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THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, 2023 / SAFAR 15, 1445 AH

emergency number 112

NO. 18380

16 PAGES

150 FILS

CROWN PRINCE ATTENDS K.I.O. CELEBRATION IN LONDON Kuwait, Britain OK cybersecurity co-op



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attends Kuwait Investment Office (KIO) 70th anniversary in London on Tuesday, August 29. Crown Prince Diwan photos

Some pass on surgeries

Biometrics lock door on 25,000 deportees

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 30: After discovering and arresting a number of expatriates who were deported from Kuwait for various reasons and were slapped with entry ban and returned to the country after performing plastic surgeries on their fingers in their countries and forging travel documents, the Ministry of Interior decided to clamp down on the fraudsters by not only fingerprinting the deportees, but also taking their biometric fingerprints, reports Al-Rai daily.

The daily has learned from security sources that, based on the instructions of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah regarding setting up a mechanism to limit the entry of any expatriate who is deported from the country, the General Administration of Deportation will begin, starting from next Sunday, biometric fingerprinting for all male and female deportees.

In this regard, the daily said, security personnel have been trained to take the fingerprints to put an end to any possible form of manipulation that happened earlier. It has been reported that some of the deportees not only do surgeries on their fingers but also perform cosmetic face surgery.

Meanwhile, the sources indicated that the Talha Deportation Center deports those who hold passports directly, while working to coordinate with embassies to obtain documents for expatriates who do not hold passports or whose passports have expired.

Giving a breakdown the ministry said more than 25,000 expatriates of various nationalities have been deported from Jan 1, until date -- January: 2,886 (1,502 males - 1,384 females); February: 2,243 (1,300 men - 943 females), March: 3,275 (1,844 men - 1,431 females), April: 2,460 (1,628 men - 832 females), May: 4,054 (2,443 men - 1,611 females), June: 3,364 (1,927 men - 1,437 females), July: 3,561 (1,945 men - 1,616 females) and August: 3,571 (1,990 men - 1,581 females).

In other news, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled on Sunday chaired a meeting during which he received updates on the outcomes of the intensive security and traffic campaigns carried out by various sectors of the Ministry against the violators of residence and labor laws and outlaws, reports Al-Rai daily.

The meeting was attended by Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lieutenant General Anwar Al-Barjas and assistant undersecretaries.

During the meeting the minister emphasized the critical importance of enhancing continuous security and traffic presence across the entire country to promptly address any unfavorable situations and shared a number of observations and directives aimed at activating measures to tackle any violations of the law.

Foresight of forefathers lauded

LONDON, Aug 30, (KUNA): Under the patronage and in the presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Kuwait Investment Office (KIO) celebrated its 70th anniversary in London on Tuesday, August 29.

Upon his arrival at the celebration, His Highness the Crown Prince was warmly welcomed by Dr. Saad Al-Barak the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil, Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investments, Acting Minister of Finance, and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA); Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait; Mr. Ghanem Al-Ghunaiman, the Managing Director of KIA; and KIA board members as well as senior officials from the leading global financial institutions in the world.

In an opening speech, Dr. Saad Al-Barak said, "With the wisdom of Kuwait's forefathers, an agreement was signed between His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and His Majesty's Political Agent in 1953, which established the Kuwait Investment Board in London on February 23, 1953, the predecessor of the Kuwait Investment Office."

"The objective of the Kuwait Investment Board was to provide a long-term investment return and an alternative income to oil reserves so as to enable Kuwait's future generations to face uncertainties ahead with greater confidence," he noted.

"This foresight has enabled the KIA, the oldest sovereign wealth fund in the world, to become one of the largest glob-



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah signing the guest book on Tuesday, Aug 29.

ally," Dr. Al-Barak added.

Al-Ghunaiman, the Managing Director of KIA, addressed the high-level attendees, stated, "The UK offers numerous attractive investment opportunities in healthcare, energy, real estate and infrastructure, to name few key sectors."

"With its wholly-owned entities based in London - St. Martins Property and Wren House Infrastructure, KIA participates in strategic opportunities in UK's real estate and infrastructure."

"This includes direct holdings in London City Airport and Associated British Ports and indirectly in numerous other projects. In fact, the KIA is one of the largest international real estate owner in the UK," he pointed out.

"KIO's Platinum Jubilee celebration is a landmark occasion. Despite today's challenging world and current geopolitical turmoil, the close cooperation between the UK and Kuwait will continue to prosper and grow for years to come," Al-Ghunaiman added.

On his part, UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt confirmed the strong relationship between the two countries and reaffirmed the continued cooperation to further increase Kuwait's investments in the UK.

Meanwhile, Minister of State Minister for Investment in the Department for Business and Trade Lord Johnson reiterated the sentiment of a continued working relationship between the two countries for decades to come.

Prior to the event, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the Kuwait Investment Authority and the United Kingdom. This is to confirm KIA's intention to enhance the bilateral relations through industrial partnership and increased investments into the UK.

The Kuwait Investment Office in London is the world's oldest sovereign wealth fund.

The Kuwait Investment Board (KIB) was established in February 3rd 1953 to invest surplus oil revenue and reduce Kuwait's reliance on a single finite resource.

A few years later, in 1965, Kuwait adopted a policy of diversification of assets and portfolios which led to the KIB being replaced by the Kuwait Investment Office.

Kuwait Investment Office (KIO) marks 70 years of "unique" partnership with UK, reflecting Kuwait leadership's success in creating KIO to generate "huge returns to help the economy," a senior British government official said.

"It is a huge celebration of our partnership with Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) over the past 70 years, which has been consistent, and unique," Minister of State in the Department for Business and Trade Lord Dominic Johnson told KUNA in an interview to mark KIO's 70th anniversary in London.

"The leadership of Kuwait had so successfully created this fund, which generated huge returns to help the economy," he added.

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NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: The biggest full moon of 2023, a super blue moon, will be seen in Kuwait early Thursday morning.

According to a statement released by Al-Ojeiri Scientific Center for Research in Astronomy, the super blue moon is a rare phenomenon that occurs when a full moon is at perigee, its closest distance in its orbit to Earth, making it appear larger and brighter than usual.

The use of the color blue does not mean the moon will be blue, instead, it refers to two full moons occurring within 30 calendar days which happens about every two and a half years. The next blue moon will occur on 31 May 2026 while the next super blue moon will be in January 2037.

The moon will be full at exactly 04:36 Thursday morning, the statement concluded. (KUNA)

LOS ANGELES: U.S. officials said Tuesday that the FBI and its European partners infiltrated and seized control of a major global malware network used for more than 15 years to commit a gamut of online crimes including crippling ransomware attacks.

They then remotely removed the malicious software agent - known as Qakbot - from thousands of infected computers. Cybersecurity experts said they were impressed by the deft dismantling of the network but cautioned that any setback to cybercrime would likely be temporary.

"Nearly ever sector of the economy has been victimized by Qakbot," Martin Estrada, the U.S. attorney in Los Angeles, said Tuesday in announcing the takedown. He said the criminal network had facilitated about 40 ransomware attacks alone over 18 months that investigators said netted Qakbot administrators about \$58 million.

Qakbot's ransomware victims included an Illinois-based engineering firm, financial services organizations in Alabama and Kansas, along with a Maryland defense manufacturer and a Southern California food distribution company, Estrada said. (AP)

GENEVA: The U.N. human rights office says criminal gangs have forced hundreds of thousands of people in Southeast Asia into participating in unlawful online scam operations, including false romantic ploys, bogus investment pitches and illegal gambling schemes.

The Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, in a new report, cites "credible sources" that at least 120,000 people in strife-torn Myanmar and roughly 100,000 in Cambodia "may be held in situations where they are forced to carry out online scams."

The report sheds new light on cybercrime scams that have become a major issue in Asia, with many of the workers trapped in virtual slavery and forced to participate in scams targeting people over the internet.

Laos, the Philippines and Thailand were also cited among the main countries of destination or transit for tens of thousands of people. Criminal gangs have increasingly targeted migrants, and lure some victims by false recruitment - suggesting they are destined for real jobs. (AP)

Prayer Timings

Fajr 04:02 Asr 15:23
 Sunrise .. 05:24 Maghrib .. 18:13
 Zohr 11:49 Isha 19:33

Local

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

Weather

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

By Day: Very hot with light to moderate northerly wind to north-westerly wind with speeds of 12-35 km/h.
 By Night: Hot to rather hot with

light to moderate northerly wind to light variable wind with speeds of 08-32 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	45	33
Kuwait Airport	46	34

Abdaly	46	27
Jahra	47	31
Salmiyah	41	33
Ahmadi	43	35
Nuwaisib	46	31
Wafra	47	29

Empowering women state priority: minister

'Dikakeen 2' ... showcases original Kuwaiti products

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 30, (KUNA): Family Welfare Department of the Social Development Sector organized on Wednesday "Dikakeen 2" exhibition to showcase various traditional Kuwaiti products.

The event was organized under the patronage of Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Sheikh Firas Saud Al-Malek Al-Sabah, with the participation of several Kuwaiti productive families.

The exhibition includes various products such as embroidery, knitting, design, perfumery, drawing, accessories and Kuwaiti clothing, in addition to old traditional games (dama) and (carrom) and other means of entertainment taken from the authentic Kuwaiti heritage.

Empowering women is one of the state's utmost priority and "Dikakeen 2" -- for small and medium size enterprises -- is one of the events that require such support from authorities, said a government official on Wednesday.

Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Sheikh Firas Saud Al-Malek Al-Sabah told KUNA on the sideline of Dikakeen 2 opening that the event was an important gesture to empower women in the country.

Sheikh Firas said that the initiative had evoked a

sense of optimism especially after seeing all the products produced by participants.

On his part, acting undersecretary for Social Affairs Abdulaziz Al-Mutairi said that the ministry was keen support commodities produced by families, affirming that the ministry was willing to offer raw material for participants to provide their services to the masses.

He revealed that participants and clients of the Dikakeen 2 had reached around 96 families, noting that a similar event would be opened in Sabah Al-Ahmad area tomorrow.

Speaking to KUNA, Sara Al-Dousiri, head of family care department at the ministry, said that Dikakeen 2 was part of a series of events aimed at supporting beneficiaries of the ministry to become owners of businesses.

Those benefiting from the ministry's support are trained to come up with business ideas and in turn have a chance to partake in events such as Dikakeen 2, she added.

On their parts, Salman Boland and Husa Al-Baloul, participants in the event, expressed their gratitude to the ministry's support, saying that this gesture had enabled them to benefit themselves and others. Dikakeen, which means shops, held its second event under the organization of the ministry's family care department (Boutique 33). It would last until September 2.



Sheikh Firas

'Monitor markets, check prices to curb increment exploitation'

Call to improve retirees condition

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
 Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 30: MP Hassan Jawhar has called on the government to improve the conditions of retirees.

According to Jawhar, this is part of the government program approved by the National Assembly. He said Article Four of law number 49/1982 stipulates the need to increase the pension of retirees every two years to cope with the rising cost of

'Ready for challenges'

KOC mulls restructure, senior posts reshuffle

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 30: Within the framework of developing its operations and launching a new phase of its strategy, Al-Rai learned that the Kuwait Oil Company is preparing to announce a comprehensive administrative restructuring for all its organizational levels, starting from the rotation of some deputy CEOs down to some group managers, in addition to merging, creating and canceling some groups and teams in the company, including merging the financial groups and transferring them to the Directorate of Administrative Affairs, doing away with the wells inspection group, and distributing its teams to the fields directorates, reports Al-Rai daily.

Sources revealed that the changes with regard to the executive vice presidents and the change in the names of the directorates include renaming the Directorate of Administrative Affairs to become the Directorate of Administrative and Financial Affairs, and Qusai Al-Amer was chosen to be its deputy chief executive.

The Directorate of Planning and Financial Affairs has also been renamed to become the Directorate of Planning and Innovation, with Issa Al-Maraghi as Deputy Chief Executive Officer, while the Directorate of Gas and Innovation has been renamed to become the Directorate of Gas and Environment, with Amina Saleh as Deputy Chief Executive Officer.

Changed

The name of the Directorate of Major Projects and Technical Services was changed to the Directorate of Project Management and Engineering, and Fahad Al-Kharqawi became its deputy chief executive. As for the Directorate of South and East Kuwait, Muhammad Al-Abduljalil became the deputy chief executive (South and East Kuwait) and reports to the CEO.

As for the North Kuwait Directorate, Badr Al-Munifi became the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the (North Kuwait) Directorate, reporting directly to the CEO.

The sources indicated that a circular awaiting its issuance comes in order to achieve the strategic goals of "Kuwait Oil" in terms of re-achieving the optimal utilization of the company's existing energies and benefiting from the available cadres and expertise.

Meanwhile, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense, Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Al-Mishaal, has affirmed the full readiness of the army to face any challenges, reports Al-Rai daily.



Sheikh Al-Mishaal

Al-Mishaal, in a statement to the daily on the sidelines of the reception held by the Italian Embassy during the visit of the military ship Francesco Morosini said the strength of the Kuwaiti-Italian relations in various fields, indicating that there are plans to develop the army, according to a strategic perspective and a specific timetable.

The commander of the floating units, Brigadier General Khaled Hassan Al-Kandari, told the daily Kuwait in the process of purchasing ships and boats to develop the maritime system. Brigadier General Al-Kandari affirmed that there is joint cooperation between Kuwait and Italy in the defense field.

In a statement to Al-Rai, he said that Kuwait is in the process of buying ships and naval boats to develop the Kuwaiti maritime system. Regarding his evaluation of the performance of the Kuwaiti naval force, he said, "The performance is excellent, and we participate in all exercises with brotherly and friendly countries always to exchange experiences."

living. He pointed out the government contradicted itself as its program states its commitment to improve the conditions of citizens including retirees, and that increasing the minimum salary and pension necessitates legislative amendment; but it has not submitted any bill in this regard until now.

He went on to say the government program stresses the need to amend the law on the establishment of the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) in order to improve its financial performance, yet the government did not submit any bill in this regard.

The lawmaker asserted the actuarial deficit is not a justification for the government to delay the pension increment. He added the actuarial deficit is being used as a 'scarecrow' even if it is hypothetical. He said some institutions warned in 2007 that some PIFSS funds could go bankrupt in 2018 and in 2030, but no such thing has happened so far. He urged the government and PIFSS to immediately increase the pension of retirees, as the institution can use the profits from investing the retirees' money for this purpose.

He also urged Minister of Commerce and Industry and State Minister for Youth Affairs Muhammad Othman Al-Aiban to closely monitor the markets and control the prices to ensure that the pension increment serves its purpose.

Investing

He then urged PIFSS to be wise in investing the three plots granted to it recently with a total area of almost 800,000 square meters. He said PIFSS invested a similar plot to establish a health city in 2012, but the project has yet to be completed.

In another development, Jawhar praised the fruits of the visit of HH Prime the Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to the United Kingdom; highlighting the importance of the agreements signed by both parties, especially on strengthening cooperation regarding cybersecurity and investment. He revealed one of the agreements is on the establishment of Kuwait Center for Cyber Security in accordance with law number 78/2018, which approves cooperation with the United Kingdom on cyber security. He affirmed that the British government has the legislative cover allowing it to endorse the offers of the best British companies according to the criteria that Kuwait specified to lay down the national program for cyber security. He added the visit further strengthened the relationship of the two countries.

On the investment agreement, Jawhar said the government program includes attracting foreign investors to establish enterprises in Kuwait. He asked the British party to explore the promising investment opportunities in Kuwait. He underscored the need for the government to review the investment strategy to attract more investments in partnership with the best international companies in order to generate more job opportunities and diversify the sources of national income.

Compared

Meanwhile, MP Hamdan Al-Azmi asked Minister of Health Ahmad Al-Awadhi about the number of Kuwaiti doctors, pharmacists, nurses, psychiatrists and social workers at Kuwait Center for Mental Health compared to the expatriates; number of Kuwaiti workers in night shift compared to expatriates; number of vacant supervisory positions; experience and qualifications of those occupying supervisory positions; if they include expatriates; justifications for appointing these expatriates to such positions if any; mental health strategy of the ministry for the next five years; location of other mental health facilities if any; oversight and assessment procedures.

MP Dawoud Ma'arafi forwarded the same queries to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahd and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khalid Al-Sabah about the employees in their respective ministries. He wants to know the number of these employees under the following categories: nationals, children of Kuwaiti women married to foreigners, Bedouins and expatriates; actual Kuwaiti manpower needs; number of Kuwaiti graduates hired from 2020 to 2023 including their specializations; if there is an annual recruitment plan; if there are vacant supervisory positions; and number of expatriate consultants assigned at the offices of both ministers, undersecretaries and assistant undersecretaries including their nationalities.



Top and above: Some pictures from the event.

KUNA photos

'KIO office in London testament to strong ties'

'Crown Prince UK visit important milestone'

LONDON, Aug 30, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's visit to the UK to patronize the 70th anniversary of establishing the Kuwait Investment Office in London is another important milestone in British-Kuwaiti relations, said a top official at the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce (ABCC) on Tuesday.

In an interview with KUNA, Chairman of the ABCC Baroness Elizabeth Symons of Vernham Dean expressed a most heartwarming welcome to His Highness the Crown Prince, affirming that the presence of the Kuwait Investment Office in London for seven decades was a testament to the strength of Kuwaiti-British relations.

Kuwaitis from the top level of the state to citizens continue to visit Britain for diplomacy, business, leisure, or education and this played an important part in solidifying ties further.

The British government's decision to exempt Kuwaiti citizens from traveling visas and substituting that with an easily obtained electronic visa waiver would boost relations on a popular and official level, asserted Baroness Symons.

She revealed that Kuwaitis were one of the biggest investors in the UK with a huge volume of investments, adding that the Kuwait Investment Office played an important role in London's financial district.

The State of Kuwait had invested in several vital sectors in the UK including real estate and infrastructure development, said Baroness Symons, affirming that both nations were eager to pursue further mutual ventures including the emerging dynamic industries and innovative technologies.

In regards to the volume of commercial exchange, Baroness Symons indicated that data from British authorities had shown that it reached 5.7 billion pounds sterling (USD 7.2 billion) in the periods between the second quarter of 2022 and the first quarter of 2023. This is an increase of 118.3 percent -- an equivalent of 3.1 pounds sterling (USD 3.29 billion) -- from the same period in the second quarter of 2021 and the first quarter of 2022, she indicated.

Baroness Symons also mentioned the strong lead in the free-trade commerce dialogue between the UK and the



Baroness Elizabeth Symons

GCC since official talks began in June of 2022.

Britain is eager to expand cooperation with Kuwait and the GCC in the upcoming years by offering more investment opportunities in the British market, said Baroness Symons.

On relations between the ABCC and the Kuwait Investment Office in London, the official affirmed that the ABCC would be partaking in the office's 70th-anniversary celebration.

She also lauded the achievements of the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) in lessening dependence on oil revenues by creating huge investment portfolios in the UK and elsewhere, which in return would ensure diverse income for future generations.

The ABCC is a not-for-profit membership organization established in 1975 under the General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture for the Arab Countries. The Chamber has a unique function in the promotion of bilateral trade and investment between Britain and the Arab countries.

'13 private hospitals, 3 owned by oil companies'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 30 : The latest Ministry of Health (MoH) statistics revealed that the country has 13 private hospitals and three others owned by oil companies, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The number of beds in these hospitals reached 1,727; while the number of doctors reached 1,528 and the number of nurses reached 3,855.

The number of beds in the oil sector (Ahmadi Hospital) totaled 432, the number of doctors reached 302, and the number of nurses reached 638.

Also, the number of surgeries conducted in Ahmadi Hospital reached 11,413; the number of discharged patients totaled 8,185; the number

of outpatient clinic visits reached 442,657 and 84.3 percent of whom are Kuwaitis.

Dar Al-Shifa Hospital recorded the highest percentage of discharged patients at 18 percent, followed by Al-Salam Hospital at 14.5 percent. Al-Salam Hospital conducted the highest number of surgeries -- 21.6 percent of the total.

The obstetrics and gynecology department recorded the highest percentage of discharged patients at 38.4 percent; while general surgeries recorded the highest percentage at 35.4 percent, followed by obstetrics and gynecology surgeries at 24.8 percent.

Internal medicine ranked first in

terms of the number of patients discharged from Ahmadi Hospital with 48.3 percent, followed by general diseases with 22.8 percent, and obstetrics and gynecology with 11.9 percent.

General surgeries accounted for 49.2 percent of the total operations in Ahmadi Hospital; followed by operations for ear, nose and throat diseases with 30.8 percent.

The number of visits to outpatient clinics in private hospitals totaled 3,546,607 with Al-Salam Hospital recording the highest at 17.7 percent, while obstetrics and gynecology constitute 14.6 percent of the total visits to outpatient clinics, followed by accident clinics at 12.2 percent.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Impact of grazing, agriculture on environmental resources'

"IN the previous week, a proposal emerged from one of the representatives. Personally, up to the current moment of crafting this article, I am unable to recall the individual behind it. This is because my focus lies not on the person, but on the idea itself," columnist Dr Sultan Majid Al-Salem wrote for *Al-Jarida* daily.

"The proposal involves a rather surprising notion – the idea of opening up nature reserves for grazing! The esteemed reader might find it difficult to believe that such proposals, except for rare instances, held prominence in the realm of parliamentary propositions in the past.

"The implications of this concept extend beyond the scope of this article, delving into technical intricacies that could be explored at a later juncture. These implications pertain to the potential degradation of reserves without due consideration of the environmental consequences, should such an action materialize.

"The state grapples with an array of issues, encompassing challenges such as dwindling vegetation cover, agricultural deficiencies, and various problems tied to desertification and dust. If the intention is truly to advocate for and support a parliamentary proposal, it would be prudent to center it around the augmentation of reserves and the amplification of vegetation cover.

"This endeavor aims to enrich the nation's biodiversity, even in light of the existence of explicit and well-defined laws. In the context of overgrazing, the gradual disappearance of native Kuwaiti flora and fauna has become increasingly apparent over time.

"Consequently, the presence of reserves and their positive impact need to be reinforced in practicality. Rather than advocating measures that inadvertently diminish vegetation cover, the emphasis should be on devising mechanisms to enhance the country's greenery. It is pertinent to note that grazing is permitted across extensive areas within the country.

"The core issue revolves around finding viable solutions for pastoralists and ensuring the sustainable management of their resources. This challenge does not involve direct intrusion into natural reserves and the resulting degradation of vegetation. Arguably, one of the most pivotal real-world solutions is the expansion and fortification of natural reserves.

"This measure would facilitate resource management, ensure sustain-

ability, and preserve the country's biodiversity. Moreover, it would aid in maintaining the permeability of rainwater into soil layers – a quality that has witnessed a decline according to various studies, particularly evident in recent times within Kuwait.

"Concurrently, efforts should be directed towards crafting a well-defined strategy, spanning from seed cultivation to state-level management of agricultural waste. This strategic plan should be informed by the insights of specialists in this field rather than being shaped solely by political considerations.

"From this standpoint, my aspiration is for all representatives, without exception, to swiftly embrace this idea and collaborate in forming a team dedicated to drafting a "technical" legislation. Such legislation should not only safeguard the environment but also actively foster the responsible utilization of environmental resources. This vision strives for a harmonious balance, promoting the protection of our environment while ensuring its sustainable utilization."



Dr Al-Salem

Also:

"A few days ago, I talked about filling up vacant leadership positions in various government agencies. I asked the Council of Ministers to quickly decide, as such positions have been vacant for a long period," columnist Khalid Al-Arafa wrote for *Al-Anba* daily.

"At the time, I appealed to the Council of Ministers to instruct the ministers to expedite the selection of qualified candidates in ministries and government agencies in preparation for their appointment to leadership positions before September. More than 100 vacant leadership positions are awaiting nominations that will be considered by the concerned committees after making sure the selection was made in accordance with the appropriate controls.

"This time, the Council of Ministers responded immediately as it called on all ministers during its last meeting to expedite the submission of the list of candidates for vacant leadership positions in ministries and other government agencies, preferably before the beginning of next month. This should be done according to the procedures followed in this regard, in preparation for presenting them to the committee assigned by His Highness the Prime Minister.

"Ministers are required to choose the candidates well, and avoid quotas

and compromises that have negatively affected the country's development process over the past years due to the unfortunate selection of some to these positions, which they see as a way of gaining prestige, nothing else.

"In the upcoming selection, we hope that priority will be given to those working in ministries who have the required experience and competence. Government agencies are full of young men and women whom Kuwait is proud of. Unfortunately, some believe that many have been denied access to these positions even if they deserve them.

"Finally, the ball is now in the court of the ministers. Choose the best and do not pay attention to the nominations of others, because any failure or inaction by those who have been nominated will be the first and last responsible persons before the National Assembly, the concerned minister and not the appointed leader. In the corridors of your ministries, you will find many distinguished countrymen who could occupy leadership positions."



"The only thing happening in Kuwait is the fight against newcomers. Whoever makes mistakes should be held accountable and whoever strives should be rewarded," columnist Hanaa Al-Ghamlas wrote for *Al-Jarida* daily.

"The school year has started, yet there are no teachers to cover the shortage in all stages. Was there a deliberate plan to replace expatriate staff with Kuwaitis, or it was just a random decision?

"On the other hand, some MPS demanded to prevent segregation in universities, applied institutions and private schools. Has the confusion in making crucial decisions reached the point of mere fulfillment of the wishes of lawmakers, without taking into account the future of a State entrusted in the hands of the decision-maker?

"Other countries are keen on bringing competencies and to lure them with money and position, while we are fighting against them and decreasing national competencies as well!! Is the success of an institution or organization a reason to fight against it? Unfortunately, there are many examples here.

"Who will lead Kuwait to a better future while we are floundering and thinking of postponing the school year? What kind of generation will be created in light of this confusion?! I can only say: May God protect Kuwait. God is sufficient for us and He is the best disposer of affairs."

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary

Warning against 'date rape' drug

Arrests made as drug cases see rise



A view of the Souq Mubarakia.

'Mubarakia at fire risk'

Remove wood awnings: KFF

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 30: Kuwait Firefighting Force (KFF) has asked Kuwait Municipality to remove the wooden awnings in Mubarakia Market, because they are not fire-resistant, reports *Al-Qabas* daily.

The daily obtained a copy of KFF's letter to the Municipality, urging the Committee for the Removal of Violations that Contradict Safety and Fire Prevention Regulations to quickly remove the wooden awnings in Mubarakia Market, as they pose a grave threat to lives and properties.

KFF Director Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Mekrad sent a letter to the Municipality in May, citing Firefighting Force Law No. 13 of 2020. He also affirmed the compe-

tence of KFF in protecting individuals and properties from fire and other disasters. He emphasized the need to remove the wooden awnings, as they were one of the causes of the rapid spread of the fire that engulfed Mubarakia Market on March 31, 2022; as well as contributed to the accumulation of fumes and gases and impeded the discharge of smoke.

A reliable source from the Municipality disclosed that the awnings in Al-Gharaballi Market will be removed as well, since it is part of Mubarakia Market. He added there is no budget yet for installing new awnings and this requires the approval of regulatory authorities.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 30: The continuous crackdown of the Interior Ministry on drug dealers has resulted in the arrest of dozens whose aim is to flood the country with poison, reports *Al-Qabas* daily.

The number of cases related to drugs and psychotropic substances increased in the past year to about 3,000 – 423 higher than the number of such cases referred to the Public Prosecution in 2021. The number of cases referred to the prosecution in the last five years – from 2017 to 2022 – reached more than 14,000.

Meanwhile, officials and experts in addiction treatment have warned about the danger of one of the worst types of toxins that infiltrated the country and killed many users – the drug called GHB (Gamma-Hydroxybutyric), as it causes "memory loss, paralysis, hallucination, unconsciousness and depression." They also affirmed that the ministry arrested a number of people trading in this dangerous drug.

They clarified that this drug has medical and therapeutic uses, but these uses have been criminally distorted; indicating it is known as 'rape drug' in America, where the perpetrator mixes it in a drink and then offers the drink to the victim.

An addiction treatment clinic in Kuwait affirmed that the drug is usually mixed with liquids or juices; causing paralysis, hallucination and other negative effects.

Addiction specialist Mona Al-Yatama warned against abuse of GHB, noting that it is called 'date rape' drug. She said the United States of America criminalized its use from 1999 to 2000. She added: "Unfortunately, it is easy to obtain the drug in Kuwait. The drug could be in liquid form or transparent like ice. The danger lies in its negative use – when it is added to juice or other liquids – as it incapacitates the user, making the latter vulnerable to rape. Most of those who use this type of drug suffer from sexual and moral deviations."

She pointed that GHB has medical and other uses; disclosing it surfaced in various Gulf countries eight years ago. She warned that the drug causes increased heart rates, brain cells damage, hallucination and death if consumed in high doses.

He cited the case of a young man in Kuwait who, after consuming the drug, had hallucinations and stayed in the bathroom with his dogs, eating their food and howling like them.

Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Al-Ardi, an officer at the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) in the Ministry of Interior stressed that the drug is "very dangerous and falls under a series of high-impact chemicals. Taking two milligrams of the drug is enough to kill the user instantly.

One of the effects of taking this drug is loss of consciousness for a long period. It is a psychotropic substance and the consumption of which is criminalized locally and internationally. Whoever uses it is punished according to the law."

He called for concerted efforts of the entire society to combat drugs and report cases through hotline number 1884141, noting that dealing with such reports "is strictly confidential."

Also, the daily obtained information that the National Bureau for Human Rights is preparing a report for the competent authorities in the country to discuss the importance of granting a license to establish clinics and centers for the treatment of drug addiction, in light of the remarkable increase in the number of addicts.

The Complaints and Grievances Committee in the bureau on Thursday met with a number of consultants at Najahat Center for Psychological and Social Counseling to explain developments related to the idea of establishing sanatoriums and clinics as alternatives to the government center, considering the number of addicts increases annually.

The bureau stated that the meeting tackled obstacles, which led to the failure of private clinics. It added that the committee is preparing a report, which reviews the addiction file and includes recommendations to address the problem. The report will be submitted to the concerned authorities in order to urge them to take the necessary action combat this scourge that kills hundreds of people annually.



Al-Yatama



Al-Ardi

Other Voices

Story of our fund and theirs

By Ahmad alsarraf

THE Kuwaiti Sovereign Fund, which represents public reserve funds for future generations, and which came at the initiative of the late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem, seventy years ago, is considered one of the oldest sovereign wealth funds in the world, and with time it has become the most secretive and mysterious.

The fund's money is managed from Kuwait, and from the office of the Kuwait Investment Authority in London. The fund's activity includes the local market and international markets, and it was ranked globally, in 2022, third, with assets said to be approximately \$800 billion.

The primacy of the Kuwait Fund prompted Norway, at the beginning of the nineties, to visit the KIA office in London, during the presidency of the well-known economist Youssef Al-Awadi, to benefit from Kuwait's expertise in this field.

Although more than 70 years have passed since the establishment of the Future Generations Fund, the number of those who know its balance, how it works, its areas of investment, the mechanism that is followed to select members of its board of directors, and the extent of the efficiency of the administrative apparatus are very limited, due to the nature of confidentiality in it.

The Norwegian Sovereign Fund, which was established in the 1990s, is considered the best among the world's funds, and it is characterized by a high degree of transparency. Its goal is to invest the entire state's oil revenues in generating assets and not to dispose of them. Rather, it is reserved to face the effects of the next decline in income, when oil loses its importance.

The Norwegian Fund succeeded, within a relatively short period, to become not the largest, but rather the most profitable, credible, professional and transparent that any other investment

fund lacks, especially the Kuwait Fund. In the first half of this year, it achieved the highest percentage of profits in its history, and the best compared to others, with the support of its investments in American technology companies and artificial intelligence companies, as its profits amounted to \$ 143 billion, or approximately 14%, in the first half of this year, and this amounts to double what it achieved in the first half of last year.

The Fund's CEO, Nikolai Tangin, said: The strong return was a surprise to him, due to the amount of economic and political risks, which are very worrying, in global markets, with high inflation rates and increasing geopolitical tensions.

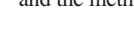
The Norwegian fund is also the largest single investor in the stock market worldwide. From its website <https://www.nbim.no/> you can find out the following:

It owns stocks, bonds, and real estate all over the world, and does not invest in Norway, to avoid causing any inflation. He also owns a small stake in more than 9,000 companies around the world, including Apple, Nestlé, Microsoft, and Samsung. On average, the Fund owns 1.5% of all listed companies in the world. Its investments are spread across most markets, countries and currencies to achieve maximum security by diversifying risks well.

As for fixed income investments, which amount to 30% of the Fund's balance, it is allocated to purchase bonds issued by governments and institutions, with specific benefits. The Fund also invests in high-quality real estate in major cities and global distribution networks, in renewable energy infrastructure, and in wind and solar energy projects.

Many other important information can be known about the Fund, which has a balance of approximately \$1.5 trillion, or twice what is known about the balance of the Kuwaiti fund!

The insistence of the Kuwait Fund officials on complete secrecy in its work leads many to doubt the reasons. The balance of the fund belongs to the people, and it is the first to know the money in it, the method of disposing of that money, and the methods of monitoring it!



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News in Brief

One dead in mishap: The Public Relations and Security Media Department of the Directorate-General Fire Department stated one person died as a result of a diesel tank explosion opposite Mina Abdullah Scrapyard, reports *Al-Rai* daily.

The daily said after the DGFDC Central Operations Department received a report Tuesday evening diesel fell while someone was opening the filler cap, causing an explosion but no fire.

The accident resulted in the death of the person and his remains were handed over to Forensics

Video maker hunted: The Ministry of Interior confirmed that all deterrent measures have been taken regarding the leakage of the video of the 'Al-Soor Street' accident, which claimed the lives of two citizens; stressing it is keen on maintaining the confidentiality of procedures, reports *Al-Jarida* daily.

The ministry disclosed in a press statement that the video of a collision between two vehicles a few days ago went viral on social media.

It affirmed that it is keen on maintaining the confidentiality of procedures and evidence related to cases, while taking into account the feelings of the parties involved.

Work is underway to determine who

spread the video in order to take the necessary measures against the perpetrator, the ministry concluded.

Racing against time: The Ministry of Education is racing against time to prepare for the new school year, which will start on Sept 10, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

Meanwhile, the Financial Affairs Department in the ministry has transferred the first installment of the school fund to the bank accounts of the schools and the next installment will be disbursed in the second semester.

The ministry earmarked KD4,213,092 for the schools fund – KD3,159,819 or 75 percent in the first semester and KD1,053,000 or 25 percent in the second semester. Kindergartens get a lion's share of this amount with KD5,736 per school; while the middle schools for boys have the lowest allocation with KD 4,514 per school.

Survey link sent: The Ministry of Health has announced that it sent a survey link to the beneficiaries of health insurance for retirees (Afa) through text messaging, reports *Al-Jarida* daily.

The ministry explained the survey is aimed at assessing the quality of service provided to the beneficiaries in a bid to develop it.

Citizens can't be permanently barred from travel, says court

MoJ adds travel ban inquiry service on 'Sahel' application

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 30: The Court of Cassation affirmed that freedom of movement is one of the basic freedoms stipulated in the constitution within the rights of citizens, and that it is not permissible to permanently prevent travel, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The court indicated that the constitution prohibits restricting freedom of movement except in accordance with the provisions of the law, including the permission to place controls and restrictions on that freedom in public interest and the security and safety of society, but it is not permissible to prevent a citizen from moving permanently.

The court said this after a citizen who was in Europe and was accused of drug abuse, and subsequently released, returned to the country, but the concerned authorities decided to prevent him from traveling and accused him of harming Kuwait's reputation abroad and withdrew his passport, and accordingly he filed a lawsuit.

The Court of Cassation added, in the rationale for its ruling, which canceled the decision to withdraw a citizen's passport for committing a felony abroad, "The withdrawal of a Kuwaiti citizen's passport is one of the most prominent forms of preventing a citizen from traveling and restricting his freedom of movement.

"Therefore, the authority of the administrative authority to restrict freedom of movement for reasons



Hashim Al-Qallaf



Mubarak Al-Hajraf

it considers the reputation of the state abroad is limited, and it depends on the period of passport withdrawal being commensurate with the issue for which the passport was withdrawn, without exaggeration that results in prolonging this period in a way that leads to depriving the citizen whose passport has been withdrawn of the right to movement for many years without worthy reasons and justifications.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Justice has added the travel ban inquiry service on 'Sahel' application, making it easier for citizens and expatriates to find out if a court ruling was issued against them that could prevent them from traveling, reports Al-Anba daily.

Undersecretary of the ministry of justice Hashim Al-Qallaf disclosed in a press statement that the service provides details of the travel ban and the amount due.

"Once payment is made, the ban will be lifted and a notification

will be sent to the concerned person. The notices on imposing or lifting a travel ban will be activated in the application soon," he added.

Food supplies distribution: Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Muhammad Al-Aiban has confirmed the establishment of a fair mechanism for distributing food supplies to Kuwaiti individuals and families, reports Al-Jarida daily.

He revealed the director general of Kuwait General Administration of Customs has been instructed to prevent the export of rice, lentil, oil, powdered milk, tomato paste and sugar from Kuwait Catering Company regardless of the quantity.

Also, the minister sent a letter to Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of State for Cabinet and National Assembly Affairs Essa Al-Kandari

in response to the incoming letter of MP Mubarak Al-Hajraf, which was approved by the Assembly. Al-Hajraf requested for assigning the parliamentary Financial and Economic Affairs Committee to discuss issues related to the ration card.

The daily obtained a copy of the minister's letter, in which he affirmed that "the ministry established this mechanism based on ministerial decision numbers 216 of 2014, 355 of 2019 and 56 of 2022; in addition to the mechanism for adding goods to the ration card which was organized by the Standing Committee for the selection and inclusion of ration and discounted items in the card system as per Ministerial Resolution number 100 of 2023, amended by Resolution number 118 of 2023 to tighten control in order to prevent the export of food supplies.

Meanwhile, representative Dr. Muhammad Al-Mahan has submitted two queries to the ministers of Health and Electricity, reports Al-Rai daily.

He wants to know the role of the Minister of Health about the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition in enhancing food security and in raising production rates for food industries, and if the ministry has conducted studies to achieve food security or if there are short-term plans to support food security in the face of risks.

He directed another question to the Minister of Electricity and the Acting Minister of Education about the Ministry of Electricity's plan to establish new stations, the ministry's plan to provide alternative energy, and what is the cost of producing solar energy stations compared to power stations.

HH Crown Prince, PM send greetings

HH the Amir congratulates Malaysia on 'National Day'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 30, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Wednesday a cable of congratulations to Malaysian King Al-Sultan Abdullah ibni Sultan Ahmad Shah on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir wished the king and the Malaysian people more progress and welfare.

Meanwhile, His Highness the

Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to Malaysian King Al-Sultan Abdullah ibni Sultan Ahmad Shah on his country's National Day.

Also, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to King Al-Sultan Abdullah ibni Sultan Ahmad Shah on his country's National Day.



KUNA photo

Kuwaiti Ambassador to Qatar Khalid Al-Mutairi and Qatari Minister of State for Interior Affairs Abdulaziz bin Faisal Al-Thani during the meeting.

Kuwait, Qatar discuss security co-op

Kuwaiti Ambassador to Qatar Khalid Al-Mutairi and Qatari Minister of State for Interior Affairs Abdulaziz bin Faisal Al-Thani on Wednesday discussed several mutual issues, mainly security.

The meeting tackled ways of promoting bilateral cooperation, especially in

the fight against illegal drugs, the Kuwaiti ambassador told KUNA.

The Qatari minister hailed Kuwait's participation in security measures during the World Cup held in Qatar (FIFA Qatar 2022) last year, Al-Mutairi added. (KUNA)

Kuwait, Britain

Continued from Page 1

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah patronized and attended 70th anniversary celebration in London yesterday.

Lord Dominic said he was "personally, very proud to have the chance to meet your Crown Prince" who he described as "wonderful, thoughtful leader."

Lord Dominic said he met with senior officials accompanying His Highness the Crown Prince including Deputy Premier, Minister of Oil and Acting Finance Minister Dr. Saad Al-Barak, Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Sabah and Managing Director of KIA Ghanem Al-Ghunaiman and was "very proud to showcase the opportunities in the UK at the same time.

"What I admire about Kuwait Investment Office in the UK is that they take the opportunities, so when there's a bit of volatility or turmoil in the turbulence in the markets, they use it," he said as the future lies ahead of mutual benefits.

"I think if I look at the future, what I'm optimistic about is the relationship we have is, developing from simply being a property play. I think if you go about 50 years or to the origination of the chaos activities in London, they tended to be focused more around physical property and then over the last few years you've seen a proliferation.

"Investments into infrastructure which is very interesting and going forward into science and technology and to into clean energy," said the senior official.

Lord Dominic said the British government planned to levelling up in order to have prosperity across the UK, not solely in London but in the southeast regions, citing many opportunities in those areas.

Asked about investment in Artificial Intelligence with an AI summit due towards end of the year, Lord Dominic said the British government was keen on having input of all nations including Kuwait.

"We have a number of companies that are looking to participate ... we want people to come here. We want the best minds to come here. We want the best capital to come here to develop our opportunities and future working with countries like Kuwait" to invest in AI sector.

Lord Dominic, on whether he believed AI was more rewarding than oil, said he would have thought it was "more scalable than oil. And yet the fixed costs for development is probably about the same, but the opportunities I'm very optimistic about AI."

He said people focused on negatives of AI "whereas I think the opportunities for changing our life for the better, for better allocating resources for freeing people up from work that will allow them to do other things. I think it's just amazing," as long as the use was safe and monitored.

Lord Dominic said Britain and Kuwait were celebrating 125 years of specific relationship, with more than 9,000 Kuwaitis studying in UK.

In latest development, The State of Kuwait and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland signed on Tuesday a declaration of intent on establishing Kuwait National Center for Cybersecurity.

The document was inked by head of the Center Muhammad Buarki from the Kuwaiti side, and Juliet Wilcox, the Cyber Security Ambassador for UK Defence and Security Exports at the Department for International Trade.

The declaration enables the British side to provide the necessary support to establish the center and provide it with the systems and capabilities needed by any country to protect itself from cyber threats, Wilcox said in statement to KUNA after the signing ceremony.

She explained that today's declaration signing is the fruit of work between the two sides that began in 2015. Kuwait was able during this period to develop its strategy and plans until it reached the issuance of the Amiri Decree last year, 2022, to establish the National Center for Cybersecurity.

"The establishment of the center means that Kuwait has a solid foundation for building the necessary cadres and capabilities, and therefore, we signed this declaration to ensure joint work to think about the future to reach the best ideas with partners in Kuwait," Wilcox added.

Wilcox believes that the goal of enhancing cybersecurity is not limited to protecting the country from cyber threats but rather to developing awareness, skills, and professionalism in this field.

She pointed out that the GCC countries are working hard to develop cybersecurity individually and collectively, adding that the United Kingdom supports these efforts, primarily supporting women's participation in cybersecurity.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) signed a memorandum of understanding on celebrating the 125th anniversary of Kuwait-UK partnership in 2024.

The document was inked by Kuwait Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and UK Minister of State in the Department for Business and Trade Lord Dominic Johnson at Lancaster House, west London, on Tuesday in the presence of Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

In related news, Dr. Saad Al-Barak, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil, said Tuesday the volume of Kuwait's investment in the UK grew from USD nine billion to USD 42 billion over the past two decades.

"We began with just few hundreds of thousands of sterling pounds deposited at the Bank of England in the 2050s. The investments kept growing by more than a double each decade later on thanks to good planning by Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA)," he said.

Dr. Al-Barak, also Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, Acting Minister of Finance, and Board Chairman of Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), made the comments in a speech to a celebration marking the 70th anniversary of Kuwait Investment Office (KIO) in London.

The celebration was held under the patronage and in presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

"When we celebrated the 50th anniversary of KIO in 2003, the volume of Kuwait investments in UK stood at USD nine billion," Al-Barak said, noting that the figure tripled over the following decade to USD 24 billion in 2013, and quadrupled to USD 42 billion at present.

KIA used in London as focal point of its investment operations on the global markets, he pointed out.

The volume of assets run by KIO in London soared from USD 27 billion in 2003 to USD 120 billion in 2013 and to USD 250 billion in 2023, he said, adding that the figures reflect a growth rate by more than four times over the past two decades.

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Construction and transportation sectors contract 40 pct in 2022

Projects valued at approximately \$28 billion

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 30: MEED magazine reported a significant shift in Kuwait's contract award activity in the construction and transportation sectors, reports Al-Rai daily.

Between 2014 and 2016, these sectors experienced a surge, totaling around \$27 billion in contract awards. However, the landscape has changed due to prolonged political disagreements between legislative and executive branches, leading to decision-making disruptions.

Following two years of positive growth in 2020 and 2021, overall project activity has seen a notable decline. Presently, Kuwait has ambitious transportation projects on the docket, valued at approximately \$28 billion. These include contracts worth \$22.9 billion in preliminary stages, \$2.3 billion in the design phase, and \$2.8 billion in the bidding phase.

Contingent

Within both the construction and transportation domains, projects worth \$4.7 billion have progressed beyond pre-qualification and are either in the bid submission or evaluation phase. If even half of these contracts are awarded, 2023 could potentially become the most fruitful year for contractors since 2018. However, the majority of this potential value is tied to substantial projects, contingent on the approval of major plans, which in turn require National Assembly support.

In 2022, the construction and transportation project market experienced a sharp 40% contraction, setting at just under \$1.7 billion, attributed to a decrease in awarded projects. From the beginning of the current year until now, contracts totaling \$1.2 billion have been granted within these sectors.

While construction ranked as the second-largest project sector in Kuwait last year, with approximately \$627 million in awarded contracts, the trend has continued into 2023, with contracts totaling around \$440 million. However, these figures remain well below the average annual awards of \$1.8 billion seen from 2018 to 2022, or the average of \$4 billion spent in the preceding five years.

As with other project sectors in Kuwait, the construction domain has suffered from a considerable reduction in public spending, a consequence of internal political conflicts over expenditures and debt.

Concurrently, pending construction projects slated for award encompass a total value of about \$22.9 billion. Among these, \$8.7 billion is under study, \$6.6 billion is in the design phase, and \$7.6 billion is in the bidding phase.

The standout performer in 2022 was the transportation sector, displaying robust project activity in Kuwait, with contract awards surpassing \$1 billion. This figure outstripped the average annual total of \$800 million recorded between 2018 and 2022.



KUNA Smart Oasis

KUNA launches 'Smart Oasis'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 30, (KUNA): Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) has opened its artificial intelligence (AI) newsroom "KUNA Smart Oasis", using cutting-edge AI technology in an effort to keep abreast of state-of-the-art media technology.

KUNA Director-General Fatma Al-Salem said on Wednesday that "KUNA Smart Oasis" would definitely contribute to revamping the media content quality, production speed and information accuracy. It would be a significant tool to fulfill the readers' expectations and ambitions in the light of wide-scale AI media transformation, she added.

AI technology would also make it easier for the agency's departments to work together by means of sharing files and information, Al-Salem pointed out.

In May, KUNA launched its



KUNA photos

KUNA launches its metaverse-based platform.

metaverse-based platform, in addition to its virtual anchor (avatar) as the first Gulf and Arab news agency to use this technology.

The project is mainly meant to

improve performance and efficiency and encourage innovation and investment in research and development in the artificial intelligence space.



The Guest Show poster

Nisreen Rubaian on TGS

This Thursday, The Guest Show (TGS) is honoured to present Ms Nisreen Rubaian, Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) mission in Kuwait.

Ms Rubaian has served with the UNHCR for more than two decades in different regions. A specialist in Human Rights and International Law, Ms Rubaian is a strong role model for women in the region. She was born in Amman, the city of Seven Hills. Specialising in human rights and law was a choice

she made early in life and she stuck to it. As a young woman, she travelled far and served in places like Nauru, Sierra Leone, Libya, Pakistan and elsewhere.

In this episode of the Guest Show she speaks to Chaitali B Roy about her journey, the complexities of working with migration and refugees, her views on women in leadership, the global mandate of UNHCR, the strategic collaboration of the UNHCR with various stakeholders in Kuwait and the stellar role played by Kuwait in supporting refugee population around the world.

Current capacity of Al-Zour more than 410,000 barrels and continues to rise

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 30: The Executive Vice President for Administrative and Commercial Affairs at the Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC), Abdullah Fahad Al-Ajmi, was quoted as saying the company is proceeding steadily to reach full operation of its three refining units at Al-Zour refinery during the next phase, reports Al-Rai daily.

Al-Ajmi stated the current refining capacity of Al-Zour is more than 410,000 barrels, stressing that KIPIC will continue to reach the full refining capacity of 615,000 barrels. He revealed that the company is currently preparing to complete the promotion and placement of vacancies for managers and team leaders, expected to be completed within 3 weeks, while indicating that all departments in the company are working in an integrated manner.

Al-Ajmi also stated that KIPIC is

preparing contracts for the appointment of 25 Kuwaiti graduates to operate refineries next week, indicating that this procedure comes from the company's belief in its role in absorbing national cadres.

He pointed out that there are ongoing preparations to open new cadres to appoint other groups of Kuwaiti youth in the company, explaining that KIPIC is currently working to move from its current headquarters in Salmiya to its new headquarters in Ahmadi, which will be completed within the next few weeks.

Al-Ajmi praised the new deputy CEO of Al-Zour Refinery, Ali Muhammad Al-Ajmi, noting that "his competence, experience and practical journey are what brought him to this position he fully deserved, and that he is one of the leaders who work hard and sincerely."



KUNA photo

A humanitarian campaign to support 2,160 Yemeni families with food and solar systems.

Deputy Governor of Lahj expresses gratitude

Al-Najat Charity concludes a humanitarian campaign to support 2,160 Yemeni families

ADEN, Aug 30, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Al-Najat Charitable Society has successfully concluded its humanitarian campaign named "Ease Them" today, Tuesday. This campaign aimed to provide essential aid, including food supplies and solar energy systems, to approximately 2,160 Yemeni families residing in the Hadhramaut and Lahj governorates in the southern region of Yemen. The initiative was carried out under the umbrella of the ongoing "Kuwait is by your side" campaign, which has been in progress for nine years.

Awad Al-Salahi, the Deputy Governor of Lahj in Yemen, expressed his deep gratitude in a press statement to his Highness the Amir, government, and people of Kuwait for their generous and consistent support to

both displaced individuals and the host community. He highly valued their continuous humanitarian efforts and unwavering solidarity with Yemen and its people, especially during times of various humanitarian and developmental challenges.

Al-Salahi highlighted that this campaign will significantly contribute to alleviating the hardships faced by the residents and displaced individuals in the targeted regions, particularly due to the high temperatures experienced there.

The Yemeni foundation responsible for implementing the project, Yanabie Al-Khair, stated in a press release that the campaign received widespread cooperation and donations from Kuwaiti citizens, residents, and individuals from other countries. The aim was to provide food assistance and solar energy solutions to over 2,160 of the most vulnerable families.

A delegation from Kuwait's Al-Najat Association, led by Abdul Ghafour Al-Abdul Ghafour, Director of Resources and Campaigns, and Abdullah Matar, Head of the Projects Department, participated in the campaign. Their presence emphasized the deep human and fraternal bond between the Kuwaiti and Yemeni people.

Abdul Ghafour Al-Abdul Ghafour stated that the campaign's primary objective was to offer essential support to those in need, including those affected by adverse circumstances and those who have been displaced due to the challenges facing the country. The assistance provided included food packages and solar energy systems that consist of fans, lighting, and batteries for electricity storage. These systems aim to provide clean and sustainable energy sources for the benefiting families.

He further expressed the Al-Najat Association's commitment to undertaking more efforts and launching similar projects and campaigns that can help alleviate the burdens faced by affected families and offer them the necessary support. This is particularly important given the challenging stage that Yemen is currently undergoing. He conveyed his sincere appreciation to all those who contributed to the success of the campaign, both in terms of financing and execution, and for their role in alleviating the suffering of thousands of Yemeni citizens.

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Al-Hassad
More draws and annual returns

10,000 250,000 100,000

ahli united bank

Al-Hassad campaign visual

AUB congratulates the winners of Al-Hassad Weekly Draw

Ahli United Bank (AUB) Congratulates the Winners of Al-Hassad Weekly Draw of Al-Hassad Islamic Account, which was held on 30 August, 2023 at the Bank's Head Office in the presence of a representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry as well as a representative from Deloitte as the external auditor to oversee the draws as per the instructions of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in this regard.

The Bank announced 10 winners of KD 1,000 as follows: Azizah M A Ali, Khaled Yousef Khaled Al-Khamees, Hazem Htaman Asee Al-Dheferi, Shuruq Redha Ali Al-Sairafi, Aref A/Rahman Mahmoud

Joudeh, Mariam Mohammad Abdullah Al-Kandari, Sarah Rashed Al-Tukhaim, Laila Taher Ahmad Bohamad, Moudhi Hajed Fawaz Al-Mutairi and Dhafer Snaid Nqaei Al-Khusali.

In its new package, Al-Hassad Islamic Saving Account presents a broader variety of rewards. Customers could now participate in the draw to win a Monthly KD 100,000 prize, in addition to 10 Weekly prizes of KD 1,000 each. The Grand Quarterly Prize of KD 250,000 in cash for the winner remains the most important aspiration of customers. It is a real chance for them to realize their life dreams. In addition to this attractive package,

there will be the annual expected profits on the basis of a Wakala contract that increases the attractiveness of the Al-Hassad Islamic Saving Account to customers.

Al-Hassad Account provides a suite of unique features, including the simplest and easiest savings program and a unique account-opening feature online with all ease with an instant deposit option.

For more information on Ahli United Bank's products and services, customers are invited to visit any of the Bank's branches, dial the customer services "Hayakom" on 181 2000, or log on to the Bank's website at www.ahliunited.com.kw

Market Movements

30-08-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
JAPAN - Nikkei	+0.33	32,333.46	UAE - DFM	-0.43	4,067.18
PHILIPPINES - PSEI	+1.13	6,295.29	PAKISTAN - KSE 100	-1.19	46,189.72
SAUDI - Tadawul	+1.16	11,574.75			
EGYPT - EGX 30	+1.01	18,818.15			

Business

Group maintains its reliable operation despite odds

EQUATE Group announces H1 2023 financial results

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 30: The EQUATE Group, a global producer of petrochemicals and the world's leading supplier of ethylene glycol announced its earnings for the first half of 2023.

The EQUATE Group reported total revenue of US\$1,518 million in H1 2023, compared to US\$2,238 million during the same period in 2022. The Group also reported a net income after tax of US\$89 million and EBITDA of US\$377 million, compared to US\$537 million and US\$855 million, respectively, for 2022.

Despite market volatility sentiments, EQUATE Group maintains its reliable operation with a sold-out volume position and continues to navigate a challenging macroeconomic landscape marked by slow global growth. In the face of this dynamic economic environment, EQUATE Group has demon-

strated its agility by delivering positive results.

Commenting on the results, Naser Aldousari, President and CEO of EQUATE Group, said: "EQUATE continues to maintain a distinguished operational performance although it has experienced lower year-over-year sales and earnings due to ample supply and sluggish market conditions. The results reflect our strengths in the market and our commitment to operational efficiency. Leveraging our competitive cost position and strategically located facilities, we successfully completed our periodic turnaround for the Ethane cracker, downstream derivatives and utilities while continuing to fulfill customer demand in key regions. We proactively focused on prioritizing higher-value opportunities where regional demand netback remains strong. We are focused on maintaining consistent and disciplined performance in the short

term while aiming for long-term growth and cash flow, and we are confident in our ability to continue delivering our financial targets across the economic cycle."

"As we continue on our journey towards sustainability, EQUATE Group is in the planning phase to transition its sustainability strategy to align with a holistic Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) approach, reaffirming our compliance with international standards and regional goals and reflecting our commitment to overall sustainable development.

Through partnerships with institutions, businesses, and society, we are focused on reducing emissions, and aiming for pursuing carbon neutrality across all EQUATE Group-owned operations in alignment with local and regional targets."

Initial estimate was 2.4

US economic growth for last quarter revised down to a 2.1% annual rate

WASHINGTON, Aug 30, (AP): The U.S. economy expanded at a 2.1% annual pace from April through June, showing continued resilience in the face of higher borrowing costs for consumers and businesses, the government said Wednesday in a downgrade from its initial estimate.

The government had previously estimated that the economy expanded at a 2.4% annual rate last quarter.

The Commerce Department's second estimate of growth last quarter marked a slight acceleration from a 2% annual growth rate from January through March. Though the economy has been slowed by the Federal Reserve's strenuous drive to tame inflation with interest rate hikes, it has managed to keep expanding, with employers still hiring and consumers still spending.

Wednesday's report on the nation's gross domestic product - the total output of goods and services - showed that growth last quarter was driven by up-ticks in consumer spending, business investment and outlays by state and local governments. A measure of consumer prices in the report also showed inflation cooling, which could ease the pressure on the Fed to further raise interest rates.

"Lower growth and weaker increases in prices are good news for the Federal Reserve," said Eugenio Aleman, chief economist at Raymond James.

Consumer spending, which accounts for about 70% of the U.S. economy, rose at a 1.7% annual pace in the April-June quarter - a decent gain, though down from 4.2% in the first three months of 2023. Excluding housing, business investment rose at a strong 6.1% annual rate last quarter. Investment in housing, hurt by higher mortgage rates, fell in the second quarter.

The American economy - the world's largest - has proved surprisingly durable in the midst of the Fed's aggressive campaign to stamp out a resurgence of inflation, which last year hit a four-decade high. Since March of last year, the Fed has raised its benchmark rate 11 times, making borrowing for everything from cars to homes to

business expansions much more expensive and prompting widespread predictions of a coming recession.

Since peaking at 9.1% in June 2022, year-over-year inflation has fallen more or less steadily. Last month, it came in at 3.2% - a significant improvement though still above the Fed's 2% inflation target. Excluding volatile food and energy costs, so-called core inflation in July matched the smallest monthly rise in nearly two years.

One measure of prices in the GDP report - the personal consumption expenditures index - rose at a 2.5% annual rate last quarter, down from a 4.1% pace in the January-March quarter and the smallest increase since the end of 2020.

Since the Fed began raising rates, the economy has been bolstered by a consistently healthy job market. Employers have added a robust average of 258,000 jobs a month this year, though that average has slowed over the past three months to 218,000.

On Tuesday, a report from the government added to evidence that the job market is gradually weakening: It showed that employers posted far fewer job openings in July and that the number of people who quit their jobs tumbled for a second straight month. (When fewer people quit their jobs, it typically suggests that they aren't as confident in finding a new one.)

Still, job openings remain well above their pre-pandemic levels. The nation's unemployment rate, at 3.5%, is still barely above a half-decade low. And when the government issues the August jobs report on Friday, economists polled by the data firm FactSet think it will show that while hiring slowed, employers still added 170,000 jobs.

The combination of tumbling inflation, continued economic growth and slower but steady hiring has raised hopes for a rare "soft landing." That's a scenario in which the Fed manages to conquer high inflation without causing a painful recession.

Wednesday's government report, its second of three estimates of last quarter's growth, will be followed by a final calculation late next month.

Wall Street moves higher, adding to its recent gains



Trader Robert Arciero, left, and specialist Michael Pistillo work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, Wednesday, Aug. 30, 2023. Stocks are edging mostly higher in early trading on Wall Street chipping a bit more away from the market's losses in August. (AP)

Asian shares boosted by Wall Street rise

NEW YORK, Aug 30, (AP): Stocks rose in late morning trading on Wednesday following several updates showing that the job market continued cooling, but economic growth remained resilient.

The S&P 500 rose 0.3% and continued to chip away at the market's losses in August. The benchmark index is coming off of three straight gains.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 20 points, or 0.1%, to 34,872 as of 11:24 a.m. and the Nasdaq composite rose 0.4%.

Technology stocks led the market's gains. Apple jumped 1.4% and Palo Alto Networks rose 1.3%.

HP was on the losing end with a 8.2% slump after cutting its profit forecast for the year.

Wall Street's focus this week remains a broad mix of economic updates that investors hope will paint a clearer picture of where the economy is headed and whether the Federal Reserve has enough reason to hold off on any additional interest rate hikes.

A survey of private-sector employers in the U.S. showed that hiring cooled more than expected by economists. The report reinforces the latest government data on job openings from Tuesday, which also showed that hiring is cooling somewhat.

The U.S. downgraded its economic growth estimate for the second quarter to an annual rate of 2.1% from 2.4%. Economists had forecast that the gross domestic product, or GDP, assessment would remain unchanged though it still marks a slight increase from growth of 2% during the first

quarter. Treasury yields fell following the latest economic reports. The yield on the 10-year Treasury slipped to 4.10% from about 4.15% just before the latest GDP report. It stood at 4.12% late Tuesday.

The yield on the 2-year Treasury, which tracks expectations for the Fed, fell to 4.83% from a level of 4.90% prior to the latest GDP release. It stood at 4.89% late Tuesday.

The latest round of economic updates are signaling that the Fed may be able to pause hiking its main interest rate, which it has pushed to its highest level since 2001 in an effort to tame inflation. The central bank held rates steady at its last meeting and investors expect the same at its upcoming meeting in September.

Wall Street is also hoping that economic data this week shows that the Fed's goal of a "soft landing" is possible. The central bank's goal has been to raise interest rates enough to tame inflation without crashing the economy into a recession. A strong job market and consumer spending has helped thwart a recession and analysts are divided on whether one will occur with any severity.

On Thursday, the government will release its latest update on inflation with the July report on personal consumption and expenditures, or PCE. That's the Fed's preferred measure for inflation, and it has been cooling for months. PCE eased to 3% in June and was as high as 7% a year ago.

On Friday, the government's monthly employment report for August will cap a heavy week of updates about hiring and jobs.

Markets in Asia and Europe were mixed.

Europe

France's CAC 40 declined 0.1% in early trading

to 7,363.09, while Germany's DAX slipped nearly 0.3% to 15,889.66. Britain's FTSE 100 added 0.1% to 7,473.74.

Asia

Asian shares rose Wednesday, boosted by a Wall Street rally that came on positive reports on consumer confidence and job openings.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 added 0.3% in afternoon trading to 32,312.75. South Korea's Kospi rose 0.4% to 2,563.37. Hong Kong's Hang Seng gained 0.5% to 18,574.12, while the Shanghai Composite inched up 0.1% to 3,139.28.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 jumped 1.2% to 7,297.70, after the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported the monthly Consumer Price Index indicator rose 4.9% in the 12 months to July.

That was lower than the expected 5.2%, marking the first time since February 2022 that the indicator fell below 5%.

"But given that it is still a distance away from the RBA's 2% to 3% target, the central bank may continue to maintain its hawkish-pause stance for some policy flexibility, although we are likely seeing the end of its tightening process," said Yeap Jun Rong, market analyst at IG.

Oil

In energy trading, benchmark U.S. crude rose 34 cents to \$81.50 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, gained 27 cents to \$85.76 a barrel.

Currencies

In currency trading, the U.S. dollar edged up to 146.23 Japanese yen from 145.87 yen. The euro cost \$1.0877, down from \$1.0881.

US dollar stands at KD 0.307, Euro up to KD 0.334

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 30, (KUNA): The exchange rate of the US dollar on Wednesday stood at KD 0.307 while the Euro went up by 0.28 percent to KD 0.334, compared to Tuesday's rates.

The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said in its daily bulletin that the British sterling pound dropped by 0.03 to KD 0.388, while the Swiss franc went up by 0.42 to KD 0.350 and the Japa-

nese Yen stood at KD 0.002.

The CBK publishes daily average exchange rates that do not necessarily reflect actual prices of the currencies' trade for the day.

INVESTMENT STRATEGY & RESEARCH

KAMCO INVEST

GCC Corporate Earnings Report: Q2-2023 August 2023

Higher banking interest income fails to offset lower commodity prices...

Quarterly profits reported by GCC-listed companies once again showed a y-o-y decline during Q2-2023 mainly led by a fall in energy and commodity prices. Most global commodity prices witnessed a decline during the quarter that was also reflected in the slide in the Bloomberg Commodity index by around 15% since last year. A fall in profits for the Retail and Capital Goods sectors also added to the decline while profits for the Utilities sector was affected by higher financing costs as declared by the two biggest players in the sector. On the other hand, Banking sector profits remained resilient registering healthy q-o-q and y-o-y growth as lending grew unabated despite higher interest rates. The Telecom sector also showed higher y-o-y profits as did Real Estate and F&B sectors during Q2-2023.

Aggregate net profit for GCC-listed companies reached USD 57.9 Bn during Q2-2023 as compared to USD 61.7 Bn during Q1-2023 resulting in a q-o-q decline of 6.2%. The y-o-y performance showed a steeper decline of 26.6% when compared to Q2-2022 profits of USD 78.8 Bn, which was one of the biggest profits on record for the GCC markets. Energy, Materials and Capital Goods were the top three sectors by absolute y-o-y profit decline vs. Q2-2022 as these sectors accounted for 58% of total profits during Q2-2023 as compared to 73.8% of profits during Q2-2022. In terms of q-o-q performance, the decline in profit was led by a fall in profits for the Energy, Capital Goods and Real Estate sectors that was partially offset by a higher profits mainly for the Utilities, F&B and Banking sectors.

In terms of regional trend, profits mostly declined in the region with five out of seven country averages showing a y-o-y fall in profits. Saudi Arabia and Qatari companies showed the biggest declines during Q2-2023 while growth in Dubai and Kuwait aggregates partially offset the overall decline. Profits for Saudi-listed companies fell to an eight-quarter low level during the quarter.

In terms of sectoral performance, profits for the Energy sector witnessed a steep y-o-y decline of 37.0% or by USD 18.1 Bn and 14.5% q-o-q or by USD 5.2 Bn during Q2-2023 to reach USD 30.9 Bn. The decline in profits reflected both a decline in volumes as well as price realizations by companies in the sector. During the quarter, average Brent crude oil prices declined by almost a third to reach USD 78.0 per barrel from USD 113.8 per barrel during Q2-2022. On the other hand, the broader commodity index as reported by Bloomberg showed that average index levels declined by 20% y-o-y during Q2-2023 while end of quarter index dropped by around 15%. The q-o-q performance of the two benchmarks (Brent crude oil prices and Bloomberg Commodity index) also showed a decline that was reflected in the earnings for the Energy sector.

Within the Energy sector, net profits for Saudi Aramco declined for the fourth consecutive quarter during Q2-2023, replicating the four straight quarter decline in crude oil prices. Profits for the oil major declined by 37.3% y-o-y and by 7.2% q-o-q to reach USD 29.0 Bn. The decline in net profits was led by fall in prices as well as lower margins for the company's refining and chemicals business.

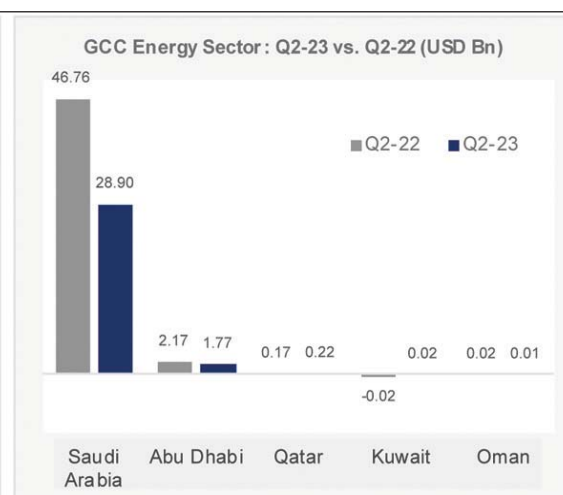
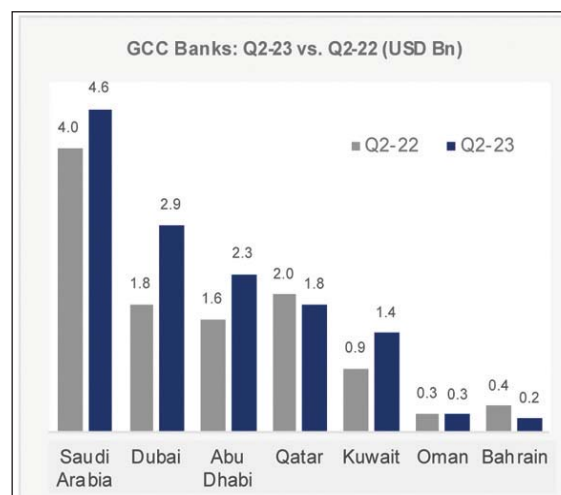
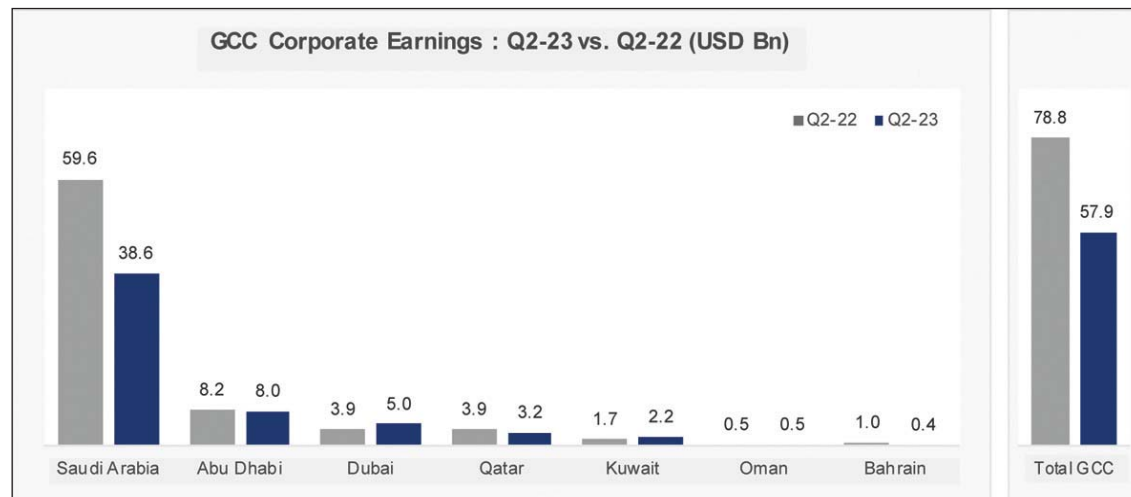
On the other hand, the banking sector in the GCC continued to show growth in net profits led by higher net interest income and non-interest income. Net interest income got support from decades high interest rates prevailing in the GCC as well as globally after the US Fed started raising rates to contain inflation. This was also reflected in the net interest margin that stood at a multi-quarter high level of 3.2%. Total net income reached USD 13.5 Bn with a q-o-q increase of 2.2% and y-o-y increase of 22.6% during Q2-2023. A decline in loan loss provisions from USD 3.0 Bn to USD 2.7 Bn also supported bottom-line performance. Results were supported by higher aggregate outstanding credit facilities in almost all the countries in the GCC during the quarter mainly led by a robust projects market pipeline as well as government efforts to reduce the impact of higher interest rates. Aggregate gross loans for GCC-listed banks reached a new record high of USD 1.9 Trillion at the end of Q2-2023. The q-o-q growth stood at 1.9% or USD 36.3 Bn backed by growth in all markets in the GCC.

Kuwait

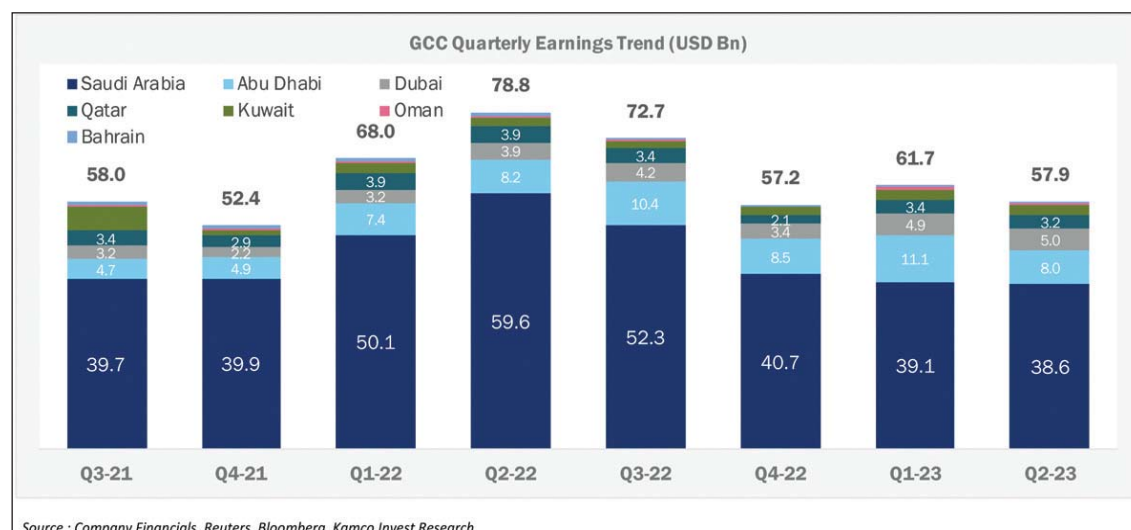
Corporate earnings for companies listed on Boursa Kuwait surged 33.7% y-o-y during Q2-2023 to reach USD 2.24 Bn as compared to USD 1.67 Bn in Q2-2022. The biggest impact on higher aggregate profits came from the Banking sector which showed 54.2% growth that reached USD 1.42 Bn in Q2-2023 from USD 920.9 Mn in Q2-2022. Among the banks, NBK reported a net profit of USD 459.3 Mn for Q2-2023 up by 16.2% compared to a net profit of USD 395.2 Mn in Q2-2022 mainly led by the net operating income which increased noticeably by 19.1% to USD 934.2 Mn as a result of significant rise in net interest income and net income from Islamic financing. KFH reported a net profit of USD 557.4 Mn for Q2-2023 up 149.3% compared to USD 223.6 Mn from the previous year due to the strong growth in both non-interest income and net interest income as well as a decline in provisions booked during the quarter. Net profits for CBK also more than doubled to USD 143.5 Mn up from USD 70.8 Mn in Q2-2022 led by higher net interest income coupled with reversal of impairment and provisions. Meanwhile, Burgan Bank reported a net profit of USD 34.3 Mn during the quarter as compared to a profit of USD 49.3 Mn during the Q2-2022 down by 30.4% primarily due to a drop in net interest income from international operations.

The Diversified Financials sector reported the second biggest increase in profits during Q2-2023 with a y-o-y increase of 67.2% to reach USD 161.5 Mn as compared to USD 96.6 Mn during Q2-2022. NOOR Financial Investment Co. witnessed strong y-o-y jump in Q2-2023 net profit that reached USD 21.5 Mn from a net profit of USD 10.6 Mn during Q2-2022 which was mainly due to the reversal of impairments of wakala investment and increase in share of profit from investment in associate. A'ayan Leasing & Investment Co. posted a net profit of USD 12.6 Mn in Q2-2023 vs USD 7.5 Mn in Q2-2022 led by the increase in the income from leasing operations and share of results of associates.

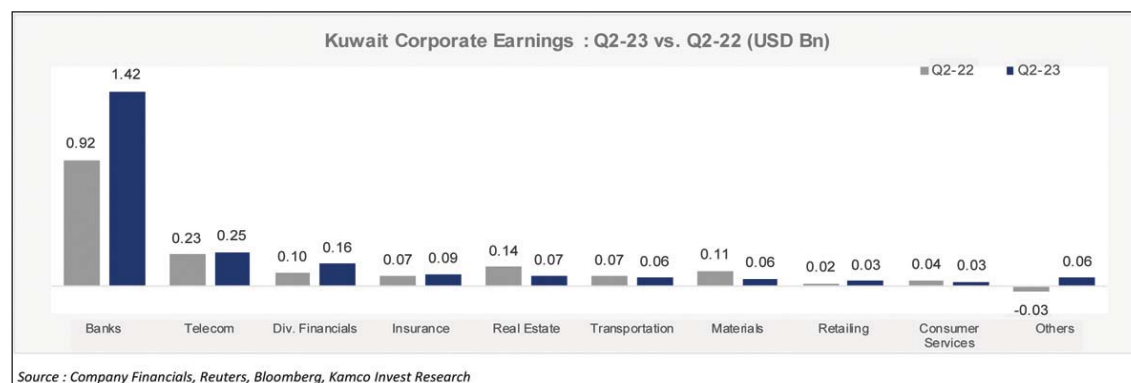
Net Profits for the Telecom sector increased by 9.1% y-o-y to reach USD 249.3 Mn for Q2-2023 compared to USD 228.6 Mn for Q2-2022. Zain recorded a net profit of USD 187.1 Mn in Q2-2023 compared to USD 164.3 Mn in Q2-2022 an increase of 13.8%. Zain Group generated consolidated revenue of USD 1.5 Bn, up by 10% y-o-y, EBITDA for the quarter reached USD 594 Mn, up 10% y-o-y, resulting in an EBITDA margin of 40%. STC Kuwait recorded a net profit of USD 25.4 Mn in Q2-2023 vs USD 24.0 Mn in Q2-2022, up by 5.9%. Meanwhile,



Source : Company Financials, Reuters, Bloomberg, Kamco Invest Research



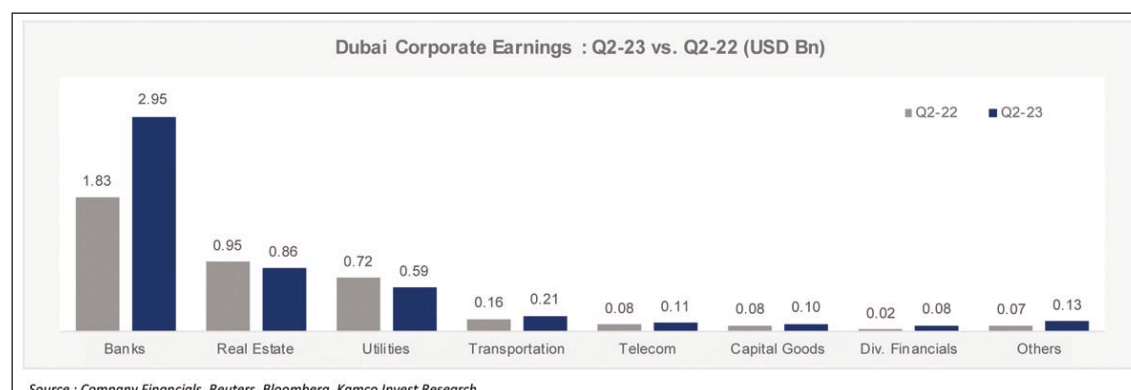
Source : Company Financials, Reuters, Bloomberg, Kamco Invest Research



Source : Company Financials, Reuters, Bloomberg, Kamco Invest Research



Source : Company Financials, Reuters, Bloomberg, Kamco Invest Research



Source : Company Financials, Reuters, Bloomberg, Kamco Invest Research

OOREDOO posted a decline of 8.6% in net profit that reached USD 36.9 Mn for Q2-2023 compared to USD 40.3 Mn during the Q2-2022.

Profits for the Insurance sector increased by 16.3 y-o-y to reach USD 85.8 Mn in Q2-2023 compared to USD 73.8 Mn in Q2-2022. Net profits reported by Gulf Insurance Group increased by 129.9% y-o-y to USD 51.8 Mn up from USD 22.5 Mn in Q2-2022, while profits for Kuwait Reinsurance Co. reached USD 7.2 Mn as compared to USD 7.1 Mn during Q2-2022. On the other hand, Kuwait Insurance Co. posted a profit decline of 53.1% that reached USD 11.5 Mn for Q2-2023 compared to USD 24.5 in Q2-2022 mainly led by the decline in the insurance revenue and net investment income.

The turnaround in profits for the Capital Goods sec-

tor from a loss of USD 47.6 Mn in Q2-2022 to a profit of USD 14.7 Mn in Q2-2023 was mainly led by smaller losses of USD 7.8 Mn reported by National Industries Group during the quarter as compared to a bigger loss of USD 49.5 Mn during Q2-2022. Higher profits for the Kuwait Portland Cement Co also helped that reached USD 5.4 Mn during the quarter as compared to a profit of USD 1.3 Mn in Q2-2022. The increase in profits was driven by the increase in the sales revenue.

Saudi Arabia

Aggregate net profits for Saudi Arabian listed companies witnessed a steep decline of 35.3% to reach USD 38.6 Bn in Q2-2023 against USD 59.6 Bn in Q2-2022. Among the top sectors of the exchange, the Banking and

the Telecom sectors reported an increase in profitability during the quarter. On the other hand, the decline in Q2-2023 earnings was mainly driven by a plunge in profits in the Energy sector which declined by 38.2% to USD 28.9 Bn as compared to USD 46.8 Bn during Q2-2022. Profits for the other key sectors like Utilities and Materials also declined during the quarter. Oil giant Aramco reported a net profit decline of 37.3% during Q2-2023 primarily due to lower crude oil prices and weakening refining and chemicals margins. This was partially offset by a decline in production royalties paid largely attributable to lower crude oil prices as well as lower average royalty rates.

Banking sector outperformed other sectors as the biggest contributor to net profits during the period by recording a net profit of USD 4.6 Bn in Q2-2023 vs. USD 4.0 Bn in Q2-2022. In Saudi Arabia, three out of ten banks reported a decline in net interest income with SNB reporting the biggest decline compared to Q1-2023. However, SNB reported higher profits that reached USD 1.3 Bn in Q2-2023 vs USD 1.2 Bn a year earlier led by higher operating income and a decline in provisions. Al Rajhi Bank recorded a profit of USD 1.11 Bn for Q2-2023 against a profit of USD 1.13 Bn for Q2-2022. The marginal change in profits reflected lower net interest income offset by higher non-interest income as well as a fall in provisions during the quarter. Riyadh Bank reported a 23.1% increase in the net profit that reached USD 528.5 Mn in Q2-2023 compared to USD 429.4 Bn in Q2-2022 led higher net special commission income, trading gains and exchange income.

Net profit for the Telecom sector grew 9.5% y-o-y to USD 969.5 Mn in Q2-2023 as compared to USD 885.0 Mn during Q2-2022. STC reported a 6.1% y-o-y increase in net profits that reached USD 802.1 Mn. Mobily registered a net profit of USD 132.6 Mn for Q2-2023 compared to USD 95.8 Mn in Q2-2022. The increase was driven by a 9.0% y-o-y increase in revenue coupled with higher EBITDA which increased by 7.4% y-o-y in Q2-2023 to reach USD 0.42 Bn. Zain KSA profits declined by 7.2% to reach USD 33.1 Mn for Q2-2023 vs a profit of USD 35.7 Mn in Q2-2022 mainly due to the rise in operational costs related to the telco towers deal and financing costs.

The Real Estate sector followed with the third largest total net profits of USD 184.7 Mn during Q2-2023 up from USD 38.4 Mn in Q2-2022. Arabian Centres Co. posted robust growth in the net profit that reached USD 90.3 Mn for Q2-2023 compared to USD 48.8 Mn for Q2-2022 up by 85.0% led by the marginal rise of 0.4% of revenue to reach USD 150.7 Mn in addition to the decline in the finance costs which fell by 34.9%. Dar Al Arkan Real Estate Development Co. posted a net profit of USD 39.1 Mn for Q2-2023 compared to USD 24.7 Mn for the previous year. The profit growth was driven by property sales and lease revenue, along with higher income from associates. Meanwhile, Saudi Real Estate Co. turned to a net loss of USD 22.0 Mn in Q2-2023 against a net profit of USD 12.1 Mn. The losses were primarily driven by revenue which fell by 40%, as a result of a drop in gross profit of subsidiaries and revenue from residential unit sales.

Dubai

Net profits for Dubai-listed companies increased by 28.6% y-o-y to USD 5.0 Bn in Q2-2023 against USD 3.9 Bn in Q2-2022. Earnings growth during the quarter were mainly driven by Banks, Transportation and Telecom companies with the three sectors accounting for 65% of the aggregate earnings in the exchange during the quarter. It is noteworthy that out of Dubai Stock Exchange's twelve sectors seven have witnessed a y-o-y increase in profits during Q2-2023 while the remaining five sectors, including the Insurance and Consumer Services sectors, reported declines.

Total net profits for the Banking Sector rose by USD 1.1 Bn in Q2-2023 to reach USD 2.9 Bn up from USD 1.8 Bn in Q2-2022. The sector's rise in total earnings was primarily driven by Emirates NBD's 74.3% profits jump during Q2-2023. The bank's Q2-2023 profits reached USD 1.7 Bn compared with USD 952.9 Mn during the corresponding period of 2022, driven by a combination of higher margins and higher retail and corporate lending which led to an overall loan growth during the quarter. Furthermore, the sector's total earnings were supported by Mashreq Bank which announced a y-o-y profit increase of 140.4% to USD 519.1 Mn during Q2-2023. Mashreq Bank's profits jump were attributed to growth in net interest income and income from Islamic financing, while a decline in provisions also supported bottom-line. Moreover, Emirates Islamic Bank registered a 70.2% increase in Q2-2023 earnings which reached USD 166.4 Mn up from USD 97.8 Mn in net profits during Q2-2022. A nearly 50% rise in net interest income and non-interest income and a steep decline in provisions supported earnings for the bank during the quarter.

Aggregate profits for the Transport Sector rose by 26.7% y-o-y in Q2-2023 to reach USD 208.3 Mn up from USD 164.3 Mn in Q2-2022. Air Arabia drove most of the growth of the sector after the airline posted 187% y-o-y Q2-2023 net profit jump which reached USD 125 Mn as compared to USD 43.6 Mn in Q2-2022. The airline's profits surge was attributed to continued strong demand for air travel during the quarter. The number of passengers that travelled on the airline during the quarter rose 37% to reach more than 3.8 Mn passengers. Salik, the company that operates Dubai's Road toll system, recorded USD 74.2 Mn in profits in Q2-2023 as compared to USD 109.8 Mn in Q2-2022. Salik recorded the second biggest net profit among the companies in the Transport sector despite witnessing 32.4% y-o-y profits decrease during the quarter.

In the Telecom Sector, Q2-2023 net profits for Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company improved 31.2% to reach USD 108.2 Mn as compared to USD 82.4 Mn. Overall growth in the telecom's revenue (+6.7%) especially, mobile service revenue and fixed service revenue (+10.9%) as well as sustained customer demand contributed to the overall profitability of the telecom during Q2-2023.

Abu Dhabi

Listed companies in Abu Dhabi witnessed a 3.4% y-o-y dip in total net profits during Q2-2023 to reach USD 8.0 Bn as compared to USD 8.2 Bn during Q2-2022. The Banking sector in Abu Dhabi witnessed an increase in net profits with aggregate sector profit of USD 2.3 Bn as compared to USD 1.6 Bn during Q2-2022, a y-o-y rise of USD 643.9 Mn or 39.8%. The Energy Sector posted the second-largest net profits in the exchange during Q2-2023, although the y-o-y change in profit was -18.3% which reached USD 1.8 Bn compared with USD 2.2 Bn

Continued on Page 8

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during Q2-2022. Capital Goods, Materials and Retailing sectors were some of the other sectors that reported decline in net profits during the quarter contributing to the overall drop in total profits in the Abu Dhabi Exchange. On the other hand, Telecommunication Services and Food, Beverage & Tobacco sectors reported an increase in profits during the quarter which helped to partially offset the decline from aforementioned sectors.

The Banking sector witnessed broad-based growth in profits across the banks on the exchange. First Abu Dhabi Bank lead the way posting the largest net profits in Q2-2023 with a 44.8% y-o-y growth to reach USD 1.1 Bn vs. with a net profit of USD 791.1 Mn during Q2-2022. FAB attributed the growth in net profits to higher interest and non-interest income. Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank posted the second largest increase in Q2-2023 net profits that reached USD 526.4 Mn for the quarter, a 22.7% y-o-y increase. ADCB attributed the strong growth in Q2-2023 net profits to higher growth in net loans.

In the Energy Sector, Q2-2023 net profits reached USD 1.8 Bn as compared to USD 2.2 Bn in Q2-2022 after three out of the four companies that constitute the sector posted y-o-y earnings declines. Adnoc Gas posted the biggest profits in the sector that reached USD 983.9 Mn as compared to USD 1.3 Bn in Q2-2022. Adnoc Gas attributed the lower quarterly profits to lower pricing that resulted in revenue decline of 24% to reach USD 5.4 Bn down from USD 7.1 Bn during Q2-2022. Abu Dhabi National Energy Co (Taqa) was next with a quarterly net profit of USD 523.7 Mn as compared to USD 629.5 Mn in Q2-2022. Taqa attributed the decline in net earnings to fall in oil and gas productions during the quarter mainly due to shut down in operations in Iraq as well as the natural decline in production of late-life UK assets.

Total net profits of the Materials Sector fell 67.2% to USD 330.5 Mn down from USD 1.0 Bn in Q2-2022. Of the ten companies that comprise the sector, only two recorded Q2-2023 net earnings growth while four companies posted net losses during the quarter with the remaining companies recording profit declines during the same period. Fujairah Cement Industries recorded a net loss of USD 9.7 Mn during Q2-2023, the biggest net loss among the companies in the sector. On the other hand, Borouge Plc recorded a profit of USD 229 Mn, the biggest net profit among the companies in the sector. Borouge attributed the dip in quarterly earnings due to lower revenue.

Qatar

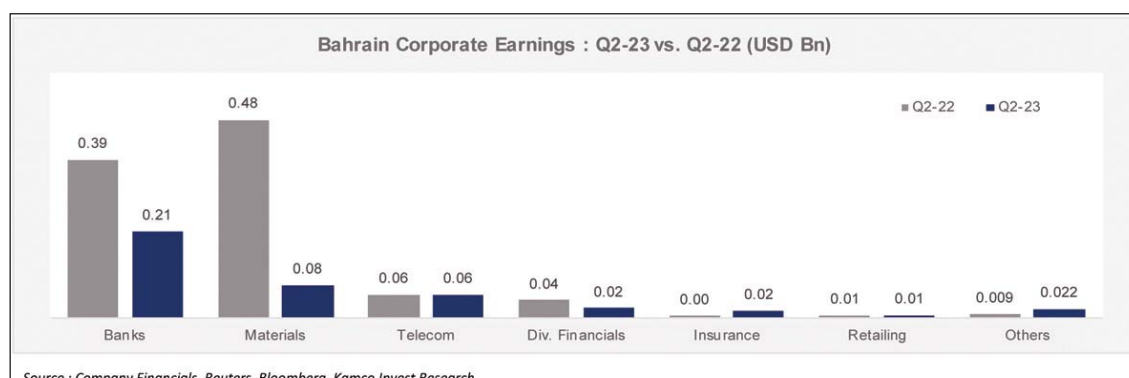
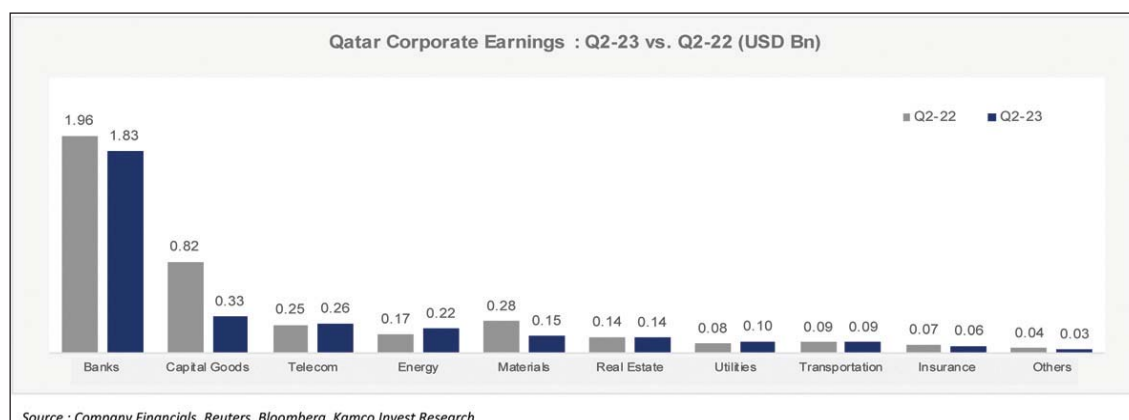
Total earnings for Qatari-listed companies witnessed a decline of 18.2% during Q2-2023 to reach USD 3.2 Bn as compared to USD 3.9 Bn in Q2-2022. The decline in quarterly profits was primarily led by fall in profits mainly for the Capital Goods, Banks and Materials sectors that was partially offset by growth in profits by Energy, Utilities and Telecommunication Services sectors during the quarter. For 1H-2023, Qatar-listed companies reported net profits of USD 6.6 Bn as compared to USD 7.8 Bn 1H-2022, registering a profit decline of 14.9%.

In the Banking sector, QNB reported a net profit decline of 11.1% in Q2-2023 reaching USD 942.4 Mn compared to a net profit of USD 1.1 Bn after the bank set aside higher loan loss provision of USD 617.8 Mn during the quarter. On the other hand, Qatar Islamic Bank registered a net profit growth of 10.1% to reach USD 288.0 Mn in Q2-2023 compared to USD 261.6 Mn in Q2-2022 mainly led by higher net income from financing activities that increased by 36.6% y-o-y to reach USD 584.1 Mn.

Income from investing also grew by 5.5% to reach USD 100.3 Mn. Fees and Commission income increased from USD 76.0 Mn during Q2-2022 to USD 79.6 Mn during Q2-2023, supporting further growth in profits for the bank. Meanwhile, the newly listed bank, Dukhan Bank, reported a net profit of USD 90.1 Mn against a net profit of USD 96.2 Mn down by 6.3% in Q2-2023 despite a healthy growth in net interest income. The decline was mainly led by higher return to investment account holders during the quarter.

In the Telecom sector, Ooredoo's net profits reached USD 228.8 Mn in Q2-2023 as compared to a net profit of USD 225.3 Mn in Q2-2022, registering an y-o-y increase of 1.6%. The telco's revenue declined by 1% y-o-y as a result of the closure of the transit company and the reporting of Mobile Money as a distinct legal entity. After adjusting for these elements, revenue rose by 4.2% to USD 3.02 Bn in Q2-2023. The customer base of Ooredoo Qatar reached 3 Mn, representing a 7% decrease compared to the previous year due to a change in definition of the prepaid base to 90-day active from 365-day. Vodafone Qatar reported a net profit of USD 34.7 Mn for Q2-2023, representing an increase of 16.9% y-o-y. Total revenue increased by 9.9% y-o-y to reach USD 212.8 Mn driven by continued growth in the company's postpaid revenue and fixed broadband services, in addition to higher service revenue.

The Energy sector also reported healthy increase in earnings during the quarter that reached USD 215.8 Mn as compared to USD 166.6 Mn in Q2-2022 up by 29.5% supported



by the profits reported by Nakilat. The Company registered a net profit increase of 9.7% to reach USD 103.9 Mn for Q2-2023 vs USD 94.7 Mn for Q2-2022 driven by the increase in the profits of joint venture companies operating in LNG transportation and shipyards. Qatar Fuel Company reported a net profit of USD 59.5 Mn in Q2-2023 vs USD 65.0 Mn in Q2-2022 down by 8.4%. The decline in net profit was due to reduced diesel sales volume, associated income, and lower B2B sales as a result of the completion of significant infrastructure projects, in addition to the lower fuel costs.

Bahrain

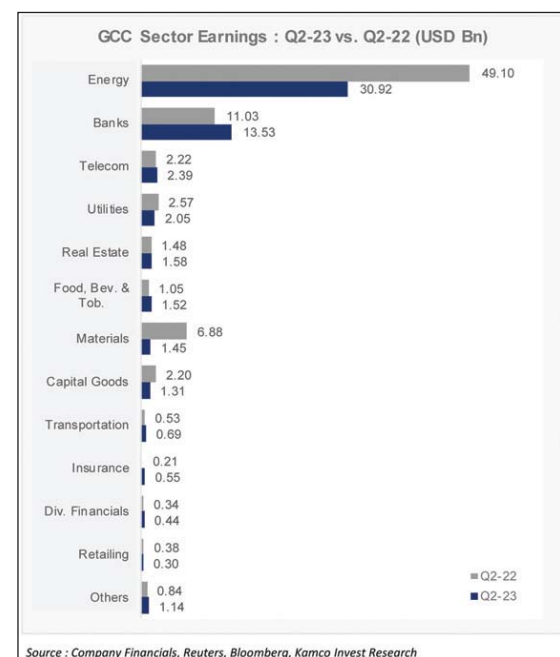
Total Q2-2023 net profits for Bahrain-listed companies decreased by 58% y-o-y to USD 413.2 Mn after four of its key sectors posted a drop in net profits during the quarter. The Materials sector reported the biggest Q2-2023 decline in profits among the sectors in the exchange. Aluminum Bahrain, the only company in the Materials Sector, reported Q2-2023 net profits of USD 79.3 Mn registering 83.6% y-o-y decrease from its Q2-2022 net earnings which stood at USD 482.6 Mn. ALBA's quarterly profits decline was mainly driven by lower LME and premia prices, which declined by 61% y-o-y.

Total Q2-2023 net profits for the Bahraini Banking Sector

witnessed 45.4% y-o-y drop to reach USD 210.1 Mn as compared to USD 385.0 Mn during Q2-2022. The Arab Banking Corporation led the way in the sector recording a 56.4% net profits jump during the quarter that reached USD 61.0 Mn, the biggest in the sector, against USD 39 Mn during Q2-2022. ABC's profits growth was mainly attributed to growth in the bank's diversified businesses as well as ABC's benefit from rising interest rates. On the other hand, second quarter net profits for National Bank of Bahrain fell 8% y-o-y to USD 48.8 Mn against USD 53 Mn during the corresponding quarter of 2022. The bank credited the drop in quarterly profits to lower realized gains from the sale of investment securities during the year.

Total Q2-2023 net profits of the Telecom sector remained almost flat, recording a marginal dip of 0.1% y-o-y to reach USD 56.3 Mn as compared to USD 56.3 Mn during Q2-2022. Profits for Beyon (Bateco) reached USD 52.8 Mn, as compared with USD 53.1 Mn in Q2-2022. The telecom recorded higher quarterly operating profit (+13%) as well as higher quarterly revenues (6%) and higher quarterly EBITDA (5%). Moreover, Q2-2023 net profits of Zain Bahrain recorded 3.1% y-o-y growth to reach USD 3.5 Mn against USD 3.4 Mn in Q2-2022.

In the Diversified Financials Sector, total Q2-2023 net



profits reached USD 22.7 Mn registering 46.1% y-o-y decline from USD 42.2 Mn in Q2-2022. The Q2-2023 net loss recorded by Bahrain Commercial Facilities at USD 11.7 Mn dragged down the total profits of the sector. Bahrain Commercial Facilities' profitability was mainly impacted by the combination of lower net interest income and higher net allowance on loans and receivables charged during the current period. On the other hand, Q2-2023 net profits for the GFH Financial Group increased by 32.8% to reach USD 30.6 Mn as compared to USD 23.1 Mn during Q2-2022 which help partly offset the overall decline in profits for the sector.

Oman

Total net profits for listed companies in Oman declined by 3.5% y-o-y to USD 491.5 Mn in Q2-2023 compared with USD 509.3 Mn in the corresponding quarter in 2022. Total Q2-2023 earnings of the Banking Sector, the biggest sector in the exchange by market cap, dropped by 7.2% to reach USD 256.7 Mn down from USD 276.5 Mn in Q2-2022. The Utilities Sector followed with the second largest total net profits of USD 99.2 Mn during Q2-2023 as compared to USD 92.5 Mn in Q2-2022 recording 7.3% y-o-y growth. Bank Muscat net earnings decreased during the quarter setting the tone for the overall decline of profits in the Banking sector. The Bank posted the biggest profits within the Banking Sector during Q2-2023 at USD 107.9 Mn as compared to USD 132.4 Mn during Q2-2022. The combination of a decline in non-interest income, increasing net impairment credit losses and growth in operating expenses mainly contributed to the bank's drop in profits. Sohar Bank and HSBC Bank Oman followed with USD 27.0 Mn and USD 25.7 Mn in net profits during Q2-2023. It is noteworthy that these two banks have recently completed their successful merger as a single entity.

The profit growth for the Utilities sector came on the back of higher profits reported by five out of the seven companies in the sector. Phoenix Power Company lead the way reporting 5.4% y-o-y growth in its Q2-2023 net profits that reached USD 37.8 Mn followed closely by Al Suwadi Power Company and Al Batinah Power Company which posted Q2-2023 net profits that reached USD 22.4 Mn and USD 21.5 Mn, respectively. Phoenix Power attributed the surge in its quarterly earnings to increased revenue underpinned by the growth of net power exported from 4,131 GWhrs during 1H-2022 to 4,379 GWhrs during 1H-2023.

Total net profits for the Telecom Sector declined by 4.9% to USD 52.6 Mn during Q2-2023 as compared to USD 55.3 Mn during Q2-2022 despite witnessing a 7.1% profits surge reported by OmanTel during the period. OmanTel's growth in quarterly profits was attributed to higher revenue, including revenue from the acquired business of Zain Group. The telco's revenue growth also included double-digit growth in wholesale transit voice and device revenue. On the other hand, Q2-2023 net profits for Ooredoo Oman recorded 42.3% decline to reach USD 7.8 Mn as compared to USD 13.5 Mn during the corresponding period of the past year dragging down the total quarterly profits of the sector.

Total Q2-2023 net profits for the Diversified Financials sector reached USD 31.3 Mn as compared to USD 30.8 Mn in Q2-2022 witnessing a 1.7% y-o-y growth. Furthermore, total Q2-2023 net earnings for the Capital Goods sector recorded a 29.6% jump to reach USD 15.3 Mn as compared to 11.8 Mn during Q2-2023. Meanwhile, the Consumer Services Sector recorded a total net loss of USD 2.1 Mn during Q2-2023 after each one of all the four companies that comprised the sector reported Q2-2023 net losses during the quarter. Dhofar Tourism Co. reported the biggest net loss of USD 1.1 Mn during the quarter followed by Salalah Beach Resort which reported total net loss of USD 0.7 Mn.

US nixes Chinese appeal to ease export controls

Experts to meet to discuss protecting trade secrets

BEIJING, Aug 30, (AP): U.S. Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo said she rebuffed an appeal Tuesday by Chinese leaders to reduce U.S. export controls on technology with possible military uses but the two governments agreed to have experts meet to discuss disputes over protecting trade secrets.

During a visit to revive frosty relations, Raimondo said she conveyed complaints to officials including China's No. 2 leader, Premier Li Qiang, about Chinese restrictions on U.S. technology companies. She said conditions for foreign companies are getting worse following an expansion of an anti-spying law and raids on consulting firms.

Raimondo joined a series of American officials including Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen who have visited Beijing in the past three months. They are trying to restore relations that are at their lowest level in decades due to disputes over technology, security, Taiwan and other issues.

A key Chinese complaint is limits on access to processor chips and other U.S. technology on security grounds. That threatens to hamper the ruling Communist Party's ambition to develop artificial intelligence and other industries. The curbs crippled the

KFH continues to promote financial literacy

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 30: In line with its ceaseless efforts in supporting safe banking and as part of its key role in the "Diraya" campaign, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) continues promoting financial literacy and highlighting the benefits of banking services and products such as personal finance.

Through the campaign, KFH seeks to raise awareness on the importance of understanding the two types of financing; consumer and housing financing which are meant to cater to customers' needs according to set parameters.

The Bank explained that consumer finance, which is a medium-term finance of maximum KD 25,000 is granted for financing goods and services like purchasing cars, furniture, or for getting educational or medical services over a period not exceeding

smartphone business of Huawei Technologies Ltd., China's first global tech brand.

"Their asks were to reduce export controls on technology" with possible military uses and to retract an order by President Joe Biden that restricts U.S. investment in Chinese companies that might be involved in military development, Raimondo said.

"Of course, I said no," Raimondo said. "We don't negotiate on matters of national security."

Plays key role in Diraya campaign



Diraya logo

five years.

Whereas housing Finance is a long-term personal finance of a maximum KD 70,000 granted over a period not exceeding fifteen years for purchasing, building or renovating private housing.

The two governments agreed Monday to exchange information about U.S. export controls. Raimondo said Washington hopes that "will increase compliance."

Meanwhile, the two governments agreed to have experts meet to "start to resolve trade secrets issues," Raimondo said.

"That is one of the big things I hear constantly from business, protection of trade secrets," she told reporters.

Earlier, Raimondo met with Premier

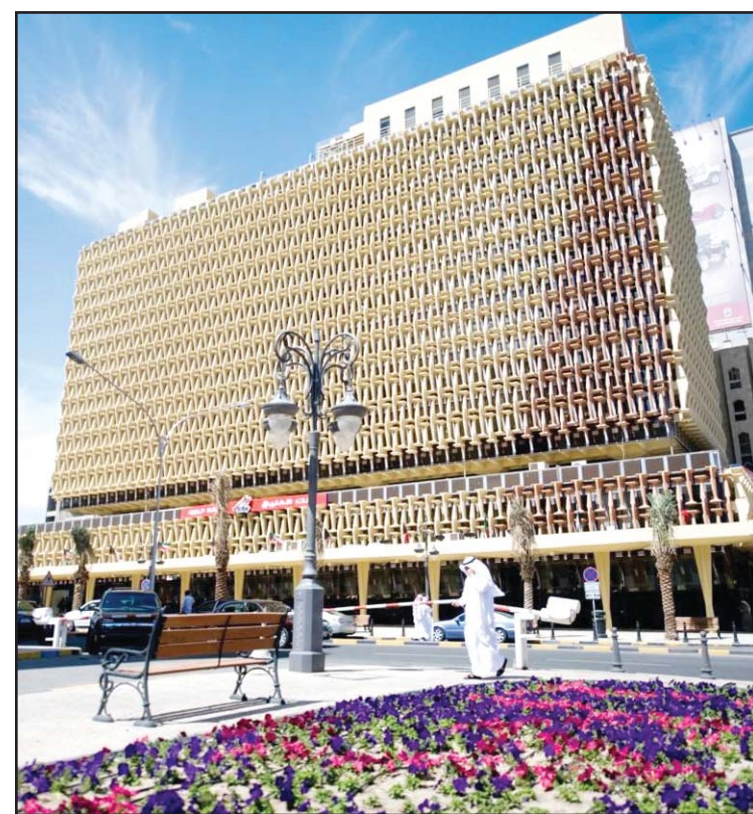
KFH added that in order to benefit from the finance services without being exposed to default risks, or lawful financial obligations, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) has enacted a set of controls for banks to comply with when granting finance, whether to their employees or customers.

The applied CBK controls require banks to offer financial advice, provide full information about the financing contract, and clarify the details of the financing process, e.g., rate of return, number and details of installments, in addition to other information prior to signing the contract. Further, banks must allow a period of two days for the customer to review and read the contract's terms and conditions carefully for better understanding of his/her rights and obligations.

Li, who appealed for "concrete actions" by Washington to improve relations, a reference to Chinese pressure for changes in U.S. policy on Taiwan, technology and other issues.

"We do hope that the U.S. side will work in the same direction as the Chinese side, show sincerity and take concrete actions," Li said.

Raimondo said the meeting, which the American Embassy earlier said would be a 10-minute "courtesy call," lasted one hour and 15 minutes.



Gulf Bank HQ

Gulf Bank obtains CBK's approval to increase its issued & paid-up capital

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 30: Gulf Bank has obtained the Central Bank of Kuwait's approval to increase its issued and paid-up capital by KD 26.1 million through a public offering with

rights issue of 260,869,565 new shares at a nominal value of 100 fils in addition to a share premium of 130 fils for each share. The total proceeds will result in an increase in the Bank's capital base by about KD 60 million.

All details and procedures related to the share issue will be disclosed after

obtaining all the required approvals from the Capital Markets Authority.

On this occasion, Gulf Bank's Chairman, Mr. Jassim Mustafa Boodai said: "The Capital Increase will boost the Bank's Capital Base and Regulatory Capital Adequacy Ratios, enhancing the Bank's ability to pursue future growth opportunities in line with its strategy, with the aim to generate a strong and sustainable long-term value to all its stakeholders."

Jassim Mustafa Boodai further pointed that as of 30 June 2023, Gulf Bank Capital Adequacy Ratio was 16.1% and the Tier 1 Ratio was 13.9%, both above their regulatory minimums. Thus, total proceeds from the Capital Increase will further enhance the Bank's regulatory capital ratios. Boodai also highlighted that Gulf Bank remains an 'A' rated bank from three major credit rating agencies.



Boodai

XCMG launches its Saudi Arabia subsidiary co

Leading construction machinery manufacturer XCMG Machinery ("XCMG", SHE:000425) has officially launched its Saudi Arabia subsidiary company in Riyadh, to anchor the establishment of a more comprehensive sales and service network locally and further boost the integration into Saudi Arabia's development.

The Saudi subsidiary offers a range of services including after-sales support, spare parts warehousing, buyback options, and maintenance and repair ser-

VICES to local customers.

Saleh Ali Khabti, Deputy Minister for Investment Transaction, Ministry of Investment, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, noted at the opening ceremony that since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Saudi Arabia in the last century, China-Saudi Arabia relations have advanced steadily with fruitful cooperation across various fields, in particular, with the launch of 'Vision 2030,' Saudi Arabia has accelerated its socio-economic reforms with new policies and

initiatives coming into effect and the society becoming more open up, the business environment is improving continually and diversified economic programs are being implemented steadily.

"In recent years, Chinese enterprises like XCMG have actively participated in the economic development and construction of Saudi Arabia and Middle East countries, and XCMG has also become a bridge and link to deepen the friendship between the two peoples," remarked Saleh Ali Khabti. (AP)



XCMG Machinery has officially launched its Saudi Arabia subsidiary company in Riyadh.

The Conversation

Heat waves threaten everything from cars to computers

Many machines too cannot always take the heat: experts

By Srinivas Garimella, Georgia Institute of Technology and Matthew T. Hughes, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)

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



Not only people need to stay cool, especially in a summer of record-breaking heat waves. Many machines, including cellphones, data centers, cars and airplanes, become less efficient and degrade more quickly in extreme heat. Machines generate their own heat, too, which can make hot temperatures around them even hotter.

We are engineering researchers who study how machines manage heat and ways to effectively recover and reuse heat that is otherwise wasted. There are several ways extreme heat affects machines.

No machine is perfectly efficient - all machines face some internal friction during operation. This friction causes machines to dissipate some heat, so the hotter it is outside, the hotter the machine will be.

Cellphones and similar devices with lithium ion batteries stop working as well when operating in climates above 95 degrees Fahrenheit (35 degrees Celsius) - this is to avoid overheating and increased stress on the electronics.

Cooling designs that use innovative phase-changing fluids can help keep machines cool, but in most cases heat is still ultimately dissipated into the air. So, the hotter the air, the harder it is to keep a machine cool enough to function efficiently.

Plus, the closer together machines are, the more dissipated heat there will be in the surrounding area.

Higher temperatures, either from the weather or the excess heat radiated from machinery, can cause materials in machinery to deform. To understand this, consider what temperature means at the molecular level.

At the molecular scale, temperature is a measure of how much molecules are vibrating. So the hotter it is, the more the molecules that make up everything from the air to the ground to materials in machinery vibrate.

As the temperature increases and the molecules vibrate more, the average space between them grows, causing most materials to expand as they heat up. Roads are one place to see this - hot concrete expands, gets constricted and eventually cracks. This phenomenon can happen to machinery, too, and thermal stresses are just the beginning of the problem.

High temperatures can also change the way oils in your car's engine behave, leading to potential engine failures. For example, if a heat wave makes it 30 degrees F (16.7 degrees C) hotter than normal, the viscosity - or thickness - of typical car engine oils can change by a factor of three.

Thinner

Fluids like engine oils become thinner as they heat up, so if it gets too hot, the oil may not be thick enough to properly lubricate and protect engine parts from increased wear and tear.

Additionally, a hot day will cause the air inside your tires to expand and increases the tire pressure, which could increase wear and the risk of skidding.

Airplanes are also not designed to take off at extreme temperatures. As it gets hotter outside, air starts to expand and takes up more space than before, making it thinner or less dense. This reduction in air density decreases the amount of weight the plane can support during flight, which can cause significant travel delays or flight cancellations.

In general, the electronics contained in devices like cellphones, personal computers and data centers consist of many kinds of materials that all respond differ-

ently to temperature changes. These materials are all located next to each other in tight spaces. So as the temperature increases, different kinds of materials deform differently, potentially leading to premature wear and failure.

Lithium ion batteries in cars and general electronics degrade faster at higher operating temperatures. This is because higher temperatures increase the rate of reactions within the battery, including corrosion reactions that deplete the lithium in the battery. This process wears down its storage capacity. Recent research shows that electric vehicles can lose about 20% of their range when exposed to sustained 90-degree Fahrenheit weather.

Data centers, which are buildings full of servers that store data, dissipate significant amounts of heat to keep their components cool. On very hot days, fans must work harder to ensure chips do not overheat. In some cases, powerful fans are not enough to cool the electronics.

To keep the centers cool, incoming dry air from the outside is often first sent through a moist pad. The water from the pad evaporates into the air and absorbs heat, which cools the air. This technique, called evaporative cooling, is usually an economical and effective way to keep chips at a reasonable operating temperature.

However, evaporative cooling can require a significant amount of water. This issue is problematic in regions where water is scarce. Water for cooling can add to the already intense resource footprint associated with data centers.

Air conditioners struggle to perform effectively as it gets hotter outside - just when they're needed the most. On hot days, air conditioner compressors have to work harder to send the heat from homes outside, which in turn disproportionately increases electricity consumption and overall electricity demand.

For example, in Texas, every increase of 1.8 degrees F (1 degree C) creates a rise of about 4% in electricity demand. (AP)

Economy struggles

Iran businesses are new battleground over hijab

TEHRAN, Iran, Aug 30, (AP) - For months, Iranian authorities did little to enforce the law on women covering their hair but now the country's theocracy is pushing to make businesses the new battleground over the mandatory headscarf.

The effort comes ahead of the first anniversary of nationwide protests that erupted after the Sept. 16 death of Mahsa Amini in the custody of the country's morality police. A crackdown by security forces that followed saw more than 530 people killed and over 22,000 arrested.

These days, with uncovered women a common sight on Tehran streets, authorities have begun raiding companies where women employees or customers have been seen without the headscarf, or hijab. Iran's parliament is discussing a law that would increase punishments on uncovered women and the businesses they frequent.

The developments could foment new unrest as parliamentary elections loom next year and the country's economy struggles under the weight of international sanctions imposed over Iran's nuclear program.

Punishment

"If I face penalties and punishment, I will wear the headscarf since I am in a ... prominent position," said Parvaneh, a doctor who treated protesters injured during demonstrations last year. Like several other women who spoke to The Associated Press, she asked that only her first name be used for fear of reprisals.

"But the young people I treated during the protests will not pull back," she added.

For observant Muslim women, the head covering is a sign of piety before God and modesty in front of men outside their families. In Iran, the hijab - and the all-encompassing black chador worn by some - has long been a political symbol as well, particularly after becoming mandatory in the years following the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

After the death of Amini, who was picked up for her allegedly loose headscarf, police were hesitant to strictly enforce the Islamic dress code - possibly to avoid even wider demonstrations and displays of defiance. But in recent weeks, the tone has changed.

"I'm telling you that this lack of hijab will be definitely put an end to," hard-line President Ebrahim Raisi said Wednesday.

Authorities have started sending

warning text messages to women seen without the veil in cars: around 1 million messages were sent. In time, some 2,000 cars were confiscated and over 4,000 women referred to prosecutors.

Next, security forces scoured social media for companies with images of uncovered women in the workplace. One of the offices of Digikala, a hugely popular digital retail websites with more than 40 million active monthly users, was closed. Also briefly shut were the online bookstore Taghcheh and insurance marketplace Azki.

The crackdown extended beyond the capital of Tehran. In the northern city of Lahajjan, local health officials ordered hospitals and clinics to stop providing services to uncovered women. In Damavand, a town some 60 kilometers (40 miles) east of Tehran, prosecutors ordered the arrest of a bank manager and a teller over serving a woman not wearing the hijab.

Outdoor café seating is now banned in the northeastern city of Mashhad and hard-liners in Isfahan want to ban the mixed working of men and women in shops.

The entertainment industry is also being watched. Police have threatened to shut down film productions that have women without headscarves working behind cameras.

Judges also have also sentenced female celebrities convicted of not wearing the veil to work in morgues as a public service, in lieu of prison time. They also have to obtain a mental health certificate from a psychologist before they can go back to their regular jobs.

"Instead of addressing people's legitimate grievances, the regime continues to obsess over the hijab and act as if its very survival depends on whether women dress modestly," said Haleh Esfandiari, a fellow at the Washington-based Wilson Center and an Iranian-American dual national who was held by Tehran in 2007.

A new bill before Iran's parliament could make penalties for women even more serious. It calls for fines of up to 360 million Iranian rials (\$720) and prison sentences for women without the headscarf. The draft legislation also calls for more strictly segregating the sexes in schools, parks, hospitals and other locations.

It also envisages fines on businesses with female staff and customers who do not wear the hijab with up to three months of their income, while offending celebrities can be banned from leaving the country and performing.



Saudi Arabia's Roshn launches Marafy mixed-use project in Jeddah.

Saudi Arabia's giga project to house 130,000 residents

Marafy, global sea destination, lighting the shores of Red Sea

Deliver advanced carbon-reducing tech

Dalrada expands into Africa and ME with its subsidiary in Morocco

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia, Aug 30: Roshn Group, Saudi Arabia's most trusted multi-asset class real estate developer, and PIF giga-project, have announced Marafy, a transformative, mixed-use development in north of Jeddah that will accommodate over 130,000 residents with a 11-kilometre-long manmade canal at its centre.

Marafy will provide a new waterfront around its manmade canal which will add a new destination to the north of Jeddah. The 11-kilometre long and 100-metre-wide navigable canal will connect to and extend Obhur Creek, will be surrounded by multiple unique districts, it is the first canal ever to be built in Saudi Arabia, and Roshn's first fully mixed-use development.

David Grover Group CEO of Roshn Group commented on the announcement: "It is core to us as a giga project to introduce such huge development to the kingdom, Marafy will be a gamechanger on the real estate development sector, raising the bar of development in the region, boosting the quality of life, and creating a huge impact in Jeddah." He added: "It is a pride moment to announce the launch of Marafy, our huge development in north of Jeddah. It's one of the iconic projects that will put Jeddah on the map of the world class destination on all aspects, and one of contributors to achieving Vision 2030 goals of creating a vibrant community and a thriving economy".

Waterfront

Marafy's canal will provide a waterfront comparable in size to those of Chicago, Stockholm, Hamburg, and central London, bringing the marine environment into the heart of a historic city that has been welcoming traders, travellers, and pilgrims for centuries. Marafy will breathe new life into Jeddah, creating an urban water corridor to link homes and communities with nature, commerce, and life-enhancing amenities. The development will strengthen Jeddah's position as a regional hub, with world-class residential, retail, lifestyle, leisure, and entertainment spaces built to attract residents and visitors alike, creating an

SAN DIEGO, Aug 30: Dalrada Financial Corporation (OTCQB: DFCO, "Dalrada"), a problem-solving innovator that takes on complex, multi-disciplinary challenges in climate technology, clean energy, and precision manufacturing, has announced that it had once again expanded its global footprint through the creation of Dalrada Technologies Morocco, an eco-forward service provider of advanced climate technologies.

Dalrada Technologies Morocco will primarily focus on providing installation and ongoing support services for Dalrada's range of high-efficiency commercial heat pumps to countries within the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region. Additionally, the subsidiary's main office in Fes will serve as an operational and training hub, while also increasing the possibil-

ity of creating a building and manufacturing center for Dalrada heat pumps in Morocco.

The Moroccan subsidiary joins Dalrada during a time of rapid global expansion and advancement of the company's clean energy and climate technologies for improved sustainability on the path toward worldwide Net Zero goals.

"Our presence in Morocco will provide us with a tremendous opportunity to expand our dedicated climate services to a much larger geographic area," according to Brian Bonar, Dalrada CEO and Founder. He continued, "By establishing Dalrada Technologies Morocco, we're able to deliver advanced carbon-reducing technology and support to new areas that really need it."

Dalrada Technologies Morocco will

help accelerate Dalrada's continued global efforts in offering leading-edge climate technology products and services that optimize the energy resources of its clients while minimizing environmental impact and reducing energy costs.

Dalrada Technologies Morocco is a wholly-owned technology subsidiary of Dalrada Corporation that brings clean energy and climate technology to Africa and the Middle East through advanced service solutions.

The company is committed to providing expert customer service and support by designing and implementing strategies and projects, and believes in transparency and creating true solutions, analyzing and studying client needs, and understanding and collaborating with clients to reach shared goals.

Abdulaziz International Airport.

The announcement of Marafy marks a major milestone for Roshn Group as a giga-project. Under His Royal Highness the Crown Prince's guidance, the Group has embraced its mandate to emerge as a multi-asset class developer, intensifying its activities and becoming a national champion across a range of sectors in pursuit of Vision 2030's ambitious goals.

Roshn Group is Saudi Arabia's most trusted multi-asset class real estate developer, and a giga-project wholly owned by the Kingdom's Public Investment Fund (PIF). Roshn's integrated developments offer a new way of living, supported by amenities within walking distance as well as green spaces, sports hubs, cycle lanes, and living beyond walls. Driven by technology, innovation, and sustain-

ability, the Group is building at unprecedented scale with a land bank of over 200 million sqm. The Group launched its flagship 20 million sqm community in Riyadh, Sedra, in 2021 and delivered homes ahead of schedule, becoming the Kingdom's first giga-project to deliver to customers. The Group went on to launch the 4 million sqm Alarous in Jeddah and announced two more integrated developments, Warefa in Riyadh (1.4 million sqm), and Alfulwa in Al Ahsa (10.8 million sqm). By 2030, Roshn will develop 400,000 homes, as well as 1,000 kindergartens and schools, and over 700 mosques. As a national champion across a range of sectors, Roshn takes a human-centric approach to building sustainably, pursuing corporate excellence, and partnering with the best-in-class to set new standards in mainstream development.



Iranian women walk in Tehran, Iran on Aug 5, 2023. These days, with uncovered women a common sight on Tehran streets, authorities have begun raiding companies where women employees or customers have been seen without the headscarf or hijab. Iran's parliament is discussing a law that would increase punishments on uncovered women and the businesses they frequent. (AP)

The Conversation

Information theory may help explain redundancies

Genetic code has lots of 'words' for the same thing: study

By Subhash Kak

Oklahoma State University

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



Nearly all life, from bacteria to humans, uses the same genetic code. This code acts as a dictionary, translating genes into the amino acids used to build proteins. The universality of the genetic code indicates a common ancestry among all living organisms and the essential role this code plays in the structure, function and regulation of biological cells.

Understanding how the genetic code works is the foundation of genetic engineering and synthetic biology. But there are still many unsolved mysteries, such as why the code is important for various biological processes such as protein folding.

As a scholar working at the interface of biology and physics, I apply information theory – the mathematics of how information is stored and communicated – to study some of these intriguing questions. Just as computers need strings of binary code to function, biological processes also rely on bits of information.

In my recent research, I propose that optimization theory may provide a potential explanation for a long-standing mystery about a certain redundancy in how amino acids are encoded.

Different words for same thing

The genetic codebook is made of "words" composed of four letters: A, C, G and U. Each of these letters stands for a different chemical building block called a nucleotide: adenine, cytosine, guanine and uracil. A molecular machine called a ribosome reads the codebook to translate genes into proteins.

Ribosomes read three-letter words called codons, and there are 64 different possible combinations of the four letters that make different codons. In this list of 64 words, 61 encode amino acids, and three signal the ribosome to stop protein synthesis in the cell. For example, "AUG" codes for the amino acid methionine and also indicates the start of a protein.

But just as in any other language, there are synonyms – different codons can encode the same amino acid. In fact, since there are only 20 amino acids but 61 different words to encode them, there is quite a lot of overlap. An amino acid can have anywhere from one to six different codons that encode it. There are only two amino acids that have exactly one codon, methionine and tryptophan. This redundancy helps ribosomes perform their tasks correctly even when there's a typo in the genetic code.

Engineering nature's guidelines

Why certain amino acids have more synonyms than others is a mystery that has puzzled scientists for decades. Is there a pattern to this variability, or is it random? To answer this question, scientists study the rules that govern nature's decision-making.

If a human engineer designed the genetic code, they would want to make sure that each amino acid had a similar degree of redundancy to protect against er-

rors and to promote uniformity. The mapping of the 61 codons onto the 20 amino acids would be roughly equal, with each amino acid assigned three codons.

But nature has different priorities. Evolutionary models of natural systems like bacteria demonstrate that nature is always striving for optimization. Not only does the final form of a protein need to be optimal, but so do its intermediate forms. Optimization ensures that natural systems can adapt to different environments.

Scientists understand some of the guidelines that nature follows when engineering the genetic code. For instance, the spatial arrangement of atoms and molecules within and surrounding the genetic code can affect its function, as well as the coevolution of other cellular structures involved in creating proteins.

Information theory, genetics

My research indicates that there may be two other significant factors that natural systems consider: the information-theoretic nature of the genetic code and the principle of maximum entropy.

Paralleling how the computer processes data consisting of 0s and 1s, life processes the genetic code based on data consisting of the four letters A, C, G and U. Mathematically, however, the most energy-efficient way to represent data isn't binary (or base 2) – using 0s and 1s, as computers do – but rather base e. Short for Euler's number, e is an irrational number – meaning that there's no way to write down its exact value using fractions or decimals (although it's approximately 2.718).

Nature's affinity for optimization using this irrational number is responsible for the infinitely repeating fractals seen in jagged shorelines, fern leaves, snowflakes and trees. Beyond biology, information optimization using e also has applications in mathematics and cosmology.

Another principle operating in the natural world is that of maximum entropy. Entropy is a measure of disorder in a system, and the maximum entropy principle states that systems evolve to states of greater disorder. This principle allows researchers to make inferences from limited data and has been used to explain how amino acids interact in proteins.

In the context of codon groupings, the maximum entropy principle implies that nature is scrambling data as much as possible – meaning the function that describes the distribution of codon groupings should be mathematically difficult to undo. Studying how to maximize the mathematical complexity of this function reveals potential patterns underlying the codon groupings.

I believe these two principles may help describe the distribution of the codon groups in the genetic code and point to the usefulness of mathematics in analyzing natural systems. Although there are many biological mysteries that scientists have yet to solve, information theory can be a powerful tool to help crack the genetic code. (AP)



Researchers at Institute for Systems Biology (ISB) have identified a network within Mtb that allows tuberculosis to tolerate and resist drug therapies.

'Insights can help with finding drugs to treat TB'

ISB researchers find a 'chink' in armor of tuberculosis pathogen

SEATTLE, Aug 30: (Mtb) is the pathogen that causes tuberculosis (TB), the world's deadliest infectious disease. Mtb is so successful and harmful because it can adapt to different conditions inside our bodies, allowing it to evade treatment.

By using a computer model to understand Mtb's adaptations, researchers at Institute for Systems Biology (ISB) have identified a network within Mtb that allows it to tolerate and resist drug therapies. When the network is disrupted, researchers found that Mtb's cells are unable to properly divide, compromising their cell wall – a key defense mechanism.

"We have quite literally found a chink in Mtb's armor," said ISB Professor, Director and Senior Vice President Dr. Nitin Baliga, corresponding author of a paper published in the newest issue of the journal Cell Reports. "We took a systems approach to figure out how this pathogen circumvents treatment, and we found a targetable mechanism

that we know helps it deal with stressful conditions."

The computer model – called EGRIN 2.0 – helps scientists see how Mtb's genes work together and are affected by their environment. EGRIN 2.0 identified a signaling system called MtrA that helps the pathogen grow in response to signals from a host's body. The team also found that MtrA decreases the effectiveness of antibiotics used to treat TB.

"We believe this clears the way for developing a drug to effectively target and inhibit the essential mechanism of the MtrA signaling system, thus preventing Mtb to resist and tolerate treatment," said ISB Senior Research Scientist Dr. Eliza Peterson, lead author of the paper. "These insights can also help with finding other drugs and/or multi-drug regimens important for treating TB."

Peterson, Baliga and team also think the EGRIN 2.0 platform has the capability to identify other Mtb vulnerabilities manifesting in different contexts. "TB can hide itself, making it diffi-

cult to kill," Baliga said. "This powerful technology helps us build models that show us when and how it is doing that, to find new targets, and to understand how drugs work."

This research was made possible thanks to grants from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and sets the stage for taking networks like MtrA to rapidly find targeted inhibitors.

Institute for Systems Biology (ISB) is a collaborative and cross-disciplinary non-profit biomedical research organization based in Seattle. We focus on some of the most pressing issues in human health, including aging, brain health, cancer, COVID-19, and many infectious diseases. Our science is translational, and we champion sound scientific research that results in real-world clinical impacts. ISB is an affiliate of Providence, one of the largest not-for-profit health care systems in the United States.

More than 300K Americans die annually of cardiovascular disease

Prescriptions for fruits, vegetables can improve health of people

By Kurt Hager, UMass Chan Medical School and Fang Fang Zhang, Tufts University

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



The health of people with diabetes, hypertension and obesity improved when they could get free fruits and vegetables with a prescription from their doctors and other health professionals.

We found that these patients' blood sugar levels, blood pressure and weight improved in our new study published in Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes.

The improvements we saw in clinical outcomes could have a meaningful impact on overall health. For example, systolic blood pressure, or blood pressure during heartbeats, decreased more than 8 millimeters of mercury, or mm Hg, while diastolic blood pressure, or blood pressure between heartbeats, decreased nearly 5 mm Hg. For context, this is about half the drop gained through medications that lower blood pressure.

Many US health care providers have been experimenting with "food is medicine" programs, which provide free, healthy food to patients - sometimes for a year or more.

This is the largest analysis to date of produce prescription programs, which are one variety of these efforts. They let patients with diet-related illnesses get apples, broccoli,

berries, cucumbers and other kinds of fruits and vegetables for free. In Los Angeles, Boise, Houston, Minneapolis and other places where the programs we studied were located, participants selected the produce of their choice at grocery stores or farmers markets using electronic cards or vouchers. They typically received about US\$65 per month for four to 10 months.

We pooled data from 22 US produce prescription locations operated by Wholesome Wave, a nonprofit that promotes access to affordable, healthy food. None of the pilots had previously been evaluated. All 4,000 participants either had, or were at risk for, poor cardiometabolic health and were recruited from clinics serving low-income neighborhoods.

Participants in these programs ate more fruits and vegetables. They were also one-third less likely to experience food insecurity - not having enough food to meet basic needs and lead a healthy life.

More than 300,000 Americans die annually of cardiovascular disease and diabetes cases tied to what they eat.

The people in the estimated 13.5 million US households experiencing food insecurity are more likely than others to have cardiometabolic health problems, such as diabetes or heart disease. They also have shorter life expectancy and higher medical costs.

Most Americans, regardless of their income, don't follow a healthy diet. However, research shows that lower-income Americans tend to eat food that's slightly worse for their health than those who can afford to spend more.

The 2022 White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health brought together experts who outlined a national strategy to eradicate food insecurity and reduce diet-related illnesses. It ended with a strategy calling for, among other things, more produce prescription programs.

The last White House conference on hunger and nutrition, which occurred over 50 years earlier, led to significant and lasting changes in US food policies. The National School Lunch Program expanded and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, known as WIC, was created. Within a year of the latest conference, two government agencies - the Indian Health Service and the Veterans Health Administration - announced produce prescription pilots. Eight state Medicaid programs have received or applied for federal waivers that would allow Medicaid to pay for produce prescriptions for up to six months for some people.

However, these programs remain unavailable to most Americans who might benefit. We are evaluating "food is medicine" pilots funded by the Flexible Services Program in Massachusetts' Medicaid program. (AP)

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'Breaking Bad' stars reunite on picket line, call studios to resume talks

CULVER CITY, Calif., Aug. 30, (AP) — The cast of "Breaking Bad" has reunited to call upon Hollywood studios to resume negotiations with striking screen actors.

"We want you to come back to the table with us," Bryan Cranston said in a plea to the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers outside Sony Pictures Studios on Tuesday.

Cranston was joined by Aaron Paul, Jesse Plemons and other members of the "Breaking Bad" universe in an effort to energize picket lines more than a month after SAG-AFTRA joined striking Hollywood writers.

Both guilds are seeking to address issues brought about by the dominance of streaming services, which have changed all aspects of production and pay in the industry.

"The way things were structured 10 years ago made a lot of sense and it made it more possible for journeymen-type actors, actors in the middle that are working just as a hard or harder," Plemons said.

By its final season, which aired more than a decade ago, "Breaking Bad" was one of the most watched and highest rated cable TV shows ever.

The AMC hit series has achieved enduring popularity on Netflix, but its stars say that has not been reflected in their pay.

"I don't get a piece from Netflix on 'Breaking Bad' to be totally honest and that's insane to me," Paul said. "I think a lot of these streamers know that they have been getting away with not paying people a fair wage and now it's time to pony up."

Cranston said they chose Sony for their reunion as the studio behind the Emmy-winning hit, along with its spinoff projects, the AMC prequel series "Better Call Saul" and the Netflix film, "El Camino."

"We're not making them the enemy. They are not villains. These are people that we all will be working with once again at some point,"

Cranston said. "We just want them to see reality."

Several other casts have joined picket lines during the strike, including actors from "Parks and Recreation" and the cult hit "Jury Duty," drawing a link between popular shows and the actors' strike goals.

Cranston also affirmed SAG-AFTRA President Fran Drescher's recent comments to The Associated Press that these dual Hollywood strikes are galvanizing a broader movement throughout the country.

"Without organized labor, management will just keep stuffing their pockets. They don't and will not ever just go, 'You know what? I don't think this is being fair to those people. I'm going to pay them more.' It's just not what they do," he said.

Affected

Movies and TV shows affected by Hollywood actors and screenwriters' strikes

Hollywood productions and promotional tours around the world have been put on indefinite hold as actors join writers on the picket lines as they seek new contracts with studios and streaming services.

Late-night talk shows and many television productions were put on long-term hiatus due to the writers strike, movie tentpoles, some in mid-production, have shut down too from Ridley Scott's "Gladiator" sequel to "Deadpool 3," and studios are also pushing some of their completed films into 2024 as well.

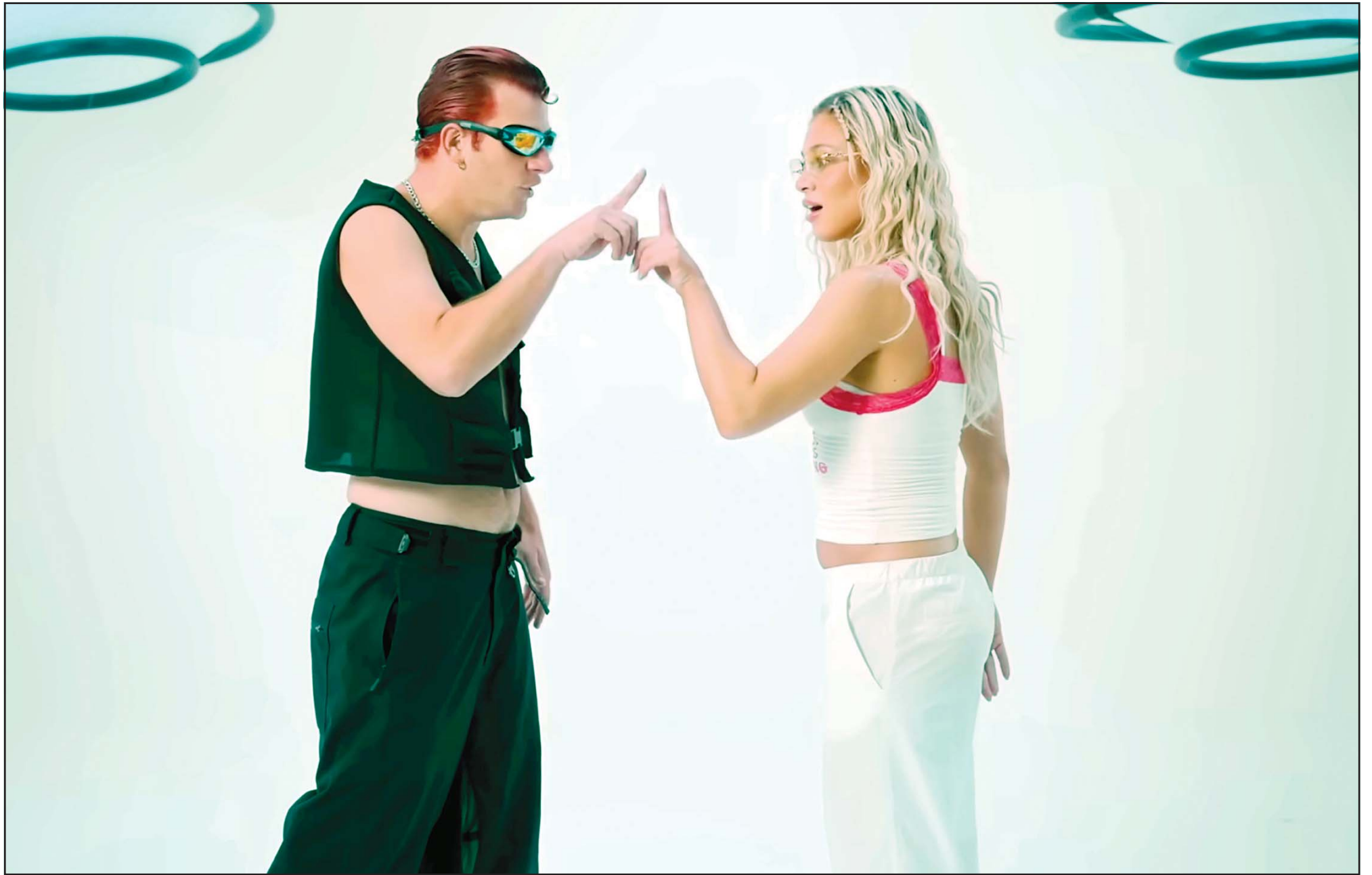
On Thursday, Warner Bros. reshuffled several films, notably moving "Dune 2" from November to March 2024. The studio also shifted the release date of a "Lord of the Rings" movie that will now arrive in theaters in December 2024.

Here's a selected look at shows and films in suspension.

"1923" - Paramount+; "A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms: The Hedge Knight" - HBO; "Abbott Elementary" - ABC; "American Dad" - Fox; "American Horror Story" - FX; "Big Mouth" - Netflix; "Billions" - Showtime; "The Chi" - Showtime; "Cobra Kai" - Netflix; "Daredevil: Born Again" - Disney+; "Duster" - Max; "Emily in Paris" - Netflix; "Family Guy" - Fox; "FBI: Most Wanted" - CBS; "Grey's Anatomy" - ABC; "Hacks" - Max; "The Last of Us" - HBO; "Law & Order" - NBC; "Metropolis" - Apple TV+; "Penguin" - Max; "Severance" - Apple TV+; "The Sex Lives of College Girls" - Max; "Stranger Things" - Netflix; "The Summer I Turned Pretty" - Prime Video; "Yellowjackets" - Showtime; "Deadpool 3" - Disney/Marvel; "Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part II" - Paramount; "Beetlejuice 2" - Warner Bros.; "Gladiator 2" - Paramount; "Wicked" - Universal; Untitled Karate Kid film - Sony; "Blade" - Disney "G20" - (TBD); "Lilo & Stitch" - Disney (TBD); "Mortal Kombat 2" - Warner Bros. (TBD); "Spider-Man: Beyond the Spider-Verse" - Sony (TBD); Untitled Brad Pitt F1 Film - Apple (TBD); "Venom 3" - Sony (TBD); "Challengers" - MGM/Amazon; "Dune: Part Two" - Warner Bros.; "Ghostbusters: Afterlife" - Sony; "Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire" - Warner Bros.; "Kraven the Hunter" - Sony; "The Lord of the Rings: The War of the Rohirrim" - Warner Bros.; "Poor Things" - Searchlight Pictures; "Problemista" - A24 (TBD); "They Listen" - Sony (TBD); Untitled Dirty Dancing Sequel - Lionsgate; "White Bird" - Lionsgate; "Jimmy Kimmel Live" - ABC; "Last Week Tonight With John Oliver" - HBO; "Late Night With Seth Myers" - NBC; "The Late Show With Stephen Colbert" - CBS; "Saturday Night Live" - NBC and "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon" - NBC

Film

Variety



This image released by BMG shows a scene from the music video 'Planet of the Bass,' by DJ Crazy Times, feat. Ms. Biljana Electronica. DJ Crazy Times is comedian Kyle Gordon and Ms. Biljana Electronica is played onscreen by content creator Audrey Trullinger, and voiced by singer-songwriter Chrissi Poland. (AP)

Music

Eurodance parody song viral hit of the moment

'90s 'Planet of the Bass' still lingers

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 30, (AP) — The year is 2023, but it might as well be 1997.

One of the great viral hits of the moment is DJ Crazy Times and Ms. Biljana Electronica's "Planet of the Bass," a parody song pulled straight from the absurdity of late '90s, early '00s Eurodance music. Think Eiffel 65's "Blue (Da Ba Dee)," or Crazy Frog's "Axel F." At the time of writing, the various versions of his song have surpassed over 250 million combined views across social platforms.

Confused? You're not alone.

A clip of the viral tune - which features hilarious lyrics like "Life, it never die / Women are my favorite guy" - began to circulate in late July after comedian Kyle Gordon posted it on social media. The 50-second video, titled "Every European Dance Song in the 1990's" and set inside the World Trade Center's Oculus, featured a flame-haired emcee, DJ Crazy Times, alongside a woman with crimped blonde hair: Ms. Biljana Electronica, herself.

In reality, "DJ Crazy Times" - dressed in his signature black vest and baggy pants - was Gordon, who first developed the character in his college a cappella group as a David Guetta-esque DJ. He's since evolved into "this weird, horny Latvian guy rapping," as Gordon describes it. And while "Ms. Biljana Electronica" was played onscreen by content creator Audrey Trullinger, she was voiced by singer-songwriter Chrissi Poland.

"It's the only session I've ever done in my whole career where I had to keep stopping as I was laughing so hard at the lyrics," Poland says.

Poland doesn't appear in any of the four videos for the song, an intentional decision satirizing Eurodance music videos where "they would just have these female vocalists sing tracks in the studio and then put models in," she says.

"It was always meant to be a parody of this trope," Gordon says. "Black Box's 'Ride on Time' is another example - the song would be a hit, and then they would shamelessly put in models or actresses in the video."

To some fans' dismay, Trullinger was replaced in a second clip - featuring the same audio - by influencer

Mara Olney, and then in a third clip by comedian Sabrina Brier. But she assumed her role as the original "Ms. Biljana Electronica" in the official music video for the song, released earlier this month.

Gordon says it has been "awesome to see this whole saga play out," as "people argue over what the bit is" and root for their favorite version of Ms. Biljana Electronica. "To sort of see it slowly unfold and dawn on people, I think, was pretty funny."

Gordon chalks up the success of "Planet of the Bass" to a few different causes: there's nostalgia for this music, of course, but the timing was fortuitous.

The first clip hit TikTok around the tail end of the promotion cycle for the "Barbie" movie, which brought newfound attention to the 1997 hit "Barbie Girl," by Danish-Norwegian Euro pop band Aqua.

"Eurodance generally might be in the zeitgeist," Gordon says.

Character

He adds that because his DJ Crazy Times character had evolved over the last decade, he didn't feel like he was quick to jump on a trend, rather, that it was "just luck, that it timed out with where this song came out in the life of the 'Barbie' movie."

Nate Sloan, a musicologist and assistant professor at the USC Thornton School of Music, said that upon first listen, "Planet of the Bass" straddled the line between parody and sincerity. Until DJ Crazy Times' verse.

"Once he said, 'Women are my favorite guy,' I knew it was a joke," says Sloan, who also co-hosts the "Switched On Pop" podcast.

The reason for any confusion is because, well, the song does demonstrate a deep understanding of the music it pulls from - source material that was already playful and less self-serious than other pop music forms.

"Aqua is perhaps the most obvious antecedent for the song," Sloan says. "Musically, it doesn't sound a lot like a song of theirs - say, 'Barbie Girl.' But it seems to be paying homage."

"One thing I love is the interplay between the male and female singer," he adds. "In a song like 'Barbie Girl,' they are constantly going back and forth. In

'Planet of the Bass,' DJ Crazy Times is giving little interjections at the end of each of Ms. Biljana Electronica's lyrics."

He cites a theory first posited by music journalist John Seabrook, which suggests that European - and in particular, Swedish - songwriters were so effective in the late 1990s and early 2000s because they focused on the sounds of words as opposed to their explicit meaning.

"Maybe counterintuitively, it made those songs more successful," Sloan says. "The assonance of it, the rhyme of it feels really good. So maybe having an emphasis more on the sound of the words than the meaning is actually part of what makes this genre compelling." (For his part, Gordon acknowledges he pulled from that music, but also cites "the butchering of the English language" inherent in '80s Italo-disco as a formative lyrical influence.)

There's also the music itself of "Planet of the Bass," which Sloan defines as fast and syncopated, with elongated melodies bordering on operatic - which, considering the humor of the song, makes for an amusing tension.

There's an argument to be made that mimicked music come and go in waves. In 2023, "Planet of the Bass" might not feel too dissimilar from, say, the parodic Lily-Rose Depp's "World Class Sinner / I'm A Freak," from "The Idol" - which uses the same chord progression and is recorded in the same key as The Weeknd's "Can't Feel My Face."

Parody songs, Sloan theorizes, inspire moments of virality not only for their musical qualities, but because they are tied to a strong visual.

"There's a continuum from 'Planet of the Bass,' to 'World Class Sinner' to 'What Does the Fox Say' to 'Gangnam Style,'" he says - and with the exception of "Gangnam Style," few linger as hooks in the cultural imagination.

"I'm skeptical these songs have longevity as musical material than comedic, audio-visual sketches," Sloan says.

But perhaps longevity is antonymic to virality - these songs are a lot of fun even if for a short amount of time.

Features

ARABIC TIMES

THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, 2023

NEW YORK: CBS is giving the late game show host **Bob Barker** a last run on television with a prime-time tribute special that will air on the network Thursday night.

"The Price is Right: A Tribute to Bob Barker," scheduled for 8 p.m. Eastern and Pacific, will be replayed Labor Day in the game show's regular daytime slot, which is 11 a.m. Eastern and 10 a.m. Pacific.

The smooth-talking host, who urged participants to "come on down" and play the enduring game that required them to guess the price of consumer goods, died at age 99 Saturday at his home in Los Angeles.

With his signature long, thin microphone, Barker commanded the show's stage from 1972 to 2007. His tribute will be hosted by **Drew Carey**, his replacement and still the show's host now.

The show of highlights from Barker's 50-year television career will feature clips from his first and last days on "The Price is Right." Barker hosted the game show "Truth or Consequences" before that.

It will illustrate Barker's ability to make the most out of every moment, said **Margot Wain**, senior vice president of daytime television at CBS.

"Bob was one-of-a-kind," Wain said. "He'll be remembered as an extraordinary host, a devoted animal activist and, as he would put it, 'a loyal friend and true.'" (AP)

CHICAGO: A Chicago television news crew reporting on a string of robberies ended up robbed themselves after they were accosted at gunpoint by three armed men wearing ski masks.

Spanish-language station Univision Chicago said a reporter and photographer were filming just before 5 a.m. Monday in Chicago's West Town neighborhood when three masked men brandishing firearms robbed them, taking their television camera and other items. "They were approached with guns and robbed. Mainly it was personal items, and they took a camera," **Luis Godinez**, vice president of news at Univision Chicago, told the Chicago Tribune. Godinez said the news crew was filming a story about robber-

ies in the West Town community that was slated to run on the morning news. He said the footage they shot was in the stolen camera, and the story never made it on the air. Chicago police identified the victims as a 28-year-old man and 42-year-old man. Police said the pair was outside when the three men drove up in a gray sedan



Barker



Carey

and black SUV. After the armed robbers took items from the news crew they fled in their vehicles.

No injuries were reported and no one is in custody, police said.

Godinez said Univision Chicago, the local TV affiliate of international media company TelevisaUnivision, is not disclosing the names of the reporter

and photographer to protect their privacy.

"They're OK, and we're working on it together as a team," he said.

The episode was the second robbery this month involving a Chicago news crew, after a WLS-TV photographer was assaulted and robbed on Aug. 8 while preparing

to cover a weekday afternoon news conference on Chicago's West Side, the station reported.

The robberies prompted the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians Local 41, which represents TV photographers in Chicago, to warn about the growing safety threats to those who cover the news. (AP)

People & Places

Books

'Do Tell' a must-read

'Deep Sky' soars in a fast paced novel

'The Deep Sky' by Yume Kitasei (Flatiron Books)

Asuka's never been assured of her place in the mission to Planet X. She worked hard, trained and studied and pushed herself, but still just barely made it as the Alternate. So when an explosion busts a hole in the ship and kills the captain, it's Asuka's chance to prove her worth or sink into endless space.

Yume Kitasei's debut novel, "The Deep Sky," begins in the pivotal moments just before what should have been a simple space walk gone horribly wrong rocks the world of the 80 young crew members painstakingly chosen and trained as a last hope for humanity. Their mission is to fly into deep space toward Planet X, birth and raise children, and start a new world. But with the ship knocked off course, the hierarchy in disarray, and a traitor in their midst, the already tenuous trip seems increasingly impossible.

Not to mention the possibility of World War III breaking out on Earth severely cramping communications with Mission Control.

Kitasei doesn't have to reach far to find inspiration for the desperation and downward spirals plaguing the planet they're leaving behind. There are forest fires that flay California, houses literally given away in abandoned Japanese towns, creatures that are extinct except in virtual reality. By drawing on real, often traumatizing issues — misogyny, campus lockdowns, messy geopolitics, conspiracy theories, fighting with your mother — Kitasei makes the far-out story relatable, and allows readers to reexamine these issues in a new light. It's remarkably easy to become Asuka.

Although the book's cast is almost entirely made of women, it's still amazingly diverse, presenting a sample-size version of society for closer inspection.

Like the author, Asuka is half Japanese, half American. She struggles with being adrift between the two cultures, especially as her family splits apart and the divided world forces her to choose a side.

Brief bird facts meant to soothe Asuka — whose love of feathered friends has followed her from childhood and out past the Milky Way — serve as haunting dramatic irony steeped in metaphor, taunting readers to make a connection if they dare.

What at first feels like another "2001: A Space Odyssey" turns out to be so much more. Kitasei has a few tricks up her sleeve, as well as an amazing talent for description — reading "The Deep Sky" is like watching a 4D movie, all senses engaged.

"The Deep Sky" is a smart, emotionally mature, quick-paced climate fiction space whodunit that I already wanted to read again before I even finished it.

'Do Tell' by Lindsay Lynch (Doubleday)

Edie O'Dare was there that night, the night that changed the lives of a dozen names in Hollywood — the night Sophie Melrose, newcomer at FWM studios, was sexually assaulted by Freddy Clarke, famous for playing dashing heroes. And for all that Edie wants to be hardened and unattached, Sophie grabs a hold of her heart from the first interaction they have together.

Lindsay Lynch's debut novel "Do Tell" goes far beyond that fateful night in 1939 and the court case that follows — which is loosely based on the real case brought by Peggy Satterlee and Betty Hansen against actor Errol Flynn — and creates a noir-like tale of Hollywood's underbelly.

Edie's acting contract is almost up, and Sophie's court case propels her into a new career as a gossip columnist. She suddenly finds herself in competition with Poppy, whom she used to feed gossip to from the FWM sets, premiers and parties because Edie has learned how to blend in with a crowd. She's learned the trade, how to barter information and pull strings, when to make up details and even full stories. But some stories may be beyond her control.

When the trial ends, the fallout is quickly overshadowed by a world war, casting a shadow over Hollywood to both ludicrous and devastating effect.

Despite the flowing dresses and gilded everything, the glamor of Old Hollywood is met with a distinctly noir feel that Edie brings as she sleuths in the proverbial shadows, using dirty tricks and touching moments of empathy alike to get where she needs to go. She's a hardboiled detective and a femme fatale all wrapped up in one. And, like a good noir, the clues were there, but you'll have to wait until Edie pieces it together to get the full story. For all her skills and conniving, there's something big she's overlooked.

Pithy, sharp-witted comments jab directly at society. Edie's like a cool aunt who's wise beyond her years but can still party it down and has connections all over town. She sees through the farces of Hollywood, the fake engagements and double standards, and finds a way to enjoy herself and be part of it anyway.

Things get terribly messy, but the ending is surprisingly sweet, a poetic justice that is not at all what you would expect from the opening chapters, turning a book about Hollywood gossip and the patriarchy into one about love and how to find fulfillment.

If your best subject at trivia is Turner Classic Movies, if you go to conventions dressed like a starlet from Hollywood's gilded age, "Do Tell" is a must-read.

Also:

NEW YORK: Colin Meloy, frontman of The Decemberists and already a popular children's author, is now writing a novel for adults.

Meloy's book, which has the working title "Cascadia," is scheduled for 2025. G.P. Putnam's Sons announced recently.

"Cascadia" features a protagonist named Barnaby Chambers, who sells discarded baby membrane tissue and is otherwise contending with artificial intelligence, climate change and falling birth rates.

"This story, the story of Barnaby Chambers in a near-future Oregon wrecked by climate crises and hypercapitalism, is one I've wanted to tell for a very long time now," Meloy said in a statement.

The Decemberists are known for such albums as "The Hazards of Love" and "The King Is Dead," and received a best rock song Grammy nomination in 2011 for "Down By the Water."

Meloy's previous books include the children's stories "Wildwood" and "Under Wildwood," both illustrated by his wife, Carson Ellis.



Composer Gustavo Santaolalla, a recipient of one of this year's Latin Grammys Trustees Awards, poses for a portrait in his home studio, Thursday, Aug. 17, in Los Angeles. (AP)

Music

'Last of Us' composer hears musical journey in story

'Silence key to drawing audience in'

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 30, (AP) — When composer Gustavo Santaolalla sits with a new script, the words on the page often trigger visual elements, allowing him to hear the musical journey as the story travels from scene to scene.

It's a trait that's served "The Last of Us" composer well in creating the music for both the acclaimed video game and its Emmy-nominated HBO adaptation, including a nod for Santaolalla's music.

Santaolalla was never formally trained to read or write music, but his instinctual method has led him to create Academy-award winning compositions for Ang Lee's "Brokeback Mountain" and Alejandro González Iñárritu's "Babel." His first Emmy nod was for AMC's "Hell on Wheels" in 2012, a year before the release of the first "Last of Us" video game.

Santaolalla says he never felt like he was "just writing music" for a video game. From the very beginning he said he knew that "The Last of Us" "felt like a great story" that could easily be retold through any medium.

"The music translated so perfectly to the series," said Santaolalla who brought a sense of nostalgia to fans by reusing the game's beloved theme song.

The video game is set in the aftermath of a global pandemic that has turned civilians into zombie-like creatures. It follows the story of a smuggler named Joel who finds himself escorting an immune teenage girl named Ellie across the United States. The television series stars Pedro Pascal and Bella Ramsey and received 24 Emmy nominations this year.

Santaolalla transports the audience into the dystopian nightmare with one

constant sound: the warm twang of his ronroco — a stringed mandolin that he calls "this wonderful little instrument from the Andes Mountains." It can be heard throughout the "Last of Us" theme song and in almost all of the composer's projects.

"One thing that I really felt was very rewarding was that (writers) Neil Druckmann and Craig Mazin, they have said that my music, somehow, it's part of the DNA of 'The Last of Us,'" he said. "It's like a character in the story."

Santaolalla's Emmy nomination is for the third episode where the show expanded on the relationship between two characters named Bill and Frank — portrayed by Nick Offerman and Murray Bartlett. Bill's sexual orientation was only implied in the original video game, without much explanation about his partnership with Frank.

Impact

In the series, Mazin and Druckmann create a romantic backstory for the two characters, creating one of the series' most talked about tearjerker episodes.

"I knew the impact that that episode had in the audience," said Santaolalla. "I was surprised (about the nomination), but at the same time, it was something that I got the feeling that it could happen," he said. "I'm so grateful."

Santaolalla says that he took into consideration the way that silence "played a big role" in the soundtrack of Bill and Frank's story.

"Bill is a guy that has been inside of him, you know for years. You can't get a word out of this guy or that demonstrative feelings. So there is already a silence in the reality of those characters. It is a very important part of the

music of those characters."

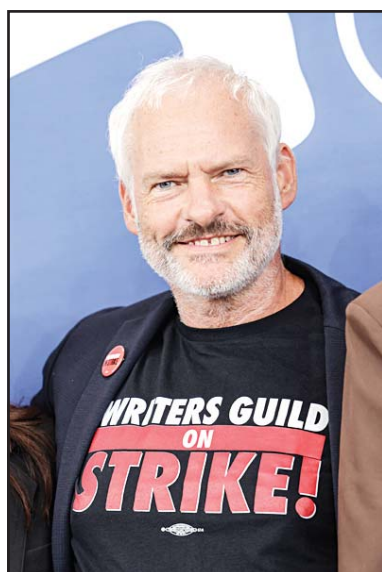
Santaolalla says silence is an element he loves to play with when writing music and was significant when composing "Brokeback Mountain" — a love story between two American cowboys.

"Silence sometimes can be louder than the note," he said. "There's an element where the silence works great in both of those cases, because the characters are not very talkative. Those silences when you're watching something, it sucks people into the screen ... you move to the front of your seat."

Santaolalla first stepped into music as a young boy after his mother bought him his first guitar. He started making records as a teenager in Argentina. The producer turned composer would later flee the South American country during the 70s and make his way to Los Angeles where he soon became a notable figure in the rock en Español scene, producing over 100 albums for other Latin American icons like Juanes, Molotov and Julieta Venegas. He's won BAFTAs, Golden Globes and both Grammys and Latin Grammys.

At 72, the musician has no plans of taking a break. He is the frontman of the critically acclaimed Argentine/Uruguayan band, Bajofondo, and is gearing up to perform at Eric Clapton's upcoming 2023 Crossroads Festival in Los Angeles. Later this year, Santaolalla will travel to Sevilla, Spain, to receive the Latin Grammys' Trustees Award honoring his musical legacy.

"This is far beyond anything that I could have imagined," he said. "But being aware of that since an early age and now being in the position that I am now, I feel a responsibility to use this gift because I feel that is something that was given to me."



Jury member Martin McDonagh wears a tee shirt with the slogan 'Writers Guild on Strike' as he poses for photographers during the photo call for the Jury during the 80th edition of the Venice Film Festival in Venice, Italy, on Wednesday, Aug. 30. (AP)



Oher



50 Cent

Variety

PHOENIX: Sweltering heat in Phoenix that has routinely broken records this summer led to yet another canceled concert, with rapper 50 Cent calling the triple-digit temperatures "dangerous."

Rapper 50 Cent said Monday that his scheduled show Tuesday night at Talking Stick Resort Amphitheatre, an outdoor venue in west Phoenix, was postponed because of the sweltering weather.

"I'll be back in Arizona soon! 116 degrees is dangerous for everyone," the rapper, whose real name is Curtis Jackson, wrote on social media.

National Weather Service meteorologists in Phoenix said Monday's high topped off at 117 degrees Fahrenheit (47 degrees Celsius). Tuesday's temperature also is expected to reach 117 degrees, which would break the previous record of 113 degrees (45 degrees Celsius) for Aug. 29, set in 1981.

50 Cent joins the likes of other musicians whose shows have been impacted by the area's scorching temperatures this summer.

In July, heavy metal band Disturbed postponed its concert, saying equipment wouldn't work in metro Phoenix's excessive heat. That outdoor show at the Talking Stick Resort Amphitheatre has been rescheduled for March 2, 2024.

And at country singer Morgan Wallen's July 19 concert in Phoenix, some fans complained on social media that some concession stands at Chase Field ran out of water. Others said they left the venue early because of the hot conditions despite the baseball stadium's retractable roof being closed.

Phoenix is closing in on the record for most 110-degree (43 degrees Celsius) days in a year — 53 days, set in 2020. Weather Service meteorologists said Tuesday marked the 51st day.

There was no immediate word on when 50 Cent's Phoenix show on his "The Final Lap Tour" will be rescheduled.

Millions of people across the Southwest experienced a historic heat wave in July, including in Phoenix, which had a streak of 31 consecutive days with temperatures over

110 degrees.

MEMPHIS, Tenn: Lawyers for former NFL player Michael Oher are seeking his school records and information about contracts and payouts related to the film "The Blind Side" as part of his highly publicized effort to end a legal agreement between

him and Sean and Leigh Anne Tuohy.

Shelby County Probate Court issued three subpoenas Tuesday asking for information from Memphis Shelby County Schools, Alcon Entertainment, which produced the movie, and Creative Artists Agency, a prominent talent agent firm known as CAA.

The filings are part of Oher's attempts to end a conservatorship overseen by the

Tuohys, who took in Oher while he was a high school football player in Memphis. Their story was the subject of the film "The Blind Side," which earned Sandra Bullock an Oscar for her portrayal of Leigh Anne Tuohy.

Oher, 37, filed a petition Aug. 14 in probate court accusing the Tuohys of lying to him by having him sign papers making them his conservators rather than his adoptive parents nearly two decades ago. Oher is asking for the conservatorship to be terminated, a full accounting of the money earned off his name and story to be done and to be paid what he is due, with interest.

He accused the couple of falsely representing themselves as his adoptive parents, saying he discovered in February the conservatorship agreed to in 2004 was not the arrangement he thought it was — and that it provided him no familial relationship to them. He claims the Tuohys have kept him in the dark about financial dealings related to his name, image and likeness during the 19-year life of the agreement.

The Tuohys have called the claims they enriched themselves at his expense outlandish, hurtful and absurd and part of a "shakedown" by Oher. Lawyers representing the couple also said the Tuohys would enter into a consent order to end the conservatorship they say Oher was aware of long before this year.

The couple's lawyers said they set up the conservatorship to help Oher with health insurance, a driver's license and being admitted to college. In Tennessee, a conservatorship removes power from a person to make decisions for themselves, and it is often used in the case of a medical condition or disability. (AP)



Cast and writers from "Breaking Bad" and "Better Call Saul" Juan Carlos Cantu, from left, Javier Grajeda, Aaron Paul, Charles Baker, Norma Maldonado, Jesse Plemons, Peter Gould, Bryan Cranston and Matt Jones, pose on a picket line outside Sony Pictures studios on Tuesday, Aug. 29, in Culver City, Calif. The film and television industries remain paralyzed by Hollywood's dual actors and screenwriters strikes. (AP) — Details Page 11

Health

E. coli sickens 5

Biden targets 10 drugs for Medicare price talks

WASHINGTON, Aug 30, (AP): President Joe Biden touted the potential cost savings of Medicare's first-ever price negotiations for widely used prescription drugs on Tuesday as he struggles to convince Americans that he's improved their lives as he runs for reelection.

The drugs include the blood thinner Eliquis, diabetes treatment Jardiance and eight other medications. The negotiation process was authorized under the Inflation Reduction Act, which Biden signed last year, capping decades of debate over whether the federal government should be allowed to haggle with pharmaceutical companies.

Any lower prices won't take effect for three years, and the path forward could be further complicated by litigation from drugmakers and heavy criticism from Republicans.

But the effort is a centerpiece of Biden's reelection pitch as the Democrat tries to show Americans he's deserving of a second term because of the work he's doing to lower costs while the country is struggling with inflation. The drug negotiations, like many of Biden's biggest policy moves, will take time to play out, and his challenge is to persuade the public to be patient.

"For all of you out there, I get it, and millions of Americans get it," Biden said at the White House. "I promise you. I'm going to have your back and I'll never stop fighting for you on this issue."

He noted that he got "no help from the other team" - meaning Republicans - when it came to lowering prescription costs.

The drugs on the list announced Tuesday accounted for \$3.4 billion in out-of-pocket costs for Medicare patients last year.

The Medicare program paid more than \$50 billion for the drugs between June 1, 2022, and May 31, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, or CMS.

That includes more than \$16 billion on Eliquis, a total that does not count discounts or rebates that are already negotiated for the drug. The drug from Pfizer and Bristol-Myers Squibb treats blood clots in the legs and lungs and reduces the risk of stroke in people with an irregular heartbeat called atrial fibrillation.

Treatments

The diabetes treatments Jardiance from Eli Lilly and Co. and Boehringer Ingelheim and Januvia from Merck made the list. It also included Amgen's autoimmune disease treatment Enbrel and Entresto from Novartis, which is used to treat heart failure.

Other drugs on the list include AstraZeneca's diabetes and heart failure treatment Farxiga and three drugs from Johnson & Johnson: the blood thinner Xarelto, the blood cancer treatment Imbruvica and its biggest seller, Stelara, an IV treatment for psoriasis and other inflammatory disorders.

The list also includes several versions of Novo Nordisk's Fiasp, a fast-acting insulin taken around meals.

The announcement Tuesday is another significant step toward taming drug pricing under the Inflation Reduction Act, which was signed by Biden last year. The law also calls for a \$2,000 annual cap on how much people with Medicare have to pay out of pocket for drugs starting in 2025.

In addition, the law already caps out-of-pocket costs for insulin at \$35 a month for Medicare patients.

"We are here today with the firm belief that in the United States of America, no senior should have to choose between whether they fill their prescription or fill their fridge with food," Vice President Kamala Harris said.

For drugs on the list released Tuesday, the government aims to negotiate the lowest maximum fair price. That could help some patients who have coverage but still face big bills like coinsurance payments when they get a prescription.

About 9% of Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older said in 2021 that they did not fill a prescription or skipped a drug dose due to cost, according to research by the Commonwealth Fund, which studies health care issues.

Currently, pharmacy benefit managers that run Medicare prescription plans negotiate rebates off a drug's price. Those rebates sometimes help reduce premiums customers pay for coverage. But they may not directly change what a patient spends at the pharmacy counter.

The new drug price negotiations aim "to basically make drugs more affordable while also still allowing for profits to be made," said Gretchen Jacobson, who researches Medicare issues at Commonwealth.

The federal government will benefit most from any lowered drug prices, noted Larry Levitt, an executive vice president for health policy at KFF, another non-profit that studies health care. But he said that if Medicare spends less on prescription drugs, then premiums for everyone with its drug coverage also should fall.

Drug companies that refuse to be a part of the new negotiation process will be heavily taxed.

The pharmaceutical industry has been gearing up for months to fight these rules. The lobbying group Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America said Tuesday that the drug list announcement stemmed from "a rushed process focused on short-term political gain rather than what is best for patients."

"Many of the medicines selected for price setting already have significant rebates and discounts due to the robust private market negotiation that occurs in the Part D program today," PhRMA CEO Stephen J. Ubl said in a statement.

PhRMA representatives also have said pharmacy benefit managers can still restrict access to drugs with negotiated prices by moving the drugs to a tier of their formulary - a list of covered drugs - that would require higher out-of-pocket payments. Pharmacy benefit managers also could require patients to try other drugs first or seek approval before a prescription can be covered.

Republican lawmakers also have blasted the Biden administration, saying companies might pull back on introducing new drugs that could be subjected to future haggling. They've also questioned whether the government knows enough to suggest prices for drugs.

Also:

NEW YORK: Health officials are investigating an outbreak of E. coli food poisoning among students at the University of Arkansas, with dozens reporting symptoms and five people needing treatment in the hospital.

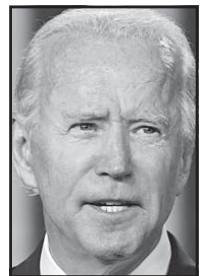
Among those affected are two 19-year-old sorority members who developed a serious complication that can lead to kidney failure after being infected with the E. coli strain O157:H7. That's according to Bill Marler, a Seattle food safety lawyer who said he reviewed the patients' medical records after being contacted by the families.

One of the students, Camille Honey of Fayetteville, Arkansas, was hospitalized and on dialysis Tuesday after both kidneys failed, said her mother, Kris Honey.

"She's been in 10 out of 10 pain for a week," Kris Honey said. "She's been here for 11 days in serious pain and misery."

Camille, a sophomore, had moved into a sorority house on campus on Aug. 4 and fell ill on Aug. 16. Her condition worsened and her mother took her to an emergency room. Because Kris Honey had recently watched the Netflix documentary "Poisoned," which features Marler and focuses on foodborne illness, she asked ER staff to take a stool sample.

About 100 students reported symptoms of E. coli infection, officials with the Arkansas Department of Health said, though it's not clear how many are part of the outbreak. The state confirmed that five people needed to be hospitalized, and officials are analyzing responses from a survey of more than 3,200 people to try to identify the source of the illnesses.



Biden



This image provided by the Indian Space Research Organisation shows a crater encountered by Chandrayaan-3 as seen by the navigation camera on Aug. 27. India's moon rover confirmed the presence of sulfur and detected several other elements near the lunar south pole as it searches for signs of frozen water nearly a week after its historic moon landing, India's space agency said Tuesday. The lunar rover had come down a ramp from the lander of India's spacecraft after last Wednesday's touchdown near the moon's south pole. (AP)

Space

Several other elements detected near lunar south pole

India's moon rover confirms sulfur

NEW DELHI, Aug 30, (AP): India's moon rover confirmed the presence of sulfur and detected several other elements near the lunar south pole as it searches for signs of frozen water nearly a week after its historic moon landing, India's space agency said Tuesday.

The rover's laser-induced spectroscope instrument also detected aluminum, iron, calcium, chromium, titanium, manganese, oxygen and silicon on the lunar surface, the Indian Space Research Organization, or ISRO, said in a post on its website.

The lunar rover had come down a ramp from the lander of India's spacecraft after last Wednesday's touchdown near the moon's south pole. The Chandrayaan-3 Rover is expected to conduct experiments over 14 days, the ISRO has said.

The rover "unambiguously confirms the presence of sulfur," ISRO said. It also is searching for signs of frozen water that could help future astronaut missions, as a potential source of drinking water or to make rocket fuel.

The rover also will study the moon's atmosphere and seismic activity, ISRO Chairman S. Somnath said.

On Monday, the rover's route was reprogrammed when it came close to a 4-meter-wide (13-foot-wide) crater. "It's now safely heading on a new path," the ISRO said.

The craft moves at a slow speed of around 10 centimeters (4 inches) per second to minimize shock and damage to the vehicle from the moon's rough terrain.

After a failed attempt to land on the moon in 2019, India last week joined the United States, the Soviet Union and China as only the fourth country to achieve this milestone.

The successful mission showcases India's rising standing as a technology

and space powerhouse and dovetails with the image that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is trying to project: an ascendant country asserting its place among the global elite.

The mission began more than a month ago at an estimated cost of \$75 million.

India's success came just days after Russia's Luna-25, which was aiming for the same lunar region, spun into an uncontrolled orbit and crashed. It would have been the first successful Russian lunar landing after a gap of 47 years. Russia's head of the state-controlled space corporation Roscosmos attributed the failure to the lack of expertise due to the long break in lunar research that followed the last Soviet mission to the moon in 1976.

Active since the 1960s, India has launched satellites for itself and other countries, and successfully put one in orbit around Mars in 2014. India is planning its first mission to the International Space Station next year, in collaboration with the United States.

A rare blue supermoon could raise tides above normal just as Hurricane Idalia takes aim at Florida's west coast, exacerbating flooding from the storm.

The moon will be closest to Earth on Wednesday, the same day Idalia is expected to make landfall in Florida. While a supermoon can make for a spectacular backdrop in photos of landmarks around the world, its intensified gravitational pull also makes tides higher.

"I would say the timing is pretty bad for this one," said Brian Haines, the meteorologist in charge at the National Weather Service office in Charleston, South Carolina.

It's expected to make tidal flooding worse not only in Florida, but in states

such as Georgia and South Carolina, where Haines' office has been warning residents that parts of Charleston could be under water by Wednesday night.

When the moon is full, the sun and the moon are pulling in the same direction, which has the effect of increasing tides above normal ranges, said Kerry Emanuel, professor emeritus of atmospheric science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The moon's gravitational pulls are even stronger when it's closer to Earth, so the tides are even higher.

The storm surge is often the greatest killer when hurricanes strike. The ocean water pouring onto land could be up to 15 feet (4.6 meters) along parts of Florida's west coast, the National Hurricane Center projected in its latest briefings Tuesday. Farther south, up to 7 feet (2.1 meters) of storm surge is expected in the Tampa Bay area.

Storm surge that can be taller than a person is a concern with any major hurricane. The tides and the influence of a supermoon can increase that somewhat.

"There's a saying that you hide from the wind and run from the water, and hopefully people are heeding that advice," said Brian Tang, associate professor of atmospheric science at University of Albany in New York.

The part of northwest Florida that could be hit by Idalia is especially vulnerable to storm surge because of the region's geography. The continental shelf extends so far out from the coast and has a gradual slope, allowing the ocean to grow higher as hurricane winds drive the water onto land, Tang said. The shape of the coast in that region - known as Florida's Big Bend area - is also curved inward, which can focus the storm surge to make it even more dangerous, he said.



This photo provided by the family shows Camille Honey, 19, a University of Arkansas student who developed kidney failure after contracting a serious E. coli infection. Honey was hospitalized and on dialysis Tuesday, Aug 29, after both kidneys failed, said her mother, Kris Honey. Health officials are investigating an outbreak of E. coli food poisoning among students at the University of Arkansas, with dozens reporting symptoms and five people needing treatment in the hospital. (AP)



DeVogelaere



Voight

Discovery

Legionnaires' disease death toll up:

The death toll from Legionnaires' disease in Poland has risen to 16 with another 140 people infected in the southeastern region close to the border with Ukraine, health authorities said Wednesday.

The region of Rzeszow, some 80 kilometers (50 miles) from the border, is a key transit hub for international military support for Ukraine following Russia's full-scale invasion last year. Some 10,000 U.S. troops are stationed in the area.

Fatalities from the disease were among elderly people who also suffered from other health issues like cancer, authorities said.

Laboratory tests have confirmed the presence of Legionnaires' disease germs in the city's water pipeline system. Authorities are still looking for the source of the infections, the numbers of which were unprecedented in the region. The Internal Security Agency was also checking for any signs of malicious action.

Experts say it could come from rarely used plumbing, where the germs could have spread in high temperatures during the recent heat wave. (AP)

'E. coli found in water': Grand Canyon National Park officials warned that E. coli bacteria was detected in the water supply close to Phantom Ranch, the only lodging at the bottom of the canyon.

Park authorities said visitors should not consume any water in that area without boiling it first. E. coli can lead to diarrhea, cramps, headaches and sometimes kidney failure and even death. Infants, younger children and immuno-compromised people are more at risk.

Water from the Phantom Ranch area - including that being used to brush teeth, make ice and prepare food - should be brought to "a rolling boil" for one minute per 1,000 feet (305 meters) of elevation and then cooled before using, officials said. Phantom Ranch and the immediate vicinity

is all reachable only by a long hike or mule ride from the canyon rim or by raft on the Colorado River - are the only areas of the park affected. (AP)

Octopus moms use hot tubs:

Most octopuses lead solitary lives. So scientists were startled to find thousands of octopus huddled together, protecting their eggs at the bottom of the ocean off the central California coast.



This 1978 electron microscope image made available by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows Legionella pneumophila bacteria which are responsible for causing the pneumonic disease Legionnaires' disease. Poland's internal security officers were searching for the source of a deadly outbreak of Legionnaires' disease which has killed seven people and infected more than 100 others in the strategic city of Rzeszow, near the border with Ukraine, authorities said Friday Aug. 25. (AP)

Now researchers may have solved the mystery of why these pearl octopus congregate: Heat seeping up from the base of an extinct underwater volcano helps their eggs hatch faster.

"There are clear advantages of basically sitting in this natural hot tub," said Janet Voight, an octopus biologist at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago and co-author of the study, which was published Wednesday in Science Advances.

The researchers calculated that the heated nest location more than halved the time it took for eggs laid there to hatch - reducing the risk of being munched by snails, shrimp and other predators.

The nesting site, which the scientists dubbed an "octopus garden," was first discovered in 2018 by researchers from the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and other institutions. The team used an underwater remote vehicle to film the throng of nearly 6,000 octopus nesting 2 miles deep.

The octopus - about the size of a grapefruit - perched over their eggs laid on rocks heated by water seeping up from the sea floor.

"It was completely incredible - we suddenly saw thousands of pearly-colored octopus, all upside down, with their legs up in the air and moving around. They were pushing away potential predators and turning over their eggs," for an even flow of water and oxygen, said National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration marine biologist Andrew DeVogelaere, a study co-author. (AP)

Palace come from 2-0 down to win 4-2 at second-tier Plymouth

Spurs out of English League Cup after losing penalty shootout to Fulham

LONDON, Aug 30, (AP) — Without a trophy since 2008, Tottenham has seen one of its two realistic shots at silverware this season disappear already.

Davinson Sanchez was the only player who failed to score in a penalty shootout as Tottenham lost 5-3 to Fulham on spot kicks to get eliminated in the second round after a 1-1 draw in regulation.

Spurs have been knocked out before England's top teams have even entered the competition. The Premier League clubs competing in Europe this season don't play in the League Cup until the third round.

It's the first time Tottenham has lost in the second round since an embarrassing defeat to lower-league Grimsby in 2005.

Micky van de Ven's own-goal in the 19th minute put Fulham ahead before Brazil striker Richarlison headed in an equalizer in the 56th.

In the shootout, Sanchez — the Colombia center back who was the subject of criticism from some Tottenham fans last season — had his attempt saved by Fulham goalkeeper Marek Rodak off his team's third penalty.

Kenny Tete converted the clinching spot kick for Fulham at Craven Cottage.

Tottenham, getting accustomed to life without Harry Kane following his move to Bayern Munich, now just has the Premier League and FA Cup to compete in this season, and the league looks a massive long shot for a team with a new manager in Ange Postecoglou.

Postecoglou might face some criticism, then, for fielding a weakened lineup against Fulham — Richarlison and Van de Ven were the only two players retained after Saturday's 2-0 win against Bournemouth — despite the League Cup being one of the few opportunities for a trophy.

Five Premier League teams avoided upsets against lower-league opponents elsewhere Tuesday, with Brentford only getting past Newport County by winning a shootout 3-0. The game finished 1-1, with Newport equalizing in the sixth minute of stoppage time.

Crystal Palace came from 2-0 down to win 4-2 at second-tier Plymouth, with Jean-Philippe Mateta scoring a 22-minute hat trick. Palace scored three goals in a five-minute span from the 58th to take the lead.

Bournemouth recovered from conceding an early goal to beat second-tier Swansea 3-2 away, Luton won 3-2 at home to fourth-tier Gillingham and Wolves routed third-tier

Blackpool 5-0.

Wrexham, owned by Hollywood actors Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney, lost 4-3 on penalties to Bradford while Salford City, owned by Gary Neville, Paul Scholes and other members of Manchester United's Class of '92, beat Leeds 9-8 in a shootout to reach the third round for the first time in its 83-year history.

SOCCER

Meanwhile, Liverpool captain Virgil van Dijk could be handed a longer suspension after being charged by the Football Association on Tuesday for his reaction to being shown a red card against Newcastle in the Premier League over the weekend.

The Netherlands center back was sent off for a foul on Alexander Isak in the first half of Liverpool's 2-1 victory at St. James' Park on Sunday. Van Dijk initially refused to leave the field and then remonstrated with referee John Brooks.

The sending-off will earn him an automatic one-match ban, to be served against Aston Villa this weekend, but the



Fulham's Kenny Tete (right), and Tottenham Hotspur's Ivan Perisic battle for the ball during the Carabao Cup second round soccer match at Craven Cottage, London. (AP)

suspension could be increased.

"It's alleged that the defender acted in an improper manner and/or used abusive and/or insulting words towards a match official," the FA said.

Van Dijk has until Friday to respond to the charge.

Galatasaray head to CL group stage

Young Boys, Braga advance

LONDON, Aug 30, (AP) — Galatasaray hung on to its lead and Young Boys survived having the frame of its goal struck three times but both ended back in the Champions League group stage.

Galatasaray defender Angelino's deflected free kick in stoppage time sealed a 2-1 win over Molde in the second leg of their qualifying playoff, and a 5-3 aggregate score, minutes after the Norwegian champion had a possible equalizing goal overruled by video review.

Young Boys eventually eased past Maccabi Haifa 3-0, after a scoreless draw in Israel last week, though the Swiss champion rode its luck in the first half.

Braga also booked its place in the 32-team group stage draw Thursday by winning 1-0 at Panathinaikos to complete a 3-1 aggregate score.

Once a Champions League regular, Galatasaray will be back on the elite stage for the first time since 2019 having come through three qualifying rounds.

Mauro Icardi scored for the third straight game, including in the 3-2 win in Norway last week, when he converted a penalty in the seventh minute.

Molde, once the club of a teenaged Erling Haaland, pressed hard in the second half and Eirik Hestad pulled a goal back midway through the second half. Though Veton Berisha put the ball in Galatasaray's net in the 81st, an offside was spotted on review.

SOCCER

On Thursday, Galatasaray will join Newcastle, Real Sociedad and Union Berlin in an unusually strong group of lowest-ranked teams in seeding pot 4 of the draw.

Young Boys will play in the group stage for the third time in six seasons. It got home wins against Juventus and Manchester United in 2018 and 2021, respectively, though never advanced to the knockout rounds.

The Swiss team took control against Maccabi Haifa when Congolese winger Meschack Elia sent in crosses that led to two goals in four minutes midway through the first half, from Cedric Itten's header and an own goal by defender Abdoulaye Seck.

The win was secured in the first minute of the second half when Filip Ugrinic's shot was deflected into the Maccabi net.

Braga's return to the group stage after an 11-year absence was settled by Portugal international forward Bruma finishing off a counter attack in the 83rd.

Panathinaikos drew a crowd of more than 61,000 by moving to the Olympic Stadium in Athens from its his-



Galatasaray's Tete (left), and Molde's Martin Ellingsen fight for the ball during the Champions League soccer match between Galatasaray and Molde in Istanbul, Turkey. (AP)

toric though compact Leoforos home.

Galatasaray, Young Boys and Braga are now guaranteed prize money of about 20 million euros (\$22 million) from UEFA, with bonuses for wins and draws in the group stage.

Molde, Maccabi Haifa and Panathinaikos switch across to the second-tier Europa League group stage. Each is now due at least 9 million euros (\$9.7 million) guaranteed from UEFA plus less lucrative bonuses for future results.

Springboks looking to overtake All Blacks

South Africa aim to go back-to-back for golden end to Erasmus-Nienaber 'era'

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, Aug 30, (AP) — This Rugby World Cup was always the ultimate goal for the Springboks coaching combination of Rassie Erasmus and Jacques Nienaber, who sat down soon after taking over a struggling team in early 2018 and began plotting a five-year plan to build a squad for France in 2023.

South Africa's victory at the 2019 World Cup — a surprise and immediate reward — was actually just "a bonus," Erasmus said.

"2023 ... was always how we planned," Erasmus, now South Africa's director of rugby, told the Springboks players when they gathered in February for their first training camp of the World Cup year. "We were looking at our squad age, when the guys are going to mature, what we have to bring in."

"We worked for 2022 and 2021 and 2020. But we planned for 2023."

The defending champion Springboks have set sights on becoming just the second team to win back-to-back Rugby World Cups after New Zealand in 2011 and 2015. There's also the motivation of becoming the first to claim four titles and overtake great rivals the All Blacks. Erasmus and Nienaber — who have worked together for more than 15 years at various teams — want to end their partnership on the highest of highs.

Coach Nienaber will leave his job after the World Cup. Erasmus' future as director of rugby, having passed the head coach mantle to Nienaber in 2020, is unclear but his contract expires next year. The core of the Springboks squad are also in their early 30s and unlikely to see another World Cup.

It all gives this tournament the feel of an era-ender for the Boks.

The long-term plan Erasmus and Nienaber put in place more than five years ago targeting South Africa's first game of the 2023 World Cup against Scotland on Sept. 10 in Marseille has showed signs of working out. The Springboks appear to be peaking as planned after serving up a 52-16 hammering of Wales and a record 35-7 win over New Zealand in their final two warmups.

But the road to get there was not always smooth, with Erasmus and Nienaber catching regular and sometimes fierce criticism at home for constantly tinkering with the Springboks' lineup in big tests. Those tactics culminated in South Africa making wholesale chang-

es for every one of its three games in the Rugby Championship in July.

Nienaber was adamant they always picked a South Africa team they believed was capable of winning, but accepted there were often risks with giving a group of more than 40 players almost equal game time in big matches.

"We might be wrong. We will actually only be right if we win the World Cup," Nienaber said. "If we don't win the World Cup, we'll say this is the (worst) plan in the world. But that's what we decided."

RUGBY

Some games didn't go as planned, but it's left the Springboks with more depth than they've ever had heading to a World Cup and better-placed, Nienaber said, to deal with three big setbacks — the loss to injury of flyhalf Handre Pollard, creative outside center Lukhanyo Am and lock and lineout leader Lood de Jager, who all started the 2019 final.

While there are a number of players ready to step in for Am and de Jager in France, the Springboks have put faith in just one in the No. 10 jersey: Manie Libbok, who made his first test start in July but is the only specialist flyhalf in



In this file photo, England's Tom Curry (left), collides with South Africa's Kurt-Lee Arendse during the international rugby match between England and South Africa at Twickenham Stadium in London, on Nov. 26, 2022. (AP)

'But we've got a lot of belief in what we've been doing'

All Blacks old flaws resurface in SA thrashing

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, Aug 30, (AP) — New Zealanders' growing confidence in the All Blacks' prospects at the Rugby World Cup has been punctured by the record loss to world champion South Africa in its last warmup.

The 35-7 defeat at neutral Twickenham was New Zealand's largest in a test match and revived all of the concerns that arose during the 2022 season in which the All Blacks were beaten in three consecutive tests at home for the first time.

Those worries subsided a little when the All Blacks won their first four tests this year, beating the Springboks to win the Rugby Championship and Australia, twice, to retain the Bledisloe Cup.

The wins over Australia gained new context from France's recent 41-17 win over the Wallabies which was more comprehensive than either win the All Blacks achieved.

Coach Ian Foster has advanced as factors in the All Blacks' loss to South Africa a lack of recent match play, the three yellow cards and subsequent red card the

team received and the significant injury to prop Tyrel Lomax.

But Foster and his fellow selectors made the risky decision to play the All Blacks' strongest lineup in the match and the fact that his best lineup was mauled so thoroughly by the Springboks allows little room for mitigation.

"It's actually OK to be psychologically down after a game like that because you put so much into it," Foster said. "But when you look at the bigger picture about what we wanted to achieve from that game, to be fair we got everything we expected. We just didn't deal with it as well as we expected. We've just got to fix that."

"But we've got a lot of belief in what we've been doing and we know that the first game of the World Cup is big and it's going to be just like that. We'll probably be attacked in a very similar way."

The confidence of the New Zealand squad must have been dented by the nature of the loss which came with only two weeks to make effective repairs before the opening match of the World Cup against France on Sept. 8 in Paris.

New Zealand supporters have a growing fear the defeat was not an aberration but a recurrence of an endemic problem. Apart from the deficiency in set-pieces and general forward play there were other recurrent problems: A lack of composure in defense and under pressure, poor tactical decision-making and a lack of discipline.

There's no doubt the All



New Zealand's Malakai Fekitoa (right), runs with the ball during the Rugby World Cup Pool C match between New Zealand and Namibia at the Olympic Stadium, London on Sept. 24, 2015. (AP)

Blacks have some of the most exciting backs in the world: Richie Mo'unga and Beauden Barrett, Will Jordan and Rieko Ioane. But the manner in which the All Blacks forwards were physically dominated by South Africa raises questions about whether they will be able to provide a platform for the backs against top-tier teams at the World Cup.

Lomax has a cut to his thigh which required 30 stitches and he along with

RUGBY

lock Brodie Retallick and back-rower Shannon Frizell are in doubt for the match against France, a crucial game for the All Blacks.

The forwards appeared to have been making progress, after disappointing performances in 2022, with the introduction of Crusaders assistant Jason Ryan as forwards coach. That impression was enlarged by early season performances this year, particularly the 35-20

Change Name

I, MANOJ holder of Passport No. V.6083395 do hereby change my name to MANOJ (as Given Name) SELVAKUMAR (as Surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name MANOJ SELVAKUMAR and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. ...MANOJ SELVAKUMAR

Lutz reuniting with coach Payton in Denver

Trades dominate day as NFL teams trim rosters to 53 players

WASHINGTON, Aug. 30, (AP) — A slew of trades highlighted roster cut-down day in the NFL on Tuesday.

Kicker Wil Lutz is reuniting with coach Sean Payton in Denver. The Eagles got tight end Albert Okwuegbunam from the Broncos. Veteran kicker Nick Folk went from New England to Tennessee.

Defensive end Boogie Bashum, defensive tackle Neil Farrell Jr., cornerbacks Noah Igbinoghene and Kelvin Joseph, offensive lineman Dan Feeney and Kendrick Green and wide receiver/returner Ihmir Smith-Marsette were among the players on the move in trades.

Jonathan Taylor isn't going anywhere, however. The Indianapolis Colts didn't trade the disgruntled star running back, but they're keeping Taylor on the physically unable to perform list. That means he will miss the first four games, even if he's traded.

The most surprising cut came from New England, which let second-year quarterback Bailey Zappe go. Zappe was 2-0 as a starter last year filling in for Mac Jones but struggled in the preseason. The Patriots currently don't have a backup because they also released veteran QB Trace McSorley and rookie Malik Cunningham, a QB at Louisville who played various positions and took snaps in camp.

FOOTBALL

Other notable cuts around the league included the Bengals releasing QB Trevor Siemian in favor of Jake Browning. Siemian gave Cincinnati an experienced backup behind Joe Burrow, whose status for Week 1 isn't clear because of a calf strain. Browning was the practice squad QB last season.

Philadelphia released punter Arryn Siposs. Green Bay cut incumbent punter Pat O'Donnell. Cleveland parted with kicker Cade York, a day after acquiring kicker Dustin Hopkins in a trade with the Los Angeles Chargers. York was a fourth-round pick in 2022. The Browns also waived wide receiver Austin Watkins Jr., a former USFL standout who had a strong camp and exhibition season.

Punter Thomas Morstead was among the Jets' cuts, but he's a vested veteran who is likely to be re-signed after the team clears roster space. Same for fullback Nick Bowden. New York also waived running back Zonovan "Bam" Knight to make room in a crowded backfield that includes Dalvin Cook, Breece Hall and Michael Carter. "Hard Knocks" star wideout Jerome Kapp - whose performance of Eminem's freestyle in "8 Mile" went viral - was also waived.

The 49ers kept Brandon Allen as their third-string QB after trading away former No. 3 overall pick Trey Lance to Dallas last week. San Francisco, which ended the NFC championship game with no healthy quarterbacks, decided to keep Allen for insurance behind starter Brock Purdy and Sam Darnold.

The Falcons also kept a third quarterback, Logan Woodside, behind starter Desmond Ridder and Taylor



In this file photo, Las Vegas Raiders running back Josh Jacobs runs with the ball during the first half of an NFL football game against the Los Angeles Rams, Thursday, Dec. 8, 2022, in Inglewood, Calif. Jacobs was hampered by injuries in 2020 and '21 but showed how dangerous he can be when healthy last season. (AP)

Varane ruled out for 'a few weeks'

MANCHESTER, England, Aug. 30, (AP) — Manchester United's injury problems are mounting.

Raphael Varane is the latest player sidelined, with the former France center back ruled out for "a few weeks" by United on Wednesday because of an unspecified injury.

Varane came off at halftime of United's 3-2 win over Nottingham Forest in the Premier League on Saturday. He is definitely out of United's trip to Arsenal on Sunday before the league takes a two-week break for international games.

Defender Luke Shaw and midfielder Mason Mount, an offseason signing from Chelsea, are also out with injuries sustained in the opening weeks of the season.

Varane's absence could impact on United's decision whether to sell Harry Maguire, who has lost the captaincy since the end of last season and been linked with a move to West Ham.

Maguire is fourth-choice center back at United behind Varane, Lisandro Martinez and Victor Lindelof.

United has won two of its first three games in the league. One of them was 1-0 over Wolverhampton, when Varane scored the goal.

Wolverhampton midfielder Mathews

MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, Aug. 30, (AP) — Results and standings from MLB games on Tuesday.

NY Yankees	4	Detroit	2
Philadelphia	12	LA Angels	7
Texas	2	NY Mets	1
Tampa Bay	11	Miami	2
Washington	5	Toronto	4
Houston	6	Boston	2
Baltimore	9	Chicago W. Sox	3
Cleveland	4	Minnesota	2
Pittsburgh	6	Kansas City	3
Oakland	3	Seattle	1
Chicago Cubs	1	Milwaukee	0
St. Louis	6	San Diego 10 inn	5
Atlanta	3	Colorado	1
San Francisco	6	Cincinnati	1
LA Dodgers	9	Arizona	1

American League

East Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Baltimore	83	49	.629	—
Tampa Bay	81	52	.609	2-1/2
Toronto	72	61	.541	11-1/2
Boston	69	64	.519	14-1/2
New York	64	68	.485	19

Central Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Minnesota	69	64	.519	—
Cleveland	63	70	.474	6
Detroit	59	73	.447	9-1/2
Chicago	52	81	.391	17
Kansas City	41	93	.306	28-1/2

West Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Seattle	75	57	.568	—
Texas	75	57	.568	—
Houston	76	58	.567	—
Los Angeles	63	70	.474	12-1/2
Oakland	39	94	.293	36-1/2

National League

West Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Atlanta	86	45	.656	—
Philadelphia	74	58	.561	12-1/2
Miami	66	66	.500	20-1/2
Washington	62	71	.466	25
New York	60	73	.451	27

Central Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Milwaukee	74	58	.561	—
Chicago	70	62	.530	4
Cincinnati	68	66	.507	7
Pittsburgh	60	73	.451	14-1/2
St. Louis	57	76	.429	17-1/2

West Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Los Angeles	82	49	.626	—
San Francisco	69	63	.523	13-1/2
Arizona	69	64	.519	14
San Diego	62	71	.466	21
Colorado	49	83	.371	33-1/2

Heinicke. Atlanta chose tight end John FitzPatrick over Parker Hesse and released offensive lineman Tyler Vrabel, son of Titans coach Mike Vrabel.

Veteran wide receiver Chosen Anderson was released by Miami. The Cowboys cut veteran QB Will Grier, who became expendable after Lance was acquired last week. Dallas coach Mike McCarthy said he hopes to retain Grier on the practice squad.

New Orleans released veteran cornerback Bradley Roby, linebacker Jaylon Smith, safety Jonathan Abram and punter Blake Gillikin. Lou Hedley takes Gillikin's spot and rookie kicker Blake Grupe replaces Lutz.

The New York Giants got Basham from the Buffalo Bills. He has 4 1/2 sacks in 23 games. The Giants released veteran receivers Cole Beasley and Jamison Crowder, who were signed in the offseason. Veteran tight end Tommy Sweeney, who had a medical episode on the field last week, was placed on the reserve non-football list. Wideout Sterling Shepard, a second-round pick in 2016 coming off his second major injury in two seasons (Achilles tendon and knee) is on the team and remains the longest-tenured player.

The Kansas City Chiefs got Farrell from the Raiders for a sixth-round pick and sent Smith-Marsette to the Panthers in a deal involving a swap of conditional 2025 seventh-round draft picks.

Igbinoghene, a 2020 first-round pick, went from Miami to Dallas for Joseph. The Dolphins sent Feeney to Chicago for a sixth-round pick. Green goes from Pittsburgh to Houston for a sixth-round pick.

The Los Angeles Rams made some surprising cuts, including guard Logan Bruss, the team's top draft pick last year who missed last season with a knee injury. Cornerback Robert Rochell, a former fourth-round pick, and defensive lineman Marquise Copeland, who began camp expecting to replace A'Shawn Robinson as a starter, also were cut.

Cornerback Sam Webb, who started three games for the Raiders last season, was among the team's cuts along with former starting guard Alex Bars.

The Ravens cut well-traveled veteran QB Josh Johnson and placed linebacker Tyus Bowser on reserve/NFL.

Nunes is refusing to train with the team in a bid to force through a move to Manchester City.

City has reportedly had a bid of around 47 million pounds (\$60 million) for Nunes rejected by Wolves, which only signed the Portugal international in the 2022 offseason.

City has yet to make an improved bid, Wolves manager Gary O'Neil said, with the transfer window closing on Sept. 1.

"He's not with the group at the moment, his choice," O'Neil said of Nunes. "After the bid from Manchester City, he decided it was best for him to not be with the group. Club policy and how we deal with things like that is set in place.

"As far as I'm aware there's been no improved bid. Mathews Nunes is still our player, we have a long contract still with him and at this moment I fully expect him to be here come Sept. 2. The next few days will be key, of course, and conversations will take place that will be private between me and Mathews and I'm sure the situation will be resolved."

Speaking after Wolves' 5-0 win over Blackpool on Tuesday, O'Neil stopped short of criticizing Nunes' actions, saying he first needed to speak to the player.

Cobb loses no-hit bid with 2 outs in 9th, Giants top Reds



Los Angeles Dodgers center fielder James Outman lunges to catch a line hit by Arizona Diamondbacks' Lourdes Gurriel Jr. during the sixth inning of a baseball game in Los Angeles. (AP)

Cubs snap Milwaukee's nine-game winning streak

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug. 30, (AP) — Alex Cobb came within one out of a no-hitter before Spencer Steer doubled with two outs in the ninth inning of the San Francisco Giants' 6-1 win over the Cincinnati Reds on Tuesday night.

Cobb dazzled to shut down Cincinnati before Steer's double provided the Reds' only run, coming so close to the majors' fifth no-hitter this year.

Center fielder Austin Slater had made the defensive play of the game when he chased down a shallow fly ball by Will Benson with a diving catch in left-center to end the eighth.

The 35-year-old right-hander just missed tossing San Francisco's first no-hitter since Chris Heston on June 9, 2015, at the Mets.

After getting Noelvi Marte's first-pitch flyout to start the ninth, Cobb (7-5) issued a one-out walk to Nick Senzel before another fly to right by TJ Friedl. Then Steer came through with an opposite-field hit.

A run scored on the double, and Cobb threw a called third strike past rookie Elly De La Cruz on his career-high 131st pitch for his eighth strikeout.

Senzel was credited with a single in the third inning on a two-hopper that third baseman Casey Schmitt snagged with a backhand grab. The rookie's throw from foul territory was high and pulled a leaping J.D. Davis off the first-base bag. Official scorer Chris Thoms originally called the play a hit, then changed it to an error several minutes later.

Patrick Bailey hit a two-run homer to help Cobb win for the first time in nine starts since July 5. The Giants went ahead in the second on a balk then Luis Matos delivered an RBI double to back Cobb.

Athletics 3, Mariners 1
In Seattle, Seattle's two-day stay alone atop the AL West ended in a loss to major league-worst Oakland, which built an early lead on home runs by Seth Brown and Shea Langeliers and beat the Mariners for the first time in nine games this season.

Seattle had won 12 of its previous 13 games, turning a 7 1/2-game deficit into a one-game lead over Texas. The Rangers won 2-1 at the New York Mets, matching the Mariners at 75-57. Houston is a percentage point back at 76-58.

Star outfielder Julio Rodriguez was scratched of a pinch nerve in his left foot that left him day to day, and starter pitcher George Kirby was scratched before the game because of illness and replaced by Luke Weaver (2-5). First baseman Ty France left after two innings with a bruised left thumb sustained on a pickoff.

Sean Newcomb (1-0), the third of six A's pitchers, struck out four in 1 2/3

innings for his first win with Oakland. Trevor May got his 15th save in 18 chances, finishing a four-hitter.

Dodgers 9, Diamondbacks 1
In Los Angeles, Mookie Betts hit his career-best 36th home run, David Peralta went 3 for 4 and drove in a pair of runs and Los Angeles won its fourth straight home game, beating Arizona.

The Dodgers pounded out 16 hits while improving to 23-4 in August. Jason Heyward was 3 for 4 with two RBIs, and Chris Taylor was 3 for 3 with an RBI and a run. Will Smith also homered.

Clayton Kershaw (12-4) allowed one run and three hits in five innings, struck out five and walked three. He tied Don Drysdale (209) for second on the franchise wins list.

Merrill Kelly (10-6) gave up seven runs and 12 hits in five innings, struck out one and walked three. Corbin Carroll led off the fifth with a homer for Arizona.

Yankees 4, Tigers 2
In Detroit, New York won consecutive games for the first time in four weeks, beating Detroit as Gleyber Torres homered for the second straight game.

Kyle Higashioka and Anthony Volpe also homered for the Yankees, who had not won back-to-back games

BASEBALL

since Aug. 2 against Tampa Bay and the next day against Houston. New York has won consecutive road games for the first time since June 28-29 at major league-worst Oakland.

Last-place New York (64-68), in danger of ending its streak of 30 consecutive winning seasons, has two chances against the Tigers to end its run of 10 winless series since a three-game sweep of Kansas City from July 21-23.

Detroit (59-73) has lost four straight.

Cubs 1, Brewers 0
In Chicago, Justin Steele struck out eight in six innings, shaking off a comebacker that hit him on his left leg, and Chicago snapped Milwaukee's



Oakland Athletics' Jordan Diaz hits a single against the Seattle Mariners during the sixth inning of a baseball game in Seattle. (AP)

nine-game winning streak.

Steele (15-3) allowed six hits and walked one, improving to 6-0 with a 3.09 ERA in his last eight starts. Chicago (70-62) pulled within four games of NL Central-leading Milwaukee (74-58).

Steele was struck near his left knee by Victor Caratini's one-out liner in the second but stayed in the game, drawing a cheer from the Wrigley Field crowd of 33,294.

Braves 3, Rockies 1

In Denver, Marcell Ozuna hit his 30th homer, Charlie Morton threw six innings of one-run ball and Atlanta beat Colorado for its 16th win in 21 games.

Major league-best Atlanta improved to 86-45, including 6-0 against the Rockies with a 57-17 run margin. Colorado is an NL-worst 49-83, assured of its fifth straight losing season. The Rockies have lost eight of nine overall.

Ozuna hit a solo drive in the second off Peter Lambert (3-5), and added an RBI single in the fifth. Sean Murphy had an RBI single in the second.

Phillies 12, Angels 7

In Philadelphia, Alec Bohm followed an intentional walk to Bryce Harper with a go-ahead three-run homer, Harper hit career home run No. 299 and Philadelphia beat Los Angeles for its fifth straight win.

Shohei Ohtani had three hits and knocked in two runs for an Angels team that reportedly put at least six players on waivers and seemingly surrendered any shot at salvaging the season.

Rangers 2, Mets 1

In New York, Mitch Garver homered to snap a scoreless tie in the seventh inning and Texas emerged from a slump and beat New York.

Ezequiel Duran had an RBI single and Andrew Heaney had seven strikeouts in 5 1/3 shutout innings for the Rangers, who began the day a game behind AL West-leading Seattle. Chris Stratton (2-1) picked up his first win for Texas since being acquired from St. Louis in a July 30 trade.

Nationals 5, Blue Jays 4

In Toronto, Keibert Ruiz hit a three-

run home run, Carter Kieboom had a two-run drive and Washington dropped Toronto 3 1/2 games behind Houston for the final AL wild card.

Washington's Jacob Young got his first major league hit, a bunt single in the seventh and threw a runner out at the plate to end the eighth.

Rays 11, Marlins 2

In Miami, Randy Arozarena, Josh Lowe and Isaac Paredes homered as Tampa rallied from two early deficits and beat Miami.

José Siri hit a go-ahead two-run double in the sixth inning and Yandy Diaz added two singles for the Rays, who trail AL-leading Baltimore by 2 1/2 games in the East Division and maintained their 5 1/2-game lead in the race for the AL's top wild-card spot.

Orioles 9, White Sox 3

In Baltimore, Anthony Santander hit a go-ahead three-run double in the seventh inning, and AL-best Baltimore beat Chicago and matched its victory total from last season.

Baltimore (83-49), which has won nine of 11, remained 2 1/2 games ahead of Tampa Bay in the AL East. The Orioles went 83-79 in 2022, their first winning season since 2016.

Astros 6, Red Sox 2

In Boston, Alex Bregman and Yordan Alvarez hit back-to-back homers runs in the first inning and Houston beat Boston for its fourth straight win.

Mauricio Dubón added a two-run double in the sixth for the Astros, who kept pace in a tight race for the AL West after entering the night one game behind division-leading Seattle. The Astros opened a 3 1/2-game lead over Toronto for the final AL wild card spot.

Guardians 4, Twins 2

In Minneapolis, Cleveland overcame an early exit from starting pitcher Gavin Williams caused by knee soreness, taking a three-run lead by the fourth inning and beating AL Central-leading Minnesota.

Minnesota, which leads second-place Cleveland by six games, went 0 for 9 with runners in scoring position and stranded three runners on third base. The Twins' Royce Lewis hit a solo homer in the fourth following grand slams in his previous two games.

Cardinals 6, Padres 5, 10 innings
In St. Louis, Willson Contreras homered twice, pinch-hitter Tommy Edman singled in the deciding run in the 10th inning and St. Louis snapped a four-game skid.

Edman slammed the first pitch from Josh Hader (0-2) to left field with one out to bring in Maysn Winn. Richie Palacios set up the winning run with a two-strike bunt to move Winn to third.

Pirates 6, Royals 3

In Kansas City, Ke'Bryan Hayes hit a two-run homer with two out in the eighth inning, helping rally Pittsburgh past Kansas City.

Hayes hit his 11th homer of the season 424 feet to left-center to erase a one-run deficit. In the ninth inning, Liover Peguero added a three-run homer and Jack Suwinski scored on a Kansas City error.



Aryna Sabalenka, of Belarus, returns a shot to Maryna Zanevska, of Belgium, during the first round of the U.S. Open tennis championships in New York. (AP)

Sports

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Alcaraz advances to second round

Williams suffers her most lopsided US Open loss in first round

NEW YORK, Aug. 30, (AP) — There was a Williams sister out there in Arthur Ashe Stadium on Tuesday night, much to the delight of spectators who offered a standing ovation at the end of the match. Except this time it was Venus, not Serena, and there was no ceremony, no formal farewell — and, unlike a year ago, no indication of what the future might hold.

Her younger sister's playing days are done after one last hurrah at Flushing Meadows in 2022, but Venus Williams is still competing, still striving, even if her age, 43, and a bum knee did her no favors on this muggy evening. Williams was eliminated 6-1, 6-1 by Belgian qualifier Greet Minnen in the first round of the U.S. Open, her most lopsided loss in 100 career matches at the Grand Slam tournament where she won the trophy in 2000 and 2001.

The crowd that seemed thrilled just to get a chance to see Williams play in person sent her toward the locker room with applause and yells. She gave a quick wave and a smile as she walked off, her red racket bag slung over her left shoulder.

The first 21 times Williams entered the event, she went 21-0 in the first round. But this was her third consecutive opening-round loss since.

Afterward in Ashe, defending champion Carlos Alcaraz advanced to the second round when his opponent, Dominik Koepfer, stopped playing while trailing 6-2, 3-2. Koepfer turned his ankle on the match's eighth point and, while he initially continued after getting treated, eventually conceded.

TENNIS

The 26-year-old Minnen — who threw an uppercut and raised her arms after winning — was born in August 1997, the month before Williams reached the U.S. Open final for the first time.

Williams owns seven major championships, including five at Wimbledon. But she has lost in the first or second round in each of her past 12 Slam appearances, including bowing out at the All England Club in July after taking a tumble in her opening match.

Various injuries have limited her to 10 matches this season — she is 3-7 — after just four in all of 2022. The latest problem is with a knee that forced her to withdraw from a tune-up tournament in Cleveland a little more than a week ago and left her unsure of whether she would be able to play in New York.

"I have to really thank my doctors for helping me to get here. That in itself was a blessing," Williams said. "I love playing here. I really gave it my all today. I really played some great shots, but she had some incredible answers to that. I wish I could have been more prepared for that."

The temperature was in the low 70s Fahrenheit (20s Celsius), but the humidity was 90%, and Williams was not able to stay in the points with Minnen.

It was quickly 3-0, with Williams — owner of what used to be one of the most intimidating serves in the game — broken twice right away. She lost each of her first half-dozen second-serve points.

Minnen did what she could to keep Williams off-balance, particularly with drop shots, and it worked.

Daniil Medvedev sent an early message that this U.S. Open might be more than a two-man race between Carlos Alcaraz and Novak Djokovic.

The 2021 champion rolled into the second round, beating Attila Balázs 6-1, 6-1, 6-0 in just 1 hour, 14 minutes.

Medvedev certainly has the game to compete with either on the hard courts of the U.S. Open, where the Russian was also the runner-up to Rafael Nadal in 2019 before winning his first major two years later.

The women's No. 3 seed, Jessica Pegula, also moved on quickly with a 6-2, 6-2 victory over Camila Giorgi.

The schedule also featured a number of veteran U.S. Open champions.

Andy Murray, who won the 2012 U.S. Open title, advanced in straight sets but needed nearly three hours to do it, beating Corentin Moutet 6-2, 7-5, 6-3.

Stan Wawrinka, who won the trophy in 2016, followed Murray's victory on the Grandstand.

No. 5 seed Ons Jabeur, who lost in last year's final to Iga Swiatek, was checked by a trainer and was coughing and blowing her nose during her match before getting past Camila Osorio 7-5, 7-6 (4). She said she has the flu and a history of asthma, calling it "a very, very tough day."

She found a way through, unlike Leylah Fernandez, the runner-up in 2021, who was eliminated by No. 22 Ekaterina Alexandrova 7-6 (4), 5-7, 6-4.

Also ousted was No. 7 Caroline Garcia, a 2022 U.S. Open semifinalist who was routed 6-4, 6-1 by Chinese qualifier Wang Yafan. But Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova, the No. 9 seed, advanced easily by knocking out qualifier Na Lae Han 6-3, 6-0 in an hour.

Other seeded winners on the men's side included No. 12 Alexander

Slovenia, Puerto Rico and Greece complete field for 2nd round at basketball World Cup



Georgia guard Rati Andronikashvili (4) goes up for a shot against Venezuela guard Heissler Guillent (19) in the second half of their Basketball World Cup Group F match in Okinawa, southern Japan. (AP)



Carlos Alcaraz, of Spain, returns a shot to Dominik Koepfer, of Germany, during the first round of the U.S. Open tennis championships, in New York. (AP)

Dream cruise past Mercury

Healthy Mystics move into fifth

WASHINGTON, Aug. 30, (AP) — Brittney Sykes scored 21 points, Natasha Cloud had 12 points and nine assists, and the healthy Washington Mystics beat the Minnesota Lynx 83-72 on Tuesday night.

Washington (17-18) moved a half-game ahead of Minnesota (17-19) and Atlanta for fifth place in the WNBA standings. The Mystics begin a three-game road swing on Thursday at Las Vegas. The Lynx host Atlanta and Phoenix later this week.

Ariel Atkins added 13 points and Elena Delle Donne scored 10 for Washington.

Delle Donne, Atkins, Cloud, Shakira Austin and Sykes all started for Washington, which had everyone available for the first time since June 9. Kristi Toliver played for the first time since June 16 due to plantar fasciitis.

The Mystics led 42-37 at half-time behind a combined 20 points

from Sykes and Atkins. Sykes made a long jumper just before the third-quarter buzzer to extend Washington's lead to 67-54.

Diamond Miller led Minnesota with 25 points. Napheesa Collier had 17 points, 10 rebounds and four steals. Jessica Shepard (left ankle) Lindsay Allen (left thumb) did not play.

Dream 94, Mercury 76

In College Park, Cheyenne Parker scored 25 points, Allisha Gray added 18 points and the Atlanta

BASKETBALL

Dream beat the Phoenix Mercury.

Atlanta (17-19) is tied with Minnesota for sixth in the WNBA standings. Phoenix (9-26) was eliminated from playoff contention on Sunday, snapping a streak of 10 straight seasons reaching the postseason.

Zverev and No. 16 Cam Norrie. No. 11 seed Karen Khachanov, who reached the semifinals last year, lost 6-2, 6-4, 6-2 to American wild card Michael

Mmoh; and No. 29 Ugo Humbert of France was swept by Matteo Berrettini, the 2021 Wimbledon runner-up, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2.

US dominate Jordan to maintain unbeaten run

MANILA, Philippines, Aug. 30, (AP) — Slovenia, Puerto Rico and Greece picked up victories Wednesday at the basketball World Cup to complete the field of 16 teams for the second round.

Slovenia defeated Cape Verde 92-77, led by 19 points from NBA star Luka Doncic. Puerto Rico routed winless China 107-89 behind 22 points from former NBA player Tremont Waters. Greece defeated New Zealand 83-74 with 27 points from Ioannis Papapetrou.

Earlier in the day, Serbia, Georgia and Brazil also reached the second round. Serbia defeated South Sudan 115-83 with 25 points from 20-year-old Nikola Jovic. Georgia topped Venezuela 70-59 behind 25 points from Tornike Shengelia. Brazil beat Ivory Coast 89-77 with Yago Santos scoring 24 points and adding 12 assists.

Ten teams had already advanced: the Dominican Republic, Australia, Italy, Spain, the United States, Canada, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Montenegro.

In Okinawa, Doncic led Slovenia (3-0), as he has throughout the tournament, with 19 points, seven rebounds and nine assists to guide the team into the second round. Right behind was teammate Klemen Prepelic with 18 points, four rebounds and seven assists.

Cape Verde (1-2), which has played far better than most expected, was led by Betinho Gomes with 17 points and Kenneti Mendes with 10.

In Manila, Waters had 22 points and six assists as Puerto Rico advanced. Puerto Rico had six players in double digits.

Ismael Romero scored 18 points and added 10 rebounds for Puerto Rico (2-1). Puerto Rico joined Serbia as the teams to progress from Group B.

Zhao Rui scored 16 points for winless China (0-3). Minnesota Timberwolves sixth-man Kyle

Anderson, who picked up Chinese citizenship days before the tournament opened, scored nine points in 31 minutes.

In Manila, Papapetrou scored 27 points and teammate Giannoulis Larentzakis hit 20 as Greece (2-1) advanced. The United States won the group and also qualified.

Greece broke the game open in the final quarter, outscoring New Zealand 33-20 with Papapetrou and Larentzakis consistently scoring key baskets late.

Shea Ili led New Zealand (1-2) with 27 points and Reuben Te Rangi scored 19.

BASKETBALL

In Jakarta, Juancho Hernangomez had 21 points and his brother Willy scored 16 to lead defending champion Spain (3-0), which had already advanced to the second round. Santiago Aldama added 11.

Brazil is the other qualifier from the group.

Iran (0-3) was led by Mohammad Amini with 19 points.

In Manila, Jovic shot 9 of 9 from the floor as Serbia (3-0) beat South



U.S. forward Jaren Jackson Jr. (13) blocks the shot of Jordan center Ahmad Dwairi (44) during the first half of a Basketball World Cup group C match in Manila, Philippines. (AP)

Sudan (1-2) to reach the round of 16. Bogdan Bogdanovic added 23 points and nine assists.

Jovic and Bogdanovic combined for 18 points in the first quarter as Serbia led 30-20 and steadily built its lead.

Peter Jok scored 21 points for South Sudan but Chicago Bulls guard Carlis Jones had just three points in 22 minutes.

In Okinawa, Shengelia scored 25 points and Goga Bitadze had 11 points and 11 rebounds as Georgia advanced.

Georgia, which is playing for the first time in the World Cup, led 42-23 at the half as Venezuela (0-3) scored only four points in the second quarter.

Nestor Colmenares had 16 points and 12 rebounds to lead Venezuela. Jose Materan added 12. Both teams struggled from 3-point range. Georgia was 5 of 23 and Venezuela was 6 of 25.

In Manila, Anthony Edwards scored 22 points and Bobby Portis Jr. chipped in 13 for the United States (3-0) to wrap up the group stage with an easy victory over Jordan (0-3). Josh Hart led the Americans with 12 rebounds.

Former NBA player Rondae Hollis-Jefferson led Jordan with 20 points and seven rebounds. The United States faces Montenegro on Friday in the second round.

The U.S. improved to 8-0 overall this summer, counting five exhibitions played on the way to Manila.

They're one of three teams that won all three group games by at least 20 points — joining Group H winner Canada and Group D winner Lithuania.

In Jakarta, Yago Santos scored 24 points and added 12 assists and Brazil (2-1) advanced into the second round, a bounce back after not qualifying for the Tokyo Olympics. Tim Soares added 15 points for the winners.

Brazil went 14 of 31 from 3-point range.

Cedric Bah led Ivory Coast (1-2) with 13 points and 13 rebounds.