram has well over a billion users (by some estimates closer to 2 billion), and the app has been luring users to Threads with notifications to join their friends there.

The question is, what to do once you're on? So far, Threads' user base is similar to that of Instagram, and prominent accounts are predictable - celebrities, politicians, news organizations, influencers and the like. It's harder to find original posts from regular people, unless your the Instagram connections you ported over happen to be a chatty - or trendy - bunch. If you sign up without connecting a well-used Instagram account, by creating one just so you can join Threads, the experience can feel impersonal and sterile as the app steers you to follow big, popular accounts that everyone else follows, too.

While many popular internet celebri-

ties rushed to sign up for Threads and quickly amassed large followings, it's not clear how many of them are returning regularly. MrBeast, a popular YouTuber whose actual name is Jimmy Donaldson, has 5 million followers on the app. But he has not posted in two weeks - though he has sent several TikToks, tweets (or posts on the site now called X) and a 18-minute video on YouTube, where he has 175 million subscribers.

Zuckerberg, in a recent conference call, said he's "optimistic" about Threads but acknowledged there's a "lot of work to do" to make it reach its full potential.

"It has been sort of this weird anomalous thing in the tech industry that there hasn't been an app for public discussions like this that has reached 1 billion people," he said. "When I look at all the different social experiences, it just seems like there should be one like this."

Maybe so, but it's not clear it'll be Threads. As Zuckerberg acknowledged during the same call, Meta has tried "a bunch of standalone experiences over time" but in general, it hasn't had much luck. There's Facebook, sure. But the company bought both Instagram and WhatsApp, its two other successful apps. The biggest one may be Messenger - but even that started as a service inside Facebook before it was spin out as a separate app.

"(It's) awesome that we get a chance to work on this, and I'm really optimistic about where we are," Zuckerberg said. "But it's going to be a long road ahead."

easily accepted in the US, where less than 33% of adults use mobile payments and previous attempts to connect social features with finances have failed. Just look at Snapchat, which shut down Snapcash in 2018. Even if developers managed to build the perfect everything app, there may be some people who just won't want it - especially if that app is held by a private company subject to the whims of a controversial owner like Musk.

So where does this leave X? The app has a long way to go before it becomes an everything app, and Musk's many changes to the platform already have users jumping ship in search of a Twitter substitute. But, whether it's X or not, I think there's certainly room in the US for an everything app to move in. (AP)

The Conversation

Climate change and homebuilders pushing deeper into wildland areas blamed

Maui fires, a reminder of growing risk to communities

By Mojtaba Sadegh
Boise State University

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

Wildfires, pushed by powerful winds, raced through Lahaina, Hawaii, on Aug. 8 and 9, 2023, leaving a charred and smoldering landscape across the tourist town of about 13,000 residents that was once the capital of the Kingdom of Hawaii. At least 99 people died, Hawaii officials said. Others were rescued by the US Coast Guard after going into the ocean to escape the flames.

Dry grasses and strong winds, influenced by Hurricane Dora passing far to the south, heightened the risk as wildfires burned both in Maui's tourist-filled west coast and farther inland and on the Big Island of Hawaii.

Most fires in the US are suppressed before they have a chance to threaten communities, but the winds were too strong to send helicopters into the sky to help contain Maui's fires on the first day, leaving firefighters to battle the blazes from the ground.

Lt. Gov. Sylvia Luke issued an emergency declaration, activating the National Guard to help, and urged travelers to stay away.

Fires have become an increasing risk in many areas of the US that people once considered safe.

Over the past two decades, a staggering 21.8 million Americans found themselves living within 3 miles (5 kilometers) of a large wildfire. Nearly 600,000 of them were directly exposed to the fire, with their homes inside the wildfire perimeter. That number - people directly exposed to wildfires - more than doubled from 2000 to 2019, my team's recent research shows.

But while commentators often blame the rising risk on homebuilders pushing deeper into the wildland areas, we found that the population growth in these high-risk areas explained only a small part of the increase in the number of people who were exposed to wildfires.

Instead, three-quarters of this trend was driven by intense fires growing out of control and encroaching on existing communities.

That knowledge has implications for how communities prepare to fight wildfires in the future, how they respond to population growth and whether policy changes such as increasing insurance premiums to reduce losses will be effective.

Hot, dry weather pulls moisture from plants and soil, leaving dry fuel that can easily burn. On a windy day, a spark from a power line, campfire or lightning can start a wildfire that quickly spreads.

Exposed

Recent research on California's fires found that almost all of the increase in that state's burned area in recent decades was due to anthropogenic climate change - meaning climate change caused by human activities.

Our new research looked beyond just the area burned and asked: Where were people exposed to wildfires, and why?

I am a climate scientist who studies the wildfire-climate relationship and its socioenvironmental impacts. Colleagues and I analyzed the boundaries of more than 15,000 large wildfires across the lower 48 states and annual population distribution data to estimate the number of people exposed to those fires.

If you picture wildfire photos taken from a plane, fires generally burn in patches rather than as a wall of flame. Pockets of homes within the fire boundary survive, but many also burn.

While the population has grown in the wildland-urban interface - the region where houses intermingle with forests, shrublands or grasslands - we found that population growth accounted for only about one-quarter of the increase in the number of humans directly exposed to wildfires across the lower 48 states from 2000 to 2019.

Three-quarters of the 125% increase in exposure was due to fires increasingly encroaching on existing communities. The total burned area increased only 38%, but the locations of intense fires near towns and cities put lives at risk.

In California, the state with the most people exposed to fires, several wildfire catastrophes hit communities that had existed long before 2000. Almost all these catastrophes occurred during dry, hot, windy conditions that have become increasingly frequent because of climate change.

Studies have shown that even in conservative scenarios, the amount of area that burns in Western wildfires is projected to grow in the next few decades.

How much these fires grow and how intense they become depends largely on warming trends. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions will help slow warming. But communities will also have to adapt to more wildfires. Developing community-level wildfire response plans, reducing human ignitions of wildfires and improving zoning and building codes can help prevent fires from becoming destructive. (AP)



A man walks through wildfire wreckage on Aug 11, 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)

Cleanup, recovery from disaster of this magnitude takes years

After Maui fires, health risks linger in air, water

By Andrew J. Whelton
Purdue University

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

People returning to what remains of the beachside town of Lahaina, Hawaii, and other Maui communities after one of the nation's deadliest wildfire disasters face more dangers, beyond the 2,700 buildings destroyed or damaged and dozens of lives lost. The fires also left lingering health risks for humans and wildlife.

When fires spread through communities, as we've seen more often in recent years, they burn structures that contain treated wood, plastics, paints and hazardous household wastes. They can burn vehicles and melt plastic water pipes. All of these items release toxic gases and particles.

Many airborne pollutants fall to the ground, and when debris or dust is stirred up, hazardous particles can enter the air, where people can easily breathe them in.

Chemicals can also contaminate water supplies. On Aug 11, 2023, Maui County issued an "unsafe water" alert for areas of Lahaina and Upper Kula that were affected by wildfires, warning residents to use only bottled water for drinking and cooking, and not rely on boiling tap water because of the risk of harmful chemicals.

As an environmental engineer, I work with colleagues to help communities respond to and recover from wildfires and other disasters, including the Marshall Fire in Boulder County, Colorado, and the Camp Fire that destroyed Paradise, California. Lahaina and other Maui communities face similar risks ahead.

Residents returning to their burned neighborhoods will likely find themselves surrounded by hazards. Some are obvious, such as broken glass, nails and damaged natural gas containers. Broken power lines and gas lines may be live or leaking.

Less obvious are the chemical hazards that can reach well beyond the fire zone.

Black smoke from a fire is a sign of incomplete combustion that can produce thousands of chemicals when wood and plastics burn.

Chemicals like benzene, lead, asbestos and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, or PAHs, are common in ash, runoff and sometimes water systems after fires.

Exposure to high levels of chemicals can sometimes cause immediate harm, such as nausea, vomiting, dizziness, rashes and respiratory issues. For these reasons it is critical to protect people, especially children and people with health conditions, from exposure.

State health officials recommended that residents wear close-toed shoes, N95 respirators, chemical resistant gloves and other protective equipment while looking through property debris.

When disaster debris is eventually removed by professionals, the contractors will be wearing Tyvek suits and possibly respirators to protect their health.

Even buildings deemed structurally safe may have pollutants that make them unsafe for human health.

Pollutants

Particles and vapors can enter buildings through cracks, doors, windows and other portals. Some of these pollutants settle onto surfaces, while others penetrate fabrics, stick to walls and enter air ducts.

Often buildings must be professionally cleaned or decontaminated by wildfire remediation companies. Cleaning surfaces and ducts, replacing air filters and installing HEPA filters can also help.

Drinking water is another serious concern after urban fires. Wildfires can make the plumbing outside or inside the building itself unsafe in a couple of ways. Loss of water pressure can allow pollutants to enter pipes. Maui County cited this risk in issuing its "unsafe water" alert on Aug 11. When plastic pipes heat up, they can also decompose and then directly leach chemicals into water.

My colleagues and I have documented benzene levels that

exceeded hazardous limits for drinking water after several previous fires. PAHs can also be present, as our research has shown.

These and other chemicals pose an immediate health risk to water users, even if the water smells fine. Simple water flushing can fail to remove severe contamination. Proper inspections and testing in buildings and for private wells and larger water systems are important.

Outside, the ground can also become contaminated in a fire. Once the debris is removed, testing is necessary to ensure that the soil where people will replant their gardens, yards and fruit trees is free of hazardous chemicals and safe for humans and pets.

During firefighting and clean-up, and when it rains, pollutants can wash into waterways and end up in the ocean.

Lahaina stretches along Maui's west coast and has long been a popular site for seeing sea turtles and other marine life. That sea life may now be at risk from pollutants from burned coastal buildings and runoff. The fire burned to the shoreline, destroying boats, docks and other vehicles, some of which sank.

Debris and sunken boats will need to be removed from the nearshore waters to protect corals. Similar to wildfires near lakes, rivers and streams, water testing will be necessary.

Communities can avoid more harmful runoff during the cleanup process by placing pollution-control barriers near storm drains, around properties and near waterways. These can help intercept pollutants flowing toward the ocean.

How to safely dispose of all the debris as the community is cleaned up and recovers is another question.

After the 2021 Marshall Fire in Colorado, where about 1,200 structures were destroyed, the cleanup generated 300,000 tons of waste. In Maui, debris may have to be taken off the island for disposal.

Cleanup and recovery from a disaster of this magnitude takes years. In the process, I recommend residents reach out to public health departments for advice to help them stay healthy and safe. (AP)

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CNN revamps schedule, with new roles for Phillip, Coates, Amanpour

Media

NEW YORK, Aug. 15, (AP) — CNN is emphasizing homegrown stars and reporting chops in a schedule reboot that gives weeknight shows to Abby Phillip and Laura Coates, along with bringing Christiane Amanpour back onto the domestic network regularly.

Virtually no part of the day or weekend goes unchanged in the plans announced on Monday, the first major move by the leadership quartet that replaced ousted network chief Chris Licht on June 1.

Phillip, a political reporter, and Coates, the network's chief legal correspondent, both began at CNN in part-time roles. Soon they'll have back-to-back hours on the network's schedule each weeknight starting at 10 p.m. Eastern.

They'll join Kaitlan Collins at 9 p.m. and Erin Burnett two hours earlier, with Anderson Cooper the only man in the important five-hour stretch that includes prime time. Since Chris Cuomo was fired in December 2021, CNN hasn't had a regular prime-time lineup, and its new leaders considered it a top priority to project consistency to viewers and employees.

CNN's leadership team of Amy Entelis, David Leavy, Virginia Moseley and Eric Sherling also wanted to install program hosts with experience as reporters.

"They are extraordinarily talented and share the same CNN sensibility: versatility, determination and an inquisitive and empathetic approach to reporting the news," the leaders said in a statement.

CNN has struggled with ratings challenges worsened by the quickening pulse of people cutting the cord on cable television. In July, Fox News Channel and MSNBC — both dominated by opinion programming in the evening — averaged 1.57 million and 1.12 million viewers

respectively in prime time. CNN averaged 534,000, according to the Nielsen company.

One of CNN's most recognizable veterans, Amanpour has hosted a program on the network's international network and been virtually invisible domestically the past decade. Now she'll host a regular news hour on Saturdays.

Since jumping from Fox News, Chris Wallace has hosted a wide-ranging interview show for HBO Max that was rebroadcast on CNN. Now he'll return to familiar turf, a live political panel show, on Saturday mornings, the network said.

Heading into the 2024 campaign, political correspondent Kasie Hunt will host "Early Start" at 5 a.m. on weekdays. Phil Mattingly will be a new co-host with Poppy Harlow on the three-hour "CNN This Morning" show.

Strategy

"King Charles," a limited-run series with Gayle King and Charles Barkley, will air on Wednesday nights at 9 p.m. Eastern starting this fall, CNN announced.

The show was the centerpiece of Licht's prime-time strategy. He sought well-known personalities who could comment on the news and help CNN compete with more general-interest networks. But except for King and Barkley, the plans never came together and CNN is now abandoning that approach.

Capitol Hill correspondent Manu Raju will become the Sunday anchor of "Inside Politics," under the new plans. Pamela Brown will anchor a weekday afternoon program, while Victor Blackwell has a new

Saturday morning program. Alisyn Camerota will focus on long-form reporting.

Also:

NEW YORK: CBS on Monday appointed executive **Wendy McMahon** to an expanded role that puts her in charge of the network's news division, its locally owned stations and its syndication business.

For slightly more than two years, McMahon has worked in tandem with **Neeraj Khemlani**, leading the network's storied news division and the news operations at the 14 network affiliates it owns, in cities like **New York** and **Los Angeles**.

Khemlani said on Sunday that he was stepping down as co-president of CBS News and Stations. The impending retirement of **Steve Lo-Cascio**, president of CBS Media Ventures, will give McMahon a bigger job that includes overseeing syndicated programs like "Jeopardy!," "Entertainment Tonight" and "The Drew Barrymore Show."

One of her first steps on Monday was appointing 30-year CBS News veteran **Ingrid Ciprian-Matthews** to lead the news division.

Ciprian-Matthews was most recently executive vice president of newsgathering at CBS News. McMahon has moved aggressively to boost the news operations at local CBS stations, pushing them to emphasize more solutions-based journalism. Los Angeles has recently launched a seven-hour morning news franchise.

The network news division generally runs third behind ABC and NBC in the ratings. CBS executives have lately concentrated on re-vamping the CBS News morning show, and bringing some outside talent, including **Cecilia Vega**.

Variety



Rapper Nas 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)

Music

From being shunned by big biz to multimillion-dollar collabs

Hip-hop goes beyond the music

NEW YORK, Aug. 15, (AP) — The signs of hip-hop's influence are everywhere — from Pharrell Williams becoming Louis Vuitton's men's creative director to billion-dollar brands like Dr. Dre's Beats headphones and retail mainstays like Diddy's Sean John and Jay-Z's Rocawear.

It didn't start out that way. The music genre germinated 50 years ago as an escape from the poverty and violence of New York City's most distressed borough, the Bronx, where few wanted to invest in its businesses or its people. Out of that adversity blossomed an authentic style of expression, one that connected with the city's underserved Black and Latino teens and young adults, and filtered through to graffiti, dance and fashion.

As hip-hop spread throughout New York, so did a culture.

"Hip-hop goes beyond the music," said C. Keith Harrison, a professor and founding director for the University of Central Florida's Business of Hip-Hop Innovation & Creative Industries certificate program. "Hip-hop always knew, as Nipsey Hussle would say, how to get it out of the trunk, and so they've always had to have innovative business models."

That spirit of innovation has helped push hip-hop past big business' initial resistance to align with the genre to become the most popular music form in the United States since 2017. Hip-hop's impact on the \$16 billion music industry and beyond is now so widespread, experts say it becomes difficult to quantify.

Author Zack O'Malley Greenberg estimates that hip-hop's five wealthiest artists were worth nearly \$4 billion in 2022 by themselves.

Hip-hop artists have achieved that level of success because they are much more than their music. They are tastemakers and trendsetters in lifestyle-defining products from fashion to high-end champagne.

"Hip-hop knows how to put butts in seats, no matter what context you're in, and that's what businesses want," said Harrison, who is also a professor in the University of Central Florida's DeVos Sport Business Management Graduate Program. "Emotion, return on emotion — that's what hip-hop does differently. They

have another level of emotion."

Because rappers often tell stories fans relate to or aspire to, weaving brand shout-outs into their rhymes and product placements — sometimes paid for, sometimes not — into their videos becomes a powerful marketing tool.

In her forthcoming book "Fashion Killa: How Hip-Hop Revolutionized High Fashion," pop culture expert Sowmya Krishnamurthy addresses what people get out of "putting somebody else's name or logo across your chest or across your back."

"In America, in a capitalist society, how else do you show you've made it?" Krishnamurthy said. "One thing I kind of joke about is: People can't see your mortgage. But they can see a nice chain. They can see the clothes that you have on. That is an immediate signal."

In hip-hop, that pressure to fit in and show off is heightened.

"You have a genre that historically has a lot of people who grew up with little to nothing," Krishnamurthy said. "The aspiration is inherent."

Culture

And probably no product has been as successful at connecting with hip-hop as footwear. Consequently, rappers get their own sneaker lines without ever taking part in a sport, said Harlan Friedman, host and creator of the Sole Free podcast on sneakers and street culture.

"A seventh grader can't afford a \$20,000 rope chain and medallion, but maybe he could afford a pair of (Nike) Dunks or a pair of (Air) Jordans or a pair of Adidas," Friedman said. "That gives him that little bit of clout, that he's like his favorite artist or athlete, and it kind of gives him that feeling like, 'Oh, I'm like them.'"

Adidas was the first major company that saw rappers as potential business partners, Friedman said. But they had to be convinced.

Even though the company had seen an unusual spike in sales of its Superstar shoes in the Northeast in 1986, it wasn't ready to attribute that to rap group Run-D.M.C. and their hit "My Adidas."

When company execs saw the group ask fans to show off their Adidas and thousands removed their shoes and

waved them in the air at a Madison Square Garden performance, they were sold. They signed Run-D.M.C. to a \$1 million deal that resulted in their own shoe line in 1988.

Now that hip-hop is a multibillion dollar industry with widespread influence, it's easy to forget it wasn't always Courvoisier and Versace for its stars.

Even after Adidas' success, companies still balked at partnering with hip-hop acts because they felt that "having young Black and brown people wearing their clothing simply wasn't on brand and, in many ways, it was kind of denigrating their brand," said Krishnamurthy.

"But when that kind of money is being spent and people really saw the power that rappers had to change what somebody might wear ... they started taking notice," she said.

Companies of all sorts now court rappers and their audiences, hoping to join the ranks of Timberland — which at first resisted associating with the genre it saw as being counter to its working-class base — Hennessy cognac and anything Gucci as hip-hop approved brands.

Few events in hip-hop culture's ongoing march into the mainstream can match McDonald's introduction of Sawaytie 'n Sour sauce for the fast food giant's Chicken McNuggets in 2021.

At the time, the California rapper was far from a household name. But Jennifer Healan, McDonald's USA's vice president of brand, content, and culture, said Sawaytie was a natural fit for the company's "Famous Orders" campaign, which has also featured Travis Scott as well as one of hip-hop's biggest celebrity couples, Cardi B and her husband, Offset, for Valentine's Day.

"Sawaytie is a longtime McDonald's fan, and she brought a unique twist to our campaign by mixing and matching her favorite menu items — which tapped into our fans' passion for food hacks and new flavor combinations," Healan said.

The promotion worked well for both McDonald's, which Healan said led many to try Big Macs, and Sawaytie, who soon had her own Netflix show and was a musical guest on "Saturday Night Live."

QUINCY, Ill: A judge sentenced a former contestant on the television game show "Family Feud" to life in prison after he was convicted of first-degree murder and other charges in the slaying of his estranged wife in western Illinois.

Timothy Bliefnick, 40, showed no reaction as Adams County Circuit Judge **Robert Adrian** read the sentence Friday, news outlets reported.

A jury in May convicted Bliefnick of murder, home invasion and use of a firearm to commit first-degree murder in the Feb. 23 shooting death of **Rebecca Bliefnick**, 41. Her body was found by a family member inside her Quincy home after she failed to pick up her children from school. She had been shot multiple times.

The couple was separated and going through a divorce.

Bliefnick's attorney did not immediately respond to a phone message seeking comment.

In 2020, Timothy Bliefnick and some of his family members appeared on ABC's "Family Feud," KHQA-TV has reported. (AP)

PRAGUE: The local government in Prague said Monday that it "unequivocally" opposes a scheduled performance by Russian opera singer **Anna Netrebko** in the Czech capital while Russia wages war on Ukraine.

Deputy Mayor **Jiri Pospisil**, who oversees culture in the city, said that all the members of Prague's governing coalition shared the same view.

"All the parties perceive that at a time when the war (in Ukraine) has been ongoing and we read every day about the victims of the Russian attacks in the media, it is insensitive for such a singer to perform here in Prague," Pospisil said.

The **Czech Republic** has been a staunch supporter of Ukraine during the war. The governing coalition in Prague is made up of the same political parties that comprise the Czech government.

The view from City Hall does not necessarily mean Netrebko's Oct 16 performance at Prague's

Municipal House won't take place as planned. The management of the venue, which is a civic building as well as a concert venue, has the final say.

Her 2023-24 season includes engagements with Berlin's Staatsoper unter den Linden, the Vienna State Opera, Milan's Teatro alla Scala and the Paris



Bliefnick



Netrebko

Opera. (AP)

BERLIN: Seven people were injured in an accident on Monday at **Germany's** biggest theme park, police said.

The accident happened at the Europa-Park in the town of **Rust**, near the French and Swiss borders.

The park said that a mobile pool cracked and diving platforms attached to it from which acrobats jump collapsed during a show on Monday afternoon, German news agency dpa reported. Water from the pool flowed into a water ride attraction called Atlantica SuperSplash.

Police said that five perform-

ers and two visitors were injured, and that three of the performers were taken to a hospital for checks. The cause of the accident wasn't immediately clear.

The park is a popular tourist attraction that drew more than 6 million visitors last year, mostly from **Germany, France** and **Switzerland**. (AP)

People & Places

Stage

Lewis to star

Broadway's The Wiz finds its next Dorothy

NEW YORK, Aug. 15, (AP) — A 24-year-old triple threat who toured in "Hairspray," competed on "American Idol" and came to the attention of casting agents with her TikTok videos has landed the plum role of Dorothy in the Broadway-bound production of "The Wiz."

Nichelle Lewis will star in the national touring show this fall and then make her Broadway debut next year as the show's heel-clicking heroine, following in the footsteps of such icons as Stephanie Mills and Diana Ross.

"It's been a pretty crazy journey," she told The Associated Press before her official unveiling Monday. "I'm honored to be making my debut as Dorothy. I know I'm following in some really big footsteps."

"The Wiz" tours the US starting this fall in Baltimore and will land on Broadway in 2024. Lewis joins a cast that includes Wayne Brady and Alan Mingo Jr. sharing the role of the Wiz, Deborah Cox as Glinda, Kyle Ramer Freeman as the Lion, Phillip Johnson Richardson as the Tin Man, and Avery Wilson as the Scarecrow.

Lewis, who grew up in Virginia and graduated from Molloy University in 2021, used her modest TikTok account to share her voice — one song was "Home" from "The Wiz" — and it came to the attention of casting agents, who invited her to audition.

"I'm so excited that this is a part of my story, because I feel like there's so many people out there who started out with such a small following and I feel like they're hard on themselves about it," she said. "But I'm like, 'You never know who's watching those videos.' I never knew that 'The Wiz' was looking at my videos."

The show is adapted from "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" by L. Frank Baum, with a book by William F. Brown, and music and lyrics by Charlie Smalls.

Lewis says she identifies with Dorothy, who is alone on a journey of self-discovery in a new world while also helping others along the way find out who they are.

"I feel like it's extremely important for people, especially right now, to see that they can be powerful just by being themselves and just by being individual and unique. So I think that's how the show speaks to me," she said.

"The Wiz" opened on Broadway in 1975 and won seven Tonys, including best musical. It has such classic songs as "What Would I Do If I Could Feel" and "Ease On Down the Road." The original Broadway production featured Mills as Dorothy, Dee Dee Bridgewater as good witch Glinda and Andre De Shields as the Wiz.

A 1978 movie version of "The Wiz" starred Ross, Lena Horne and Richard Pryor as the Wiz. Michael Jackson co-starred as the Scarecrow, with Nipsey Russell as the Tin Man and Ted Ross as the Lion. NBC televised a live version in 2015 with Queen Latifah, Ne-Yo and David Alan Grier.

Lewis' love of music was encouraged by her father, who died when she was young. At his service, she sang "My Help," a song he sang when he was a child, and stunned the congregation.

"I don't know what happened that day, but I guess just I had this voice come out of me that didn't used to be there, but probably came from the millions of songs that I grew up listening to," she says. "I felt like it was something that I could share with others and it was something that I noticed made other people happy."

Lewis won a Golden Ticket on the most recent series of "American Idol" but didn't progress from the Hollywood round. Now she's earned another — leading a Broadway show.

Her mother, naturally, has been screaming and crying. "She's like, 'Your life is going to change.' And I'm like, 'I don't know. It probably will,'" she says, laughing. "I feel so blessed and I'm so glad I get to share it with her."

Also:

NEW YORK: The landmark Broadway musical "Hamilton" has landed on Roblox, turning the innovative stage show into an immersive online environment for a new generation.

"Hamilton" has global recognition. Roblox has 66 million daily active users from all around the world. What a perfect match," Matt Edelman, president and chief commercial officer for Super League, which designed and built the online experience in collaboration with Small World Games.

In the Hamilton Simulator, players use their own avatars as they rub shoulders with the musical's characters and negotiate through 10 levels set during the Revolutionary War. It starts at the New York docks and the goal is to free the city from British yoke. Appropriately, the music-filled game requires no real money from players.

"The intent here was to create a fun experience for this community and by doing so, introduce them to 'Hamilton' if they don't already know it, or to honor and inspire the passion that they have if they're already fans," says Edelman.

The game has the blessing of writer-composer Lin-Manuel Miranda, whose blockbuster musical charts the rise and fall of statesman Alexander Hamilton and stresses his orphan, immigrant roots as well as his near-Greek tragedy of a fall.

Roblox is the largest immersive gaming platform on the planet and businesses like Mattel, the NFL, Dave & Buster's and Cirque du Soleil have all planted a flag there, as have fashion labels Vans, Ralph Lauren, Nike, Tommy Hilfiger, Givenchy and Gucci.

"If you are an intellectual property owner and you want to connect to the younger generations — people really under 25 and particularly under 18 — that's where they socialize, that's where they learn. More than half of Gen Z expects to discover a brand for the first time in an immersive space," Edelman says.

Hamilton Simulator players assemble a squad from characters in the musical — James Madison and Charles Lee, perhaps, to begin with, and more valuable characters like Maria Reynolds and Angelica Schuyler coming later — to confront Redcoats. Victory earns coins, which can be used to better arm companions as stronger enemies lurk.

The 10 settings include a tavern, George Washington's office, town squares, the ballroom where Hamilton and Angelica fall in love and the Battle of Yorktown. Each level has songs from the musical, including "Guns and Ships," "You'll Be Back," and "The Schuyler Sisters," used as a sort of sonic laser to wear down and defeat enemies.



Westlife performs during the annual 'Golden Camera' German film and television awards in the decommissioned Berlin Tempelhof Airport. The '00s Irish boy band-turned-pop group Westlife are set to embark on their first-ever run of North American tour dates in March 2024, surrounding St. Patrick's Day. (AP)

Westlife set to embark on first-ever North American tour

Irish boy band Westlife are set to perform in North America for the first time in their 20-plus year history.

Westlife has sold more than 55 million records, released 36 No. 1 albums, and earned over one billion streams on YouTube. And now, they're headed to a few major cities in the U.S. and Canada around St. Patrick's Day next year.

The stint is short, but it is a long time coming. Westlife will kick off their four-date North American tour on Thursday, March 13, at Toronto's Meridian

Hall, followed by Boston's MGM Music Hall at Fenway on March 14, New York City's famed Radio City Music Hall on March 16, and close out the run at the Chicago Theatre on March 18.

According to a press release, the shows will highlight the group's catalog, touching on their greatest hits: "Swear It Again," "Flying Without Wings," "World Of Our Own," "My Love," "If I Let You Go," and "Hello My Love" among them.

Westlife first appeared on the pop music scene in the late-'90s and early-2000s, when most of

North America had their hearts set on two other boy bands: Backstreet Boys, whom Westlife opened for, and NSYNC.

Westlife were managed by Louis Walsh, then known as the mastermind behind Boyzone, a group he created to become an Irish version of the popular English group, Take That. Later, Walsh was a judge on "The X Factor UK," where he assisted in coaching one Irish and four British hopefuls into becoming the first contemporary boy band from the British Isles to make it big in the US: One Direction. (AP)



Jacqueline Avant, (left), and Clarence Avant appear at the 11th Annual AAFCA Awards in Los Angeles on Jan. 22, 2020. Clarence Avant, the manager, entrepreneur, facilitator and adviser who helped launch or guide the careers of Quincy Jones, Bill Withers and many others and came to be known as the "Black Godfather" of music and beyond, has died. He was 92.

Avant, inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2021, died Sunday at his home in Los Angeles, according to a family statement released Monday.

Avant's achievements were both public and behind the scenes, as a name in the credits, or a name behind the names. Born in a segregated hospital in North Carolina, he became a man of lasting and wide-ranging influence, in part by minding two pieces of advice from an early mentor, the music manager Joe Glaser: Never let on how much you know, and ask for as much money as possible, "without stuttering."

"He exemplified a certain level of cool and street smarts that allowed him to move confidently into worlds that nobody had prepared him for, never doubting he could figure it out," former President Barack Obama and former first lady Michelle Obama, among the many prominent people he befriended, said in a statement.

"Clarence was part of a generation that served as a bridge from a time when there was very little opportunity for Black people to a time when doors began to open. He demanded the world make room, and he paved the way for the rest of us."

Sometimes called "The Godfather of Black Music," he broke in as a manager in the 1950s, with such clients as singers Sarah Vaughan and Little Willie John and composer Lalo Schiffrin, who wrote the theme to "Mission: Impossible." In the 1970s he was an early patron of Black-owned radio stations and, in the 1990s, headed Motown after founder Berry Gordy Jr. sold the company.

He also started such labels as Sussex (a hybrid of two Avant passions — success and sex) and Tabu, with artists including Withers, Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, the S.O.S. Band and an obscure singer-songwriter, Sixto Rodriguez, who decades later became famous through the Oscar-winning documentary "Searching for Sugarman." (Rodriguez died last week.)

Other work took place more quietly, noting the victims numbered at least several hundred, and accusing Japan's mainstream media of what it called "a cover-up" by staying silent. A full report is to be presented to the UN Human Rights Council next June.

The separate team conducting the interviews Monday was set up by Johnny & Associates. It is to give its findings to the company later this month. Johnny & Associates has only commented in online statements, and how it will respond to the

team's findings remains to be seen.

In response to a request for comment by The Associated Press, Johnny & Associates said all matters are being dealt with by the investigative team. The company has promised a statement on the investigation later this month.

The Associated Press does not usually identify people who say they were assaulted, but Kitagawa's recent accusers decided to be named publicly in news accounts. (AP)

Obituary

'A name behind the names'

Avant, 'Godfather of Black Music,' dies

NEW YORK, Aug. 15, (AP) — Clarence Avant, the judicious manager, entrepreneur, facilitator and adviser who helped launch or guide the careers of Quincy Jones, Bill Withers and many others and came to be known as the "Black Godfather" of music and beyond, has died. He was 92.

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Variety

LOUISVILLE, Ky: Rick Howlett, a veteran broadcast news journalist and longtime host at WFPL-FM in Louisville, has died. He was 62.

Howlett died Saturday surrounded by family, said Stephen George, president and CEO of Louisville Public Media.

Howlett began his career as a Kentucky newscaster in 1984 and joined Louisville Public Media in 2001, the station reported.

He hosted the midday newscast and a weekly talk show that he co-created in 2019 called "In Conversation," which centers around the biggest issues facing the area.

"He was a trusted voice for our community. And he was beloved by his family and colleagues," the station said on social media. "We miss him dearly and remember him for his kindness, intelligence, humor and professionalism."

Howlett was diagnosed with esophageal cancer last year. He continued to work between treatments but earlier this month, he transitioned into palliative care.

He is survived by his wife and son. (AP)

TOKYO: Two men who say they were abused as teenagers by a Japanese entertainment mogul were interviewed Monday by a special team set up by the talent agency to look into the allegations.

Junya Hiramoto and Shimon Ishimaru, both former members of a boys' dance-and-song group called Johnny's Junior, said they still want an apology and compensation from Johnny & Associates.

"They haven't admitted anything, and they haven't apologized," Hiramoto told reporters after the interviews.

"We desire a peaceful resolution. There is no point in taking the bloody, contentious route of fighting it out with hatred."

The two are among about a dozen men who have alleged sexual abuse by the agency's founder, Johnny Kitagawa. They say they were abused at his Tokyo luxury mansion as well as at other places, such as his car and overseas hotels, while performing as teens.

Kitagawa, who died in 2019, was never charged.

Earlier this month, the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights urged the Japanese government to take action on the abuse at Johnny & Associates.

ates, noting the victims numbered at least several hundred, and accusing Japan's mainstream media of what it called "a cover-up" by staying silent. A full report is to be presented to the UN Human Rights Council next June.

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Science

Drive future research

Experts peer deep to map 'remote ocean'

KODIAK, Alaska, Aug. 15, (AP): For the team aboard the Okeanos Explorer off the coast of Alaska, exploring the mounds and craters of the sea floor along the Aleutian Islands is a chance to surface new knowledge about life in some of the world's deepest and most remote waters.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration research vessel is on a five-month mission aboard a reconfigured former Navy vessel run by civilians and members of the NOAA Corps. The ship, with a 48-member crew, is outfitted with technology and tools to peer deep into the ocean to gather data to share with onshore researchers in real time. The hope is that this data will then be used to drive future research.



Hoy

"It's so exciting to go down there and see that it's actually teeming with life," said expedition coordinator Shannon Hoy. "You would never know that unless we were able to go down there and explore."

Using a variety of sonars and two remotely operated vehicles - Deep Discoverer and Serios - researchers aboard the ship are mapping and collecting samples from areas along the Aleutian Trench and Gulf of Alaska.

High-resolution cameras that can operate at depths of up to 6,000 meters (19,685 feet) allow researchers to document and immediately share their findings. The ship can also livestream dives to the public.

Many factors, such as depth, speed and sonar capability, influence how much sea floor can be mapped. In 2 to 4 weeks, the Okeanos Explorer can map as much as 50,000 square kilometers (31,069 square miles), Hoy said.

During these dives, Hoy said the team plans to investigate some of the area's cold seep communities - places where gases from under the sea floor rise through cracks and where plants don't rely on photosynthesis for food production.

"We're also going to be looking through the water column to see what interesting animals and fauna that we can see there," she said.

Inform

Kasey Cantwell, the ship's operations chief, said the data will help researchers and the public better understand these remote stretches of ocean, including marine life and habitats in the area. That could inform management decisions in fisheries. Data could also help detect hazards and improve nautical charts.

"It's really hard to care for things you don't understand, to love things you don't understand," Cantwell said.

The deep ocean off Alaska's Aleutian Islands is one of the least mapped places in the US, partly due to its remoteness. Modern mapping standards have covered just 34% of the sea floor around Alaska, which has one of the nation's largest coastal ecosystems, and only a fraction of that has been seen, according to the expedition's web site.

Closing these gaps is a mission priority, and will help meet a goal of mapping all of the United States' deep waters by 2030 and near-shore waters by 2040, according to Emily Crum, a communications specialist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

But the data collection process is laborious.

Thomas Morrow, a physical scientist on the ship, likened the effort to "walking the length of several city blocks in complete darkness with a tiny flashlight."

Nevertheless, all these small looks add up to a better understanding of what lies in the deepest parts of the sea.

In the expedition's first two months, researchers recorded methane seeps and saw a Brisingida sea star at a depth of 2,803 meters (9,200 feet) that had not been documented in the Aleutians before. At least two potential new species have also been discovered.

Earlier this year while on an expedition off the coast of Washington state, researchers aboard the ship documented a jellyfish floating in the deep, and soon had a call from an excited scientist who told them the jellyfish was behaving in ways not seen before.

"The feeling of wonder that sometimes happens in that control room is so palpable," he said.

Also:

SAN DIEGO: Waves are getting bigger and surf at least 13 feet (about 4 meters) tall is becoming more common off California's coast as the planet warms, according to innovative new research that tracked the increasing height from historical data gathered over the past 90 years.

Oceanographer Peter Bromirski at Scripps Institution of Oceanography used the unusual method of analyzing seismic records dating back to 1931 to measure the change in wave height.

When waves ricochet off the shore, they collide with incoming waves and cause a ripple of energy through the seafloor that can be picked up by seismographs designed to detect earthquakes. The greater the impact, the taller the wave is.

Until now, scientists relied on a network of buoys by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that collect data on wave height along U.S. coasts, but that data along the California coast only went back to 1980.

"Until I stumbled upon this data set, it was almost impossible to make that comparison with any kind of reliability," Bromirski said.

To go back further, Bromirski gathered a team of undergraduate students to analyze daily seismic readings covering decades of winters. It was a slow, painstaking process that took years and involved digitizing drums of paper records. But he said it was important in learning how things have changed over nearly a century along California's coast.

They found that average winter wave heights have grown by as much as a foot since 1970, when global warming is believed to have begun accelerating. Swells at least 13 feet tall (about 4 meters) are also happening a lot more often, occurring at least twice as often between 1996 to 2016 than from 1949 to 1969.

Bromirski was also surprised to find extended periods of exceptionally low wave heights prior to about 1970 and none of those periods since.

"Erosion, coastal flooding, damage to coastal infrastructure is, you know, something that we're seeing more frequently than in the past," Bromirski said. "And, you know, combined with sea level rise, bigger waves mean that is going to happen more often."

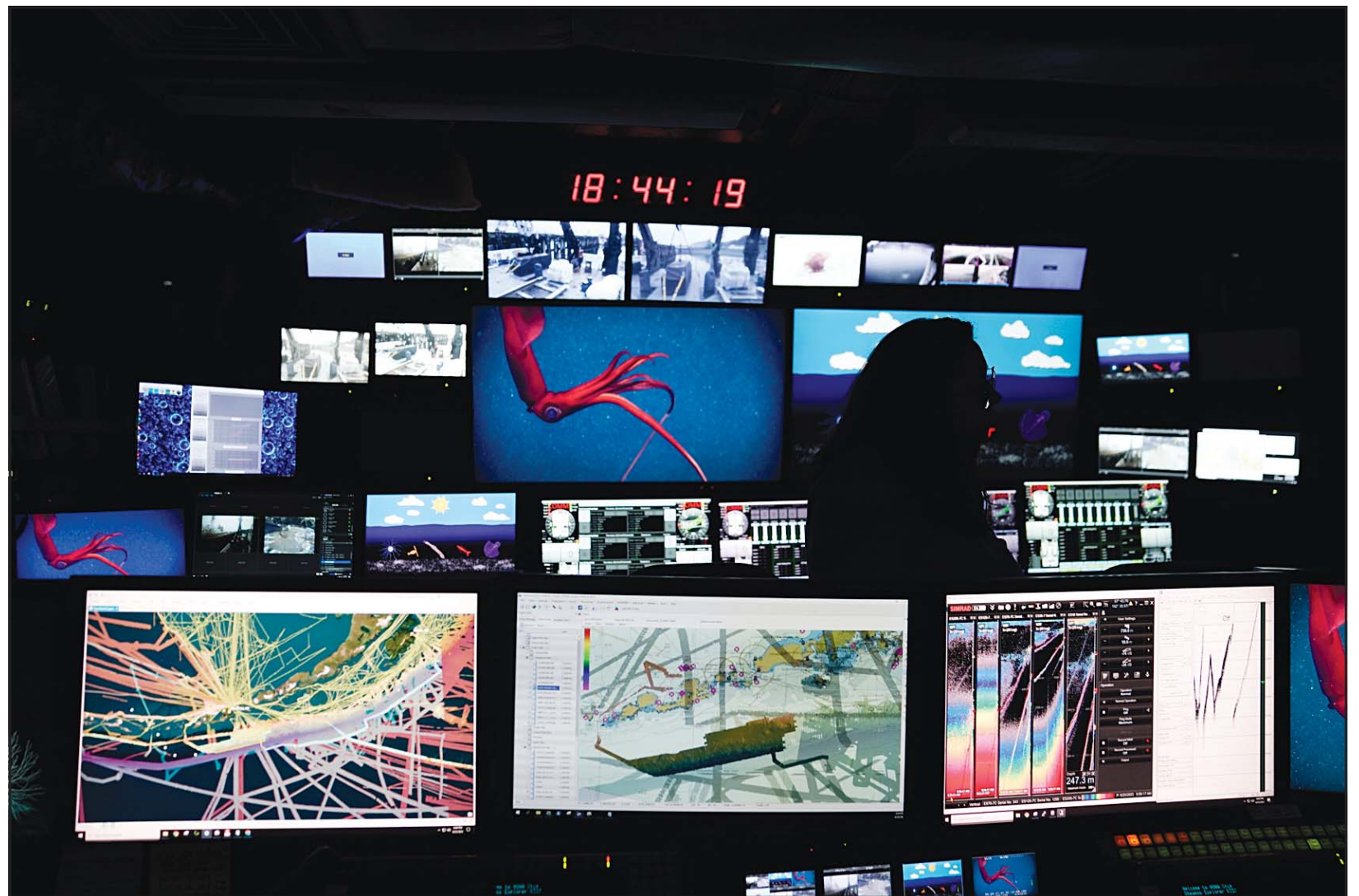
Changes in waves are showing up in other ways, too. "There's about twice as many big wave events since 1970 as there was prior to 1970," Bromirski said.

The study, published Tuesday in the Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans, adds to the evidence that climate change is causing massive shifts in the world's oceans. Other studies have shown waves are not only getting taller but also more powerful.

Damage from intense storms and massive surf is already playing out. This winter, California's severe storms and giant waves collapsed bluffs, damaged piers and flooded parts of the state's picturesque Highway 1.

Bromirski said that is a harbinger of the future. Scientists say global warming may even be accelerating, ushering in even bigger waves.

As sea levels rise and storms intensify, bigger waves will cause more flooding in coastal communities, erode away beaches, trigger landslides and destabilize remaining bluffs, he said.



Shannon Hoy, an expedition coordinator, stands in front of control room screens inside the NOAA Okeanos Explorer, Friday, June 23, 2023, in Kodiak, Alaska. The ship, a reconfigured former US Navy vessel run by civilians and members of the NOAA Corps, is specially outfitted with technology and tools needed to access deep into the ocean, and to share that data with the public and on-shore researchers in real-time. (AP)

Health

'There's something wrong'

US suicides hit all-time high last year

NEW YORK, Aug. 15, (AP): About 49,500 people took their own lives last year in the US, the highest number ever, according to new government data posted Thursday.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which posted the numbers, has not yet calculated a suicide rate for the year, but available data suggests suicides are more common in the US than at any time since the dawn of World War II.

"There's something wrong. The number should not be going up," said Christina Wilbur, a 45-year-old Florida woman whose son shot himself to death last year.

"My son should not have died," she said. "I know it's complicated. I really do. But we have to be able to do something. Something that we're not doing. Because whatever we're doing right now is not helping."

Experts caution that suicide is complicated, and that recent increases might be driven by a range of factors, including higher rates of depression and limited availability of mental health services.

But a main driver is the growing availability of guns, said Jill Harkavy-Friedman, senior vice president of research at the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

Suicide attempts involving guns end in death far more often than those with other means, and gun sales have boomed - placing firearms in more and more homes.

A recent Johns Hopkins University analysis used preliminary 2022 data to calculate that the nation's overall gun suicide rate rose last year to an all-time high. For the first time, the gun suicide rate among Black teens surpassed the rate among white teens, the researchers found.

"I don't know if you can talk about suicide without talking about firearms," Harkavy-Friedman said.

US suicides steadily rose from the early 2000s until 2018, when the national rate hit its highest level since 1941. That year saw about 48,300 suicide deaths - or 14.2 for every 100,000 Americans.

The rate fell slightly in 2019. It dropped again in 2020, during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some experts tied that to a phenomenon seen in the early stages of wars and natural disasters, when people pull together and support each other.

But in 2021, suicides rose 4%. Last year, according to the new data, the number jumped by more than 1,000,

to 49,449 - about a 3% increase vs. the year before. The provisional data comes from U.S. death certificates and is considered almost complete, but it may change slightly as death information is reviewed in the months ahead.

The largest increases were seen in older adults. Deaths rose nearly 7% in people ages 45 to 64, and more than 8% in people 65 and older. White men, in particular, have very high rates, the CDC said.

Many middle-aged and elderly people experience problems like losing a job or losing a spouse, and it's important to reduce stigma and other obstacles to them getting assistance, said Dr. Debra Houry, the CDC's chief medical officer.

Suicides in adults ages 25 to 44 grew about 1%. The new data indicates that suicide became the second leading cause of death in that age group in 2022, up from No. 4 in 2021.

Optimism

Despite the grim statistics, some say there is reason for optimism. A national crisis line launched a year ago, meaning anyone in the US can dial 988 to reach mental health specialists.

The CDC is expanding a suicide program to fund more prevention work in different communities. And there's growing awareness of the issue and that it's OK to ask for help, health officials say.

There was a more than 8% drop in suicides in people ages 10 to 24 in 2022. That may be due to increased attention to youth mental health issues and a push for schools and others to focus on the problem, CDC officials said.

But even the smaller number masks tragedy for families.

Christina Wilbur lost her 21-year-old son, Cale, on June 16 last year. He died in her home in Land O' Lakes, Florida.

Cale Wilbur had lost two friends and an uncle to suicide and had been dealing with depression. On that horrible morning, he and his mother were having an argument. She had confronted him about his drug use, his mother said. She left his bedroom and when she returned he had a gun.

"I was begging him not to, and to calm down," she said. "It looked like he relaxed for a second, but then he killed himself."

She describes her life since as black hole of emptiness and sorrow, and had found it hard to talk to friends or even family about Cale.

"There's just this huge 6-foot-2

hole, everywhere," she said. "Everything reminds me of what's missing."

It's hard to find professionals to help, and those that are around can be expensive, she said. She turned to support groups, including an organization called Alliance of Hope for Suicide Loss Survivors that operates a 24/7 online forum.

"There's nothing like being with people who get it," she said.

Also:

WELLINGTON, New Zealand: New Zealand on Monday removed the last of its remaining COVID-19 restrictions, marking the end of a government response to the pandemic that was watched closely around the world.

Prime Minister Chris Hipkins said the requirement to wear masks in hospitals and other healthcare facilities would end at midnight, as would a requirement for people who caught the virus to isolate themselves for seven days.

New Zealand was initially praised internationally for eliminating the virus entirely after imposing nationwide lockdowns and strict border controls.

But as the pandemic wore on and more infectious variants took hold, the nation's zero-tolerance approach became untenable. It eventually abandoned its elimination strategy.

Reflecting on the government's response to the virus over more than three years, Hipkins said that during the height of the pandemic he had longed for the day he could end all restrictions, but now it felt anticlimactic.

He said about 3,250 New Zealanders from a population of 5 million had died with COVID-19 as a primary or secondary cause - about one-fifth of the mortality rate in the United States.

"While there were no doubt fractures in our collective sense of unity, I believe that New Zealanders can be enormously proud of what we achieved together," Hipkins said. "We stayed home, we made sacrifices, we got vaccinated, and there is absolutely no question, we saved lives."

Health Minister Ayesha Verrall said coronavirus case numbers and hospitalizations were low and had been trending down since June, and the publicly funded health system had faced less disruption from the virus this southern winter.

"We have been able to complete 16,000 more operations than we did last year, and so that is a very good indication our health system is on a much more even keel than it was," she said.



This photo provided by Christina Wilbur shows her son, Cale Wilbur, at the age of 17 in October 2018. Christina lost her 21-year-old son on June 16, 2022. He had lost two friends and an uncle to suicide and had been dealing with depression. In 2022, about 49,500 people took their own lives in the U.S., the highest number ever, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released on Thursday, Aug. 10. (AP)



Kauffman



Harila

Discovery

Teen survives fall at Canyon: A 13-year-old North Dakota boy has survived a fall of nearly 100 feet at the North Rim of the Grand Canyon during a family trip.

Authorities said it took emergency crews two hours to rescue Wyatt Kauffman after he slipped on a cliff Tuesday and plunged the nearly 100 feet (30 meters) at the Bright Angel Point trail.

The teenager was airlifted to a Las Vegas hospital for treatment of nine broken vertebrae plus a ruptured spleen, a collapsed lung, a concussion and a broken hand and dislocated finger.

"I was up on the ledge and was moving out of the way so other people could take a picture," Kauffman told Phoenix TV station KPNX. "I squatted down and was holding on to a rock. I only had one hand on it."

"It wasn't that good of a grip. It was kind of pushing me back. I lost my grip and started to fall back," he added.

Rescue crews had to rappel down the cliff and get the injured boy out of the canyon in a basket.

"I just remember somewhat waking up and being in the back of an ambulance and a helicopter and getting on a plane and getting here" to the hospital, said Kauffman, who lives in Casselton, North Dakota.

Brian Kauffman was in North Dakota when he heard about his son's fall and rescue.

A National Park Service search and rescue team set up a rope rescue down to the steep and narrow trail and raised the teen safely to the rim.

"We're extremely grateful for the work of everyone. Two hours is an eternity in a situation like that," Brian Kauffman said. (AP)

'Impossible to carry porter': A record-setting Norwegian mountaineer pushed back Sunday against claims that she could have done more to save the life of a Pakistani porter who slipped off a narrow trail near the peak of the world's most treacherous mountain and died there after several hours.

The circumstances of Mohammad Hassan's July 27 death on K2, the world's second-highest peak, sparked ongoing controversy, with two climbers arguing that he could have been saved if all those on the mountain that day had aborted their climb and focused on getting him down safely.

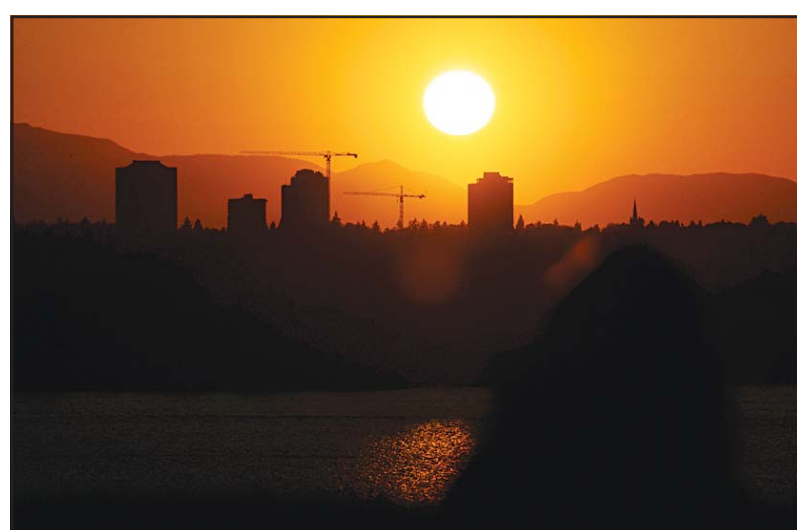
The fallout from Hassan's death overshadowed a record established by Norwegian climber Kristin Harila and her

Sherpa guide, Tenjin. By climbing K2 that day, they became the world's fastest climbers, scaling the world's 14 highest mountains in 92 days.

Harila told The Associated Press on

Sunday that "in the snowy condition we had up there that day, it wouldn't be possible to carry him down."

"I'm sure that if it was possible that we saw a chance to carry him down from



The sun sets over the University District in Seattle, May 13, 2023, seen from 520 Bridge View Park in Medina, Wash. A hazardous heat wave is expected to bring scorching temperatures to the Pacific Northwest this week, Monday, Aug. 14, according to the National Weather Service. (AP)

there, everyone would have tried that," she said by Zoom from Norway. "But it was impossible."

The uproar had been sparked by drone footage showing dozens of climbers pushing past a gravely injured Hassan toward the summit. The path to the peak was crowded on July 27, described as the last day of the season for a possible ascent.

In Pakistan, local authorities in the Gilgit-Baltistan region, which has jurisdiction over K2, formed a five-member committee on Aug. 7 to investigate Hassan's death. The committee's mandate noted that it's crucial to determine the facts after "distressing reports circulating on various social media platforms."

Investigators will try to determine, among other things, whether more could have been done to save Hassan, said Sajid Hussain, deputy director of the Sports and Tourism department of Gilgit-Baltistan. He told the AP on Sunday that investigators are to submit their findings on Aug. 22.

Hassan, a 27-year-old father of three, was hired by the Pakistan-based expedition company Lela Peak and was assigned to a team of Russian climbers, said company director Anwar Syed.

Asked if she felt the controversy had tainted her record, Harila said "of course," but did not elaborate. She appeared distraught at times during the interview and said she had received death threats. (AP)

Trio of consecutive homers lift Marlins over Astros



Baltimore Orioles starting pitcher Grayson Rodriguez works against a San Diego Padres batter during the first inning of a baseball game in San Diego. (AP)

I love the underdog stories: Latham

Alabama reloads, strives for bounce-back season

WASHINGTON, Aug 15, (AP) — Alabama offensive lineman JC Latham has been feeling disrespected during the offseason.

It's not as if anybody is truly badmouthing Nick Saban's always-formidable Crimson Tide, still regarded a potential national championship candidate despite having more question marks than usual. But 'Bama, which enters the season ranked No. 4, is clearly second fiddle to two-time defending national champion Georgia in the Southeastern Conference these days.

And that, Latham says, is "disrespectful." "I love being an underdog," said Latham, oblivious to the irony of calling Alabama an underdog. "That just fuels me when y'all don't think you can do something or people kind of downplay somebody. I love the underdog stories." Even if Alabama goes undefeated and wins the national title, it won't be a heart-tugging, underdog story. It would, however, be a nice redemption tale for Saban's powerhouse, winner of six national championships since 2009.

The Tide, after all, did lose two games last season - both on the final play - to fall short of even the SEC title game. Gone are No. 1 draft pick quarterback Bryce Young and No. 3 pick linebacker Will Anderson, among other stars.

FOOTBALL

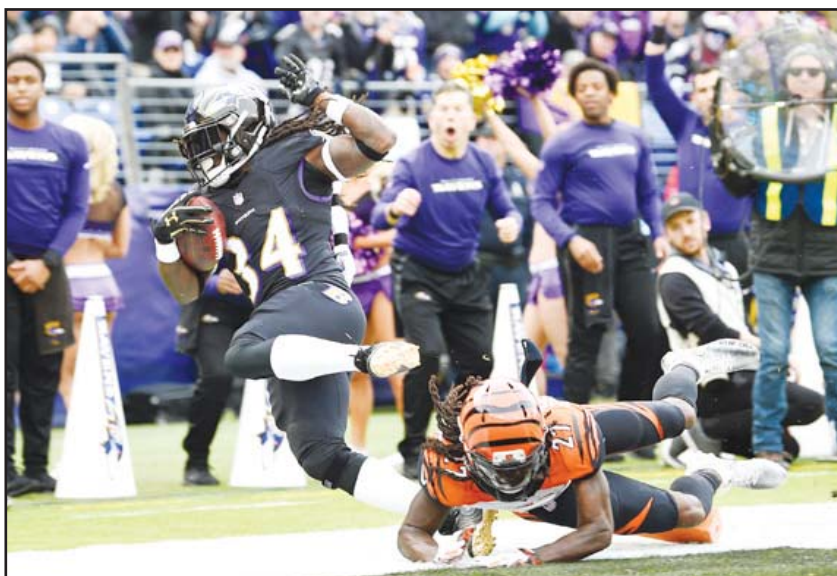
Those voids and last year's disappointments make for a feeling of unease among some Alabama fans, along with lingering uncertainty at quarterback.

Three contenders are vying to replace Young: Notre Dame transfer Tyler Buchner, 2022 backup Jalen Milroe and Ty Simpson, the highest rated recruit of the trio.

Saban also brought in

Change Name

I. ZAINAB SAIFUDDIN
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HEREBY DECLARE THAT
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NAME WILL BE READ AS
UNDER: GIVEN NAME
ZAINAB MURTAZA
AND SURNAME
TATIWALA.



In this file photo, Baltimore Ravens running back Alex Collins, left, scores a touchdown in front of Cincinnati Bengals cornerback Dre Kirkpatrick in the first half of an NFL football game Nov. 18, 2018, in Baltimore. Former NFL running back Collins, who played five seasons for the Seattle Seahawks and the Ravens after a terrific college career at Arkansas, has died. He was 28. The Seahawks released a statement from Collins' family that said he died Monday, Aug. 14, 2023. (AP)

new offensive and defensive coordinators.

The expectations? Well, they're the same as always.

But perhaps Saban's team has a chip on the shoulder instead of a big head generated by a championship run. And that is something he can work with.

"I never look back at the past," the 71-year-old coach said. "It's always about the future. Most of the things that I remember about the past are the games we didn't win, the national championship games that we lost, the games that we lost a year ago on the last play of the game. And how that impacted our chances to have a successful season." The Tide's national title hopes could well hinge on a quarterback swiftly taking over the offense.

Alabama has had a few QB battles carry into the season, or close to it. But this time, the Tide seems to have three legitimate candidates. Saban showed a certain dissatisfaction with the situation when he brought in ex-Notre Dame starter Buchner after spring practice.

Milroe started the Texas A&M game last season and Simpson was a five-star prospect.

Saban does feel like a receiving group that was fairly pedestrian last season should be better, including Ja'Corey Brooks, Jermaine Burton and top junior college signee Malik Benson.

Saban brought in defensive coordinator Kevin

Steele for his third stint in Tuscaloosa, along with 31-year-old Tommy Rees from Notre Dame. Steele has an intimate knowledge of Saban's system and has employed similar philosophies in his stints elsewhere.

The Rees-Buchner connection from Notre Dame certainly hasn't hurt either.

'You can see the growth'

Jaguars' linebacker Walker 'plans' to use his 'superpower' in Yr 2, eyes gold jacket

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., Aug 15, (AP) — Travon Walker heard the whispers during his rookie year: He's a project. He's a bust. He's an interior defensive lineman, not an edge rusher. He's hardly the answer for the Jacksonville Jaguars. And he's certainly not Aidan Hutchinson.

He insists none has bothered him. Nonetheless, he used them as motivation.

Now, Walker is hellbent on proving he was worthy of the No. 1 pick in the 2022 NFL draft. He's so confident that he'll end up being the best of the class that he's openly talking about a gold jacket - the one reserved for Pro Football Hall of Famers.

It doesn't sound like hyperbole, either. Walker and the Jaguars believe the former Georgia standout has made huge strides since last season and will be a near-impossible-to-block defender in 2023.

"You can see the growth," defensive coordinator Mike Caldwell said. "Last year was a learning year for him. He learned how to pass rush. Now he's to the point where he understands what he likes to do.

"I call it his superpower and I tell him all the time, 'Use your superpower.' He's working on doing that. ... We're excited for him this year."

The 6-foot-5, 272-pound outside linebacker from Georgia looks superhuman at times. Blessed with a rare combination of size, strength and speed, Walker had a game-changing interception in his NFL debut and notched three quarterback hits in two postseason games.

But he was mostly inconsistent in between. Walker finished with just 3 1/2 sacks in 15 regular-season games, falling well short of top-pick expectations.

He was too predictable at times, relying on power moves instead of mixing up his attacks. He was stout against the run, notching 49 tackles, and made several highlight-reel plays. But the all-important sacks rarely materialized. Making it worse: the guy many thought Jacksonville would draft at No. 1, Hutchinson, managed 9 1/2 sacks for Detroit.

Given Jacksonville's recent track record

Latham at right tackle.

Do-it-all running back Jahmyr Gibbs was picked 12th overall by the Detroit Lions. Jase McClellan has been a capable backup and ran for 655 yards and seven touchdowns last season. Highly touted freshman Justice Haynes joins the deep backfield that also includes Royzell Williams and Jam Miller.

The nation's top recruiting class most likely brought in some instant reinforcements. Among the candidates: Safety Caleb Downs, offensive tackle Kadyn Proctor and edge rusher Keon Keeley - all positions of need for Alabama. The speedy Benson was the top-rated JUCO recruit. Keeley is wearing Anderson's No. 31.

Alabama has five games scheduled against preseason Top 25 teams, including a Sept. 9 visit from No. 11 Texas. The two teams that beat the Tide last season - No. 12 Tennessee (Oct. 21) and No. 5 LSU (Nov. 4) - also visit Bryant-Denny Stadium. Alabama hosts No. 22 Mississippi on Sept. 23 and visits No. 23 Texas A&M on Oct. 7.

FOOTBALL

of first-round picks - the list includes C.J. Henderson (2020), Taven Bryan (2018), Blake Bortles (2014), Justin Blackmon (2012) and Blaine Gabbert (2011) - no one would be surprised if they chose the wrong guy again.

But the Jaguars are confident Walker will eventually be a better all-around defender - and more consistent getting to quarterbacks - than anyone drafted in 2022.

"My expectation for Travon is to dominate," teammate and fellow edge rusher Josh Allen said. "It's what he expects of himself. ... I expect him to dominate and to really show up and show out from the beginning to the end."

Walker will share the spotlight and the field with Hutchinson this week as the Lions host the Jaguars for two days of joint practices leading into an exhibition game Saturday night. Walker tends to sidestep any comparisons between the two, preferring to focus on his game and his progress.

"It's a growth from my mentality last year," Walker said. "I like to say I've always had a dog mentality. It's just the little things that I had to learn from last year being a rookie. Just coming into the league, understanding a lot of different scheme things, mental things, how to switch up my game within the game and how to elevate as a player."

FOOTBALL

"It's still the same mentality; it's just time to take it to a new level."

Walker has his sights set on the franchise single-season sack record of 14 1/2 set by Calais Campbell in 2017. It might seem like a lofty goal considering how his rookie year unfolded, but the Jaguars view it as a modest target for someone with his gifts. It also would be a solid step for a player already thinking about Canton.

"My main accolade is the gold jacket," Walker said. "I feel like if I get the gold jacket, the Super Bowl, all of that'll come with that."

Braves roll past Yankees

MIAMI, Aug 15, (AP) — Jorge Soler, Luis Arraez and Josh Bell hit consecutive homers in the eighth inning and the Miami Marlins beat the Houston Astros 5-1 on Monday night.

Houston starter Framber Valdez (9-8) limited the Marlins to four hits and two runs - one earned - through 7 2/3 innings before Soler and Arraez connected with solo shots to make it 4-1 and end the left-hander's outing.

Hector Neris relieved and allowed Bell's blast over the wall in right. It was just the second time in franchise history - the first was in 1998 - the Marlins hit three consecutive home runs.

Marlins starter Braxton Garrett (7-3) threw five scoreless innings and was lifted after 75 pitches. The left-hander gave up four hits, walked two and struck out one.

Braves 11, Yankees 3

In Atlanta, Max Fried allowed two runs in his first home start in more than three months. Nicky Lopez had three hits and three RBIs in a fill-in role, and Atlanta defeated New York.

BASEBALL

Eddie Rosario drove in four runs with three hits, including a two-run homer, in Atlanta's 15-hit attack.

Fried (4-1) gave up eight hits in six-plus innings in his first home start since May 5. He returned from the 60-day injured list on Aug. 4 after missing 70 games with a left forearm strain and allowed a combined four runs in two road starts.

Lopez has a combined eight RBIs in his last two starts. He had a two-run single in the second off Clarke Schmidt (8-7) before driving in another run with a single in Atlanta's four-run third.

Orioles 4, Padres 1

In San Diego, Ryan O'Hearn homered and Gunnar Henderson hit a bases-clearing double off Yu Darvish for the AL-best Baltimore, earning a third straight win.

Rookie right-hander Grayson Rodriguez (3-3) held the Padres to one run on three hits while going seven innings for the first time. He struck out six and walked one to win for the first time in nine starts. His last victory came May 9 against Tampa Bay.

Felix Bautista finished the combined four-hitter by pitching the ninth for his AL-leading 32nd save in 38 chances. He walked Fernando Tatis Jr. and Juan Soto with one out and then got Manny Machado to ground into a double play to end it.

Rangers 12, Angels 0

In Arlington, Max Scherzer allowed only one infield single and one walk while striking out a season-high 11 in seven innings to record his third win in three Texas starts.

Marcus Semien had two hits and a season-high five RBIs, including a three-run home run in the seventh inning. Three batters later, Adolis Garcia increased his AL-best RBI total to 91 with a two-run shot that was his 30th of the season.

Martin Perez followed Scherzer (12-4) to finish the combined one-hitter, extending the final string of consecutive batters retired to 22.

In the Rangers' three-run third, one run scored on a bases-loaded walk by Patrick Sadoval (6-9) - his final batter - and another scored on a wild pitch by Griffin Canning.

Texas batted around in the third and seventh innings. Angels pitchers allowed 12 hits, walked eight - one intentionally - and threw two wild pitches through seven innings before infielder Eduardo Escobar pitched the eighth and gave up one unearned run.

Rays 10, Giants 2

In San Francisco, Christian Bethancourt homered and singled in a run to back Tyler Glasnow's fourth straight winning decision, and Tampa Bay won their first game since placing All-Star shortstop Wander Franco on the restricted list.

Glasnow (6-3) had plenty of run support in winning his third start in a row. The right-hander struck out seven and walked three over six innings.

In a matchup of two players making their major league debuts, Jacob Lopez struck out Wade Meckler with the bases loaded to end the seventh. Lopez pitched three innings for his first career save.

Tristan Beck (3-2) relieved opener Ryan Walker in the third inning and gave up five runs on 10 hits over three innings as the Giants lost for the seventh time in nine games.

Royals 7, Mariners 6

In Kansas City, Dairon Blanco executed a suicide squeeze bunt in the ninth inning to score Samad Taylor, and Kansas City rallied to hand the playoff-contending Seattle its third straight loss.

Brady Singer took a no-hitter into the seventh inning, Bobby Witt Jr. hit an inside-the-park homer and Salvador Perez hit a three-run shot to build the Royals' 5-0 lead. But it all came undone in the final two innings.

Julio Rodriguez hit a bases-clearing dou-

MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, Aug 15, (AP) — Results and standings from MLB games on Monday.

Miami	5	Houston	1
Atlanta	11	NY Yankees	3
St. Louis	7	Oakland	5
Texas	12	LA Angels	0
Kansas City	7	Seattle	6
Baltimore	4	San Diego	1
Tampa Bay	10	San Francisco	2
NY Mets	7	Pittsburgh	2
Atlanta	11	NY Yankees	3
Colorado	6	Arizona	4

American League

East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Baltimore	74	45	.622	—
Tampa Bay	72	49	.595	3
Toronto	66	54	.550	8-1/2
Boston	62	56	.525	11-1/2
New York	60	59	.504	14

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	62	58	.517	—
Cleveland	57	62	.479	4-1/2
Detroit	53	65	.449	8
Chicago	47	72	.395	14-1/2
Kansas City	39	81	.325	23

West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Texas	71	48	.597	—
Houston	68	52	.567	3-1/2
Seattle	63	55	.534	7-1/2
Los Angeles	59	61	.492	12-1/2
Oakland	33	86	.277	38

National League

East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	76	42	.644	—
Philadelphia	65	54	.546	11-1/2
Miami	63	57	.525	14
New York	54	65	.454	22-1/2
Washington	53	66	.445	23-1/2

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	65	54	.546	—
Cincinnati	62	58	.517	3-1/2
Chicago	61	57	.517	3-1/2
Pittsburgh	53	66	.445	12
St. Louis	53	66	.445	12

West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	71	46	.607	—
San Francisco	63	56	.529	9
Arizona	59	60	.496	13
San Diego	56	63	.471	16
Colorado	46	73	.387	26

ble in the eighth to get the Royals within 5-3, then scored on a single by Eugenio Suarez. In the ninth, Josh Rojas tied it with a run-scoring single against Nick Wittgren (1-0), and Rodriguez's RBI single put the Mariners on top.

But Matt Brash (8-4) immediately ran into trouble in the ninth. He gave up consecutive singles and Perez tied the game with a sacrifice fly. Blanco then bunted Brash's first pitch down the first-base line, and first baseman Dylan Moore couldn't handle it cleanly as Taylor dashed home with the game-ending run.

Rockies 6, Diamondbacks 4
In Denver, Nolan Jones singled in the go-ahead run in a three-run eighth inning and Colorado beat Arizona to snap a five-game losing streak.

Charlie Blackmon, Ezequiel Tovar and Ryan McMahon opened the eighth inning with singles to load the bases against Joe Mantiply (1-1), the third Arizona pitcher. Scott McGough entered and retired Elias Diaz on a liner to shortstop Geraldo Perdomo before Brandon Rodgers' two-run single tied the score and sent McMahon to third. Jones followed with his go-ahead single to center.

Matt Koch (2-0) struck out two in a 1-2-3 eighth and Justin Lawrence struck out the side in the ninth for his 10th save in 14 chances.

Christian Walker hit his 25th homer and drove in three runs for the Diamondbacks, who have lost 10 of their last 12 games. Merrill Kelly gave up two solo homers and struck out 11 in six innings.

Mets 7, Pirates 2
In New York, Francisco Lindor became the first Met to reach 20 home runs and 20 stolen bases since 2008 as New York won consecutive games for the first time this month.

Jonathan Araúz hit a two-run homer while Daniel Vogelbach and Brandon Nimmo added solo homers as the Mets scored in each of the first six innings in a home game for the first time since 1987. Pete Alonso added an RBI double.

Lindor singled off rookie Quinn Priester (2-2) in the third, doubled in the fifth and scored each time. Priester allowed six runs and seven hits in five innings.

Carlos Carrasco labored through three innings and allowed two runs and four hits. Tyson Miller (1-0) pitched two innings in his Mets' debut and got his second career win.

Cardinals 7, Athletics 5
In St. Louis, rookie Jordan Walker hit a bases-loaded triple in the seventh inning, and St. Louis rallied for the win over Oakland in a matchup of last-place teams.

Jo Romero (3-1) worked 1 1/3 innings of scoreless relief for the Cardinals, who had lost their previous six meetings with the A's.

In the seventh, Angel Felipe (1-1) walked the bases full with one out and gave way to Francisco Perez, who walked Lars Nootbaar on five pitches to move the Cardinals within 5-4.



Kansas City Royals' Bobby Witt Jr. slides home to score after hitting an inside-the-park home run during the fifth inning of a baseball game against the Seattle Mariners in Kansas City, Mo. (AP)

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Félix jeered on the bench

Morata and Depay shine as Atletico make winning start

MADRID, Aug 15, (AP) — With João Félix on the bench and jeered by fans, Atletico Madrid began its Spanish league campaign with a 3-1 win over Granada.

Félix's attacking teammates Álvaro Morata and Memphis Depay scored a goal each, and Marcos Llorente added another to give Atletico the opening victory at the Metropolitan stadium.

Félix is not expected to stay with the club and negotiations for his transfer remain underway. He upset Atletico fans by recently saying that he dreamed of playing for Barcelona. The crowd at the Metropolitan loudly booed Félix when he was shown on the video screens.

Depay replaced Morata in the second half and scored a spectacular goal to put Atletico back in the lead — a long-

range right-footed strike that hit the top corner in the 67th minute.

Antoine Griezmann also started in attack for Atletico along with Morata, before being replaced by Saúl Ñíguez toward the end of the match.

Granada had equalized through Samuel Omorodion five minutes before Depay's goal. Morata opened the scoring from inside the area in first-half stoppage time. Llorente sealed Atletico's win deep into second-half stoppage time.

Atletico lost veteran midfielder Koke Resurrección because of an apparent muscle injury just five minutes into the match.

Defenders Cesar Azpilicueta and Caglar Soyuncu made their debuts for Atletico, which last year had a strong finish to the season and ended the

league in third place, behind Real Madrid and champion Barcelona.

Atletico is unbeaten against Granada in 20 straight home matches in the league.

Granada is back in the first division after a season in the second tier.

In the other match on Monday, Cadiz

SOCCER

scored early then held on to a 1-0 win against promoted Alaves. Fedé San Emeterio put the hosts ahead with a header in the seventh minute. Cadiz played a man down from the 88th after midfielder Gonzalo Escalante was sent off with a straight red card for a hard foul.

Real Madrid won 2-0 at Athletic Bil-

bao on Saturday, while Barcelona was held 0-0 at Getafe on Sunday.

Kepa Arrizabalaga was officially introduced as a Real Madrid goalkeeper on Tuesday, saying he didn't have to think too hard when the offer arrived.

"It was an easy decision," Kepa said after being introduced by club president Florentino Pérez. "I had other offers from important clubs, but when I was told about this option, it all happened really fast."

Kepa arrived on a one-year loan from Chelsea to help make up for the absence of regular starter Thibaut Courtois, who tore a ligament in his left knee last week and will be sidelined for a lengthy period.

One of the clubs negotiating with Kepa was Bayern Munich, which was trying to find a replacement for the in-

jured Manuel Neuer.

"These were some intense days, but when I received the offer from Real Madrid everything was clear," said the 28-year-old Kepa, who in 2018 became the world's most expensive goalkeeper when he joined Chelsea for 80 million euros (then \$93 million).

He had already been linked to a move with Madrid at that time, but eventually made it to England while Courtois left Chelsea and signed with Madrid.

"It happened when it had to happen. Now I'm prepared to give my 100% for Real Madrid," Kepa said. "Today is one of the most special days of my career. I'm proud to be part of Real Madrid and I'm excited about the challenge."

Pérez welcomed Kepa as "one of the best goalkeepers in the world."

"We know very well what it means to you at this moment and how hard you have worked to be able to defend the jersey and the crest of Real Madrid," the club president said.

Kepa wished a speedy recovery to Courtois and the two other Madrid players who sustained knee injuries recently — defender Éder Militão and midfielder Arda Güler.

The Spanish goalkeeper will fight for a starting position with Ukrainian teammate Andriy Lunin, the long-time reserve for Courtois who started in Madrid's 2-0 win at Athletic Bilbao in the team's Spanish league opener on Saturday.

Madrid's next game is at Almería in the Spanish league on Saturday.

Italian league starts on Saturday

Milan, Inter & Juve aim to 'bring' title back up north

MILAN, Aug 15, (AP) — Figuring out which team will challenge Napoli for the Serie A title is anyone's guess.

AC Milan is going through an off-season overhaul with a host of new players. Inter Milan is still missing a center forward with Romelu Lukaku and Edin Dzeko both gone. Juventus remains a question mark after a highly disappointing season last year. Roma and Lazio appear a step behind, while Atalanta has made waves on the transfer market.

Before Napoli won last season, no team beside the Milan clubs and Juventus had claimed the title since Roma in 2001 and they'll be eager to bring the trophy back up north.

AC Milan

No team in Italy has made as many big signings as Milan has, with six significant additions, including United States standout Christian Pulisic.

Yunus Musah, another U.S. international, has joined Pulisic in Milan in a return to the country where he spent a large portion of his childhood. Other notable signings include Ruben Loftus-Cheek, Noah Okafor, Tijjani Reijnders and Samuel Chukwueze.

But questions remain at center forward with only the 23-year-old Okafor to back up 36-year-old Olivier Giroud following the retirement of Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

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The spending spree was largely funded by the sale of midfielder Sandro Tonali to Saudi-backed Newcastle for a reported fee of more than \$75 million.

Inter Milan

Coming off a run to the Champions League final, Simone Inzaghi believes his club can do better than its third-place result in Serie A last season.

But until a replacement is found for Lukaku and Dzeko to put alongside Lautaro Martinez — who contended with Napoli's Victor Osimhen for the league's top striker honors last season — nothing is certain for the Nerazzurri.

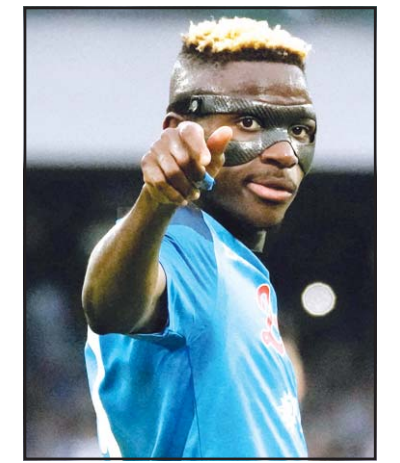
New arrivals like David Frattesi (23), Marcus Thuram (26) and Yann Aurel Bisseck (22) make Inter younger, and together with former Juventus veteran Juan Cuadrado, should add speed and creativity.

Juventus

A 10-point penalty for legal issues stemming from a false-accounting case. A seventh-place finish and then a UEFA ban that will keep Juventus out of the Europa Conference League.

Hardly anything went right for Juventus last season.

Coach Massimiliano Allegri has much higher hopes for this season, with Federico Chiesa and Dusan Vlahovic returning to full form, U.S. international Weston McKennie back after a mid-season loan to Leeds and U.S. winger Tim Weah — the son of former Milan stand-out and current Liberia President George Weah — joining from Lille to replace Cuadrado.



In this file photo, Napoli's Victor Osimhen celebrates after scoring during the Serie A soccer match between Napoli and Sampdoria at the Diego Maradona Stadium, in Naples. (AP)

Vlahovic has remained with Juventus after fans protested following speculation involving a possible acquisition of former rival Lukaku.

Roma

Roma ended last season mired in protest after its loss to Sevilla in the Europa League final, amid speculation about Jose Mourinho's future at the club.

Mourinho, however, has stayed to serve out of the third and final year of his contract. But because of financial fair play constraints, Roma has not so far met Mourinho's demands in the transfer market.

Defender Roger Ibanez is gone, with 23-year-old Evan Ndickh brought in as a replacement from Eintracht Frankfurt. The only other new players are midfielder Houssein Aouar and right back Rasmus Kristensen.

Lazio

After a slow start at Lazio, Maurizio Sarri's impact was seen when the Roman club rode the Tuscan coach's fast-paced game to a second-place finish.

But with the loss of standout midfielder Sergej Milinkovic-Savic to Saudi Arabia, Luis Alberto in a contract dispute with the club, little to show for in the transfer market and the challenges that come with returning to the Champions League, Sarri will be hard-pressed to repeat last season's performance.

Atalanta

Back in the Europa League after missing out on Europe last season, Atalanta has signed physical forward Gianluca Scamacca from West Ham and purchased striker El Bilal Toure from Almería for a club-record 30 million euros (\$33 million).

After selling striker Rasmus Hojlund to Manchester United for 64 million pounds (\$82 million) and Jeremie Boga to Nice for 18 million euros (\$20 million), Atalanta is also looking to add Charles De Ketelaere from Milan.



Wolverhampton Wanderers' Matheus Nunes (right), duels for the ball with Manchester United's Marcus Rashford during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester United and Wolverhampton at the Old Trafford stadium in Manchester, England. (AP)

Refs who missed foul at Old Trafford not involved in next set of games

MANCHESTER, England, Aug 15, (AP) — Manchester United needed a 76th-minute goal from defender Raphael Varane to eke out a 1-0 win over Wolverhampton after being outplayed for long periods of their Premier League opener.

The former France center back headed home from point-blank range after Aaron Wan Bissaka ran onto a lofted pass from Bruno Fernandes and lobbed a cross into the six-yard box.

It was a rare slick move from United, which gave competitive debuts to goalkeeper Andre Onana and Mason Mount and failed to look cohesive against a visiting team that dominated midfield and was a constant danger on the break.

Wolves struck the post through Matheus Cunha early in the second half, while substitute Fabio Silva drew two saves from the feet of Onana in the closing stages as United hung on at Old Trafford.

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Mount, who joined from Chelsea, lasted 68 minutes before being substituted after an ineffective display in a midfield three with Fernandes and Casemiro that looked disjointed.

Onana had a much more impressive debut, making six saves in total, though had a worrying moment deep into stoppage time when he appeared to clatter into Wolves substitute Sasa Kalajdzic in an aerial collision.

The incident was reviewed by video but no penalty was given, much to the annoyance of Wolves manager Gary O'Neil, who was shown a yellow card in the technical area to mark his first match in charge after being hired last week.

The match officials who failed to award Wolverhampton a late penalty against Manchester United in the opening round of the Premier League have not been selected for any game in the next set of matches.

Wolves manager O'Neil said he received an apology from elite referees' manager Jon Moss after the team was denied a stoppage-time penalty when United goalkeeper Onana ran

Record fee for a transfer in Britain

Chelsea take spending spree to \$1b in last 15 months by signing Caicedo for \$146 mn

LONDON, Aug 15, (AP) — Chelsea took its spending on players to a staggering \$1 billion in 15 months under its American owners by signing Ecuadorian midfielder Moises Caicedo from Brighton for a reported 115 million pounds (\$146 million).

It is a record fee for a transfer in Britain, surpassing the 106.7 million pounds (then \$131.4 million) that Chelsea paid for Argentina midfielder Enzo Fernandez in the January window.

Since taking control of the London club in May last year from Roman Abramovich, Chelsea's ownership — fronted by Todd Boehly and Clearlake Capital — has spent \$280 million on players in the 2022 summer transfer window, \$350 million in the January window and now around \$370 million, and counting, this summer.

It's an unprecedented spending spree designed to remodel the squad

in the shortest, most realistic possible timeframe. In the 21-year-old Caicedo, Chelsea believes it has signed one of the best young midfielders in the world.

"Moises possesses a rare midfield skill set and is a player we've been targeting for some time," Chelsea co-sporting directors Laurence Stewart and Paul Winstanley said. "We believe he will make a significant impact at Stamford Bridge this season — and in the years ahead."

Chelsea beat Liverpool to the signature of Caicedo, who only played one full season for Brighton after joining from Ecuadorian club Independiente del Valle in 2021. He spent the first half of the 2021-22 season on loan at Beerschot in Belgium before being slowly integrated into Brighton's team.

He is a defensive midfielder who is good on the ball, covers ground quickly and is an intense presser.



Liverpool's Diogo Jota (left), and Chelsea's Thiago Silva in action during the English Premier League soccer match between Chelsea and Liverpool at Stamford Bridge Stadium in London. (AP)

into substitute Sasa Kalajdzic. United won 1-0.

The referee for the game, Simon Hooper, did not award the spot kick and the video assistant referee deemed there was no foul. The two

officials were missing from the list published by the Premier League on Tuesday for the second set of matches.

O'Neil said Moss told him he "can't believe" the foul wasn't spot-

ted by the on-field referee or the VAR.

"Jon Moss said it was a blatant penalty and should have been given," Neil said. "He said it was clear and obvious."

SOCCER

policy of handing out long contracts to spread "amortization" costs of transfer fees across the whole deal.

Liverpool reached an agreement with Brighton last week to buy Caicedo for a reported 110 million pounds (\$140 million). He never ended up traveling to Merseyside because he preferred to join Chelsea, which had made offers for the midfielder during the offseason.

Caicedo wasn't involved in Brighton's opening game of the Premier League season, a 4-1 win over Luton on Saturday. Chelsea opened the Premier League with a 1-1 draw against Liverpool on Sunday.

Chelsea's latest bout of heavy spending has been offset by the sale of a slew of players on big wages including N'Golo Kante, Kepa Arrizabalaga, Kai Havertz, Mason Mount and Mateo Kovacic.

More players are likely to be coming through the door at Stamford Bridge in this transfer window, though. Romeo Lavia is another defensive midfielder who is reportedly close to signing for Chelsea amid interest from Liverpool.

Japan coach Joseph names most of squad for upcoming Rugby World Cup in France

TOKYO, Aug 15, (AP) — Japan head coach Jamie Joseph has named most of his Rugby World Cup squad, including 13 players who appeared at the 2019 tournament when the Brave Blossoms lost at home in the quarterfinals to eventual champion South Africa.

The squad will depart Japan on Saturday ahead of its final World Cup warm-up match against Italy in Treviso on Aug. 26. With three places in the 33-member squad still to be confirmed, 30 players were announced Tuesday — 15 forwards and 15 backs.

The final squad will be announced ahead of World Rugby's squad announcement deadline on Aug. 31.

In addition to the 13 players from 2019, prop Keita Inagaki and outside back Kotaro Matsushima were also members of the 2015 squad in England. Hooker Shota Horie and back rower Michael Leitch also featured in New Zealand in 2011, and are both set to represent Japan at their fourth Rugby World Cup.

Prop Sione Halasili and scrum-half Kenta Fukuda are the only two uncapped players in the squad and nine players have fewer than 10 test caps of experience.

Japan squad:

Forwards: Keita Inagaki, Craig Millar, Sione Halasili, Gu Ji Won, Shinnosuke Kakinaga, Asaeli Ai Valu, Shota Horie, Atsushi Sakate, Kosuke Horikoshi, James Moore,

Jack Cornelsen, Ben Gunter, Kazuki Himeno, Shota Fukui, Michael Leitch.

Backs: Naoto Saito, Yutaka Nagare, Kenta Fukuda, Jumpei Ogura, Lee Seung Sin, Rikiya Matsuda, Tomoki Osada, Shogo Nakano, Ryoto Nakamura, Dylan Riley, Jone Naikabala, Siosaia Fifita, Semisi Masirewa, Lomano Lava Lemeki, Kotaro Matsushima.

France flyhalf **Romain Ntamack** was ruled out of the Rugby World Cup on Monday because of a knee

RUGBY

injury, robbing the tournament of one of its star players.

The 24-year-old Ntamack ruptured cruciate ligaments in his left knee in the second half of the 30-27 victory over Scotland in a World Cup warm-up on Saturday, the team said following scans.

Matthieu Jalibert is set to fill in as Ntamack's understudy when the tournament begins in France on Sept. 8.

"Romain, we are thinking of you a lot," the French rugby federation posted on X, formerly known as Twitter. "The whole group is supporting you. We wish you a good recovery." In his own post, Ntamack wrote: "I'll be back."



Spain's Salma Paralluelo celebrates after scoring her team's first goal during the Women's World Cup semifinal soccer match between Sweden and Spain at Eden Park in Auckland, New Zealand. (AP)

Sports

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Last-gasp Spain reach Women's WCup final



Spain players and their support staff celebrate after their win in the Women's World Cup semifinal soccer match between Sweden and Spain at Eden Park in Auckland, New Zealand. (AP)

Carmona scores late goal

AUCKLAND, New Zealand, Aug 15, (AP): Spain will play for its first Women's World Cup championship after Olga Carmona's goal in the 89th minute lifted La Roja to a 2-1 victory over Sweden in the Tuesday semifinal.

Spain, which overcame last year's near mutiny by its players against coach Jorge Vilda, will play the winner of tournament co-host Australia and England on Sunday in the final in Sydney.

The controversy surrounding Spain dates to last September, when 15 players signed a letter complaining about Vilda and the conditions for the national team. Three of those players are on this World Cup team, and Vilda a day before the game against Sweden praised the Spanish federation for its support.

Now, La Roja has a chance to become a first-time World Cup champion.

"This is a historic day," said Vilda. "We're in the final, that's what we wanted."

Sweden has now lost in four of five semifinals and will play try to finish third for a fourth time.

SOCCER

"I have to watch the game, I really do, before I can make any assessments," said Sweden coach Peter Gerhardsson. "Right now I am full of emotions. It is the third loss in the semifinals. I think everyone just feels sadness and huge disappointment."

Carmona's goal capped a flurry of late scoring that saw Sweden tie the game, then Spain win it 90 seconds later on the surprise score.

Salma Paralluelo, the 19-year-old super-sub who also scored the game-winner in Spain's 2-1 extra-time quarterfinals victory over the Netherlands, scored in the 81st minute to pug Spain up 1-0. She gestured for the crowd to cheer, and the crowd thought it was celebrating Spain's decider.

But the celebration was brief. Rebecca Blomqvist tied it for Sweden in the 88th.

Then, just 90 seconds later,



Spain's Teresa Abelleira (left) and Sweden's Kosovare Asllani challenge for the ball during the Women's World Cup semifinal soccer match between Sweden and Spain at Eden Park in Auckland, New Zealand. (AP)

Carmona beat Sweden goalkeeper Zecira Musovic with the game-winner.

"It was an enormous feeling that we scored and maybe we would go to extra time," Gerhardsson said. "And just over a minute later, it's turned again. And that can happen."

Paralluelo became just the second teenager to score in a Women's World Cup semifinal after Kara Lang of Canada in 2003, also against Sweden.

"It was a magic moment. It is something very unique when I scored the first goal. To be able to repeat is really incredible," Paralluelo said.

very tough game. It could've been difficult to recover from their goal, but we've shown that his team can deal with everything," said Paralluelo. "We deserved this. We took this little step, and now we need that final push."

The Swedes have never won a World Cup. They were the 2003 runner-up and have finished third three times. Sweden won silver medals at the Tokyo Olympics two years ago, and at the 2016 Games in Brazil.

"I'm tired of crying big tournament tears," said Kosovare Asllani. Sweden also lost in the semifinals of the Euros last September.

Spain is playing in only its third overall World Cup. Four years ago, La Roja advanced to the knockout round but lost to eventual champions the United States.

Ettifaq give Gerrard winning debut in Saudi Arabian league

Malcom scores hat trick but Benzema held scoreless

RIYADH, Aug 15, (AP): Karim Benzema was held scoreless and Cristiano Ronaldo was absent with an injury, but there were still plenty of big names making their mark as the opening round of the Saudi Arabian league wrapped up.

Benzema had an assist as defending champion Al-Ittihad won 3-0 at Al-Raed while Ronaldo's Al-Nassr lost 2-1 to Steven Gerrard's Ettifaq, giving the English coach a winning debut.

Gerrard watched as Al-Nassr took an early lead through another former Liverpool star, Sadio Mane, just one of several big names to arrive in the country ahead of the new season, lured by the massive salaries on offer from the Saudi teams.

Ronaldo started that exodus when he joined Al-Nassr in January, but he picked up a knock on Saturday as his team defeated Riyadh rival Al-Hilal in the final of the Arab Club Champions Cup.

With temperatures in the eastern city of Dammam well over 90 F (32 C) despite an evening kickoff, Mane scored from close range just four minutes into the game.

Swedish forward Robin Quaison and Moussa Dembele scored for Ettifaq, while former Liverpool midfielder Jordan Henderson played most of the game for Gerrard's team.

There were plenty of empty seats in the 26,000 capacity Prince Mohamed bin Fahd Stadium but the estimated attendance of around 16,000 was significantly higher than the 5,500 average from last season.

Al-Hilal is reportedly close to signing Neymar from Paris Saint-Germain to bring another superstar to the league, but it was another Brazilian who starred for the team on Monday. Malcom, who joined from Zenit St.Petersburg in July for a reported fee of around \$66 million, scored a hat trick to lead the

Kuwait national team to participate in Budapest World Athletics Champ'ship

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15, (KUNA): Kuwait's National Athletics team is to take part in the World's Athletics Championship from the 19th to the 27th of August, held in the Hungarian capital of Budapest.

The team's general treasurer Hussien Abdullah spoke to KUNA prior to the team's departure and affirmed their readiness following the training camp they underwent in Turkey.

Representing Kuwait in the championship will be Yaqub Al-Youha, Ibrahim Al-Thafeeri and Mudhawi Al-Shammari, stated Abdullah.

The first qualifiers will kick-

start on the 20th of this month with the 100 meters race for Al-Shammari, followed by the 110 hurdles race with Al-Youha and Al-Thafeeri's 800 meters race is set to take place on the 22nd.

Runner Al-Shammari was

ATHLETICS

qualified by the international federation following her win in the 25th West Asia athletics championship with gold, silver and bronze medals.

Al-Youha and Al-Thafeeri, on the other hand, were awarded the bronze medal each.



Al Ittihad's Ngolo Kante (right), fights for the ball during his team match against Al Raed in Saudi Professional League, in Buraidah, Saudi Arabia. (AP)

team to a 3-1 win over Abha.

The 18-time champion was without Kalidou Koulibaly and

Sergej Milinkovic-Savic, signed from Chelsea and Lazio, respectively, and Hilal coach Jorge Je-

sus is still looking to strengthen his roster.

"We came out with a positive result after working hard," Jesus said. "It is great to win the first game and I am still waiting for new signings, especially in attack."

Benzema, who joined the Jeddah club from Real Madrid, created the opening goal for Al-Ittihad teammate Abderrazak Hamdallah. The third was created by N'Golo Kante, the former Chelsea midfielder whose fierce shot was parried by the goalkeeper into the path of Igor Coronado to score his second of the game.

Kante lined up in midfield alongside Fabinho, who joined from Liverpool.

"Alongside Kante, our positioning was excellent and it was a fine team performance," Fabinho said. "This is my first match and I will improve."

Fabinho's former Liverpool teammate Roberto Firmino made an immediate impact on Friday, scoring all three goals as Al-Ahli defeated Al-Hazem 3-1.

The Brazilian was helped by Riyadh Mahrez, the winger signed from English and European cham-

SOCCER

pion Manchester City and Allan Saint-Maximin from Newcastle United.

"I am very happy to play my first match, score a hat trick and help my team achieve its first victory," Firmino told Saudi Arabian television. "It is a great start for us, and the most important thing is the win. The team played wonderfully."

More than 24,000 fans attended the game in Jeddah, 10,000 more than last season's average.

"The reception from the fans was wonderful," Firmino said. "I felt goosebumps after hearing the noise they made."

Sinner wins for first ATP Masters 1000 title

TORONTO, Aug 15, (AP): Jannik Sinner won the National Bank Open on Sunday for his first ATP Masters 1000 title, beating Alex de Minaur 6-4, 6-1.

Sinner, the 21-year-old Italian player seeded seventh, has eight tour victories, also winning in February at Montpellier. He's the second Italian Masters 1000 champion, following Fabio Fognini in the 2019 event in Monte Carlo.

"One I can share with all the people who are close to me every day. It is a nice moment to share with them and we are doing the right things. This result makes us feel good, stronger and hungry to work even harder in the future."

Sinner broke de Minaur's serve five times in the 90-minute match.

De Minaur, from Australia, won in March in Acapulco for his seventh tour title.



The budding rivalry between Carlos Alcaraz and

Novak Djokovic is set to be renewed in the group stage of the Davis Cup Finals next month.

Alcaraz and Djokovic were included in the teams announced Monday by Spain and Serbia, respectively, for the competition that will be played Sept. 12-17 in Valencia, Spain. Alcaraz defeated Djokovic in the Wimbledon final in July. The Spaniard is No. 1 in the world, with Djokovic sitting at No. 2.

TENNIS

Spain and Serbia have been drawn in the same group along with the Czech Republic and South Korea. Group-stage matches will also be played in Bologna, Italy, Manchester, England, and Split, Croatia. The top two teams in each of the four groups will advance to the finals in Malaga, Spain, in November.

Alcaraz will lead a Spain team that will include Alejandro Davidovich Fokina, Roberto Bautista

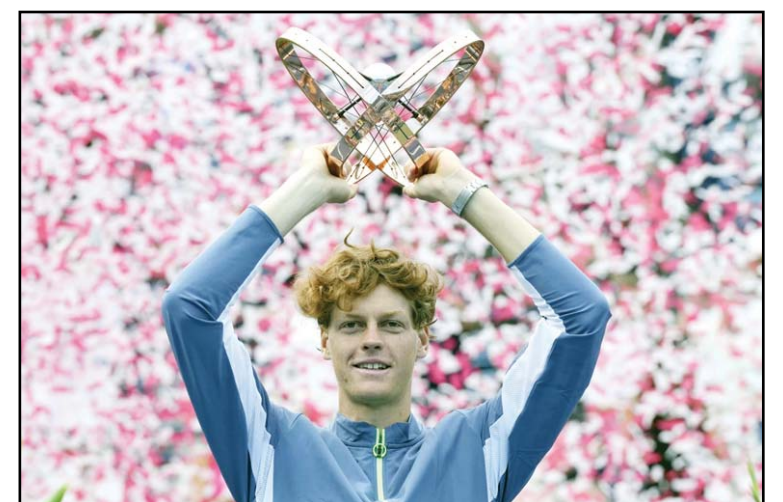
Agut and Marce Granollers. Djokovic's Serbia will also have Laslo Djere, Miomir Kecmanovic, Dusan Lajovic and Hamad Medjedovic.

Nine of the current top 20 players in the world have been called up for their national teams - Jannik Sinner and Lorenzo Musetti for Italy, Frances Tiafoe and Tommy Paul for the United States, Alex de Minaur for Australia, Cameron Norrie for Britain and Borna Coric for Croatia.

Andy Murray will also play for Britain, which faces Australia, France and Switzerland in Manchester. The Swiss will count on Stan Wawrinka, while France will have Adrian Mannarino and Nicolas Mahut.

Leo Borg, son of 11-time Grand Slam champion Bjorn Borg, was included in Sweden's team that will face Canada, Italy and Chile in Bologna.

Mackenzie McDonald, Austin Krajicek and Rajeev Ram were also included in the American team that will play against the Netherlands, Finland and host Croatia in Split.



Jannik Sinner, of Italy, holds the trophy after defeating Alex de Minaur, of Australia, to win the men's final of the National Bank Open tennis tournament in Toronto.