

This file photo shows a Boeing 737 Max 9 built for United Airlines landing at King County International Airport - Boeing Field after a test flight from Moses Lake, Washington, in Seattle. (AP)



United orders 270 jets to replace old ones, plan for growth

United Airlines said Tuesday that it is ordering 200 Boeing Max jets and 70 Airbus planes so it can replace some of its aging planes and grow after the pandemic eases. At list prices, the deal would be worth more than \$30 billion, although airlines routinely get deep discounts, sometimes more than half, according to analysts. United declined to disclose terms.

It is one of the largest orders ever for commercial planes and underscores that airlines see a recovery underway and expect to return to the profitability they enjoyed before the pandemic crushed air travel more than a year ago. It is also, of course, a major boost for the world's two main aircraft makers, especially Boeing. The Chicago-based company saw orders plummet after

Max jets were grounded following two deadly crashes. The pandemic has hurt sales too. Boeing "needs to play a bit of catch-up," and so it likely gave United a steep discount, said George Dimitroff, analyst with Ascend by Cirium. "From here forward, pricing will get firmer," Dimitroff said. "I think that United is probably taking advantage of the last of the good pricing."

United claims the orders will create 25,000 jobs over several years, although executives did not describe how they arrived at that figure. The airline has about 68,000 employees now. United said it ordered 50 Max 8 jets, 150 slightly larger Max 10s, and 70 Airbus A321neos, which are larger still and usually seat 220 passengers in economy and premium. (AP)

Market Movements

29-06-2021

| | Change | Closing pts | | Change | Closing pts | | | | |
|-------------|--------|---------------|---------|-----------|-------------|---|-------------------|---------|-----------|
| SAUDI | - | Tadawul | +39.31 | 10,996.38 | JAPAN | - | Nikkei | -235.41 | 28,812.61 |
| UK | - | FTSE 100 | +14.58 | 7,087.55 | UAE | - | DFM | -12.26 | 2,827.71 |
| EUROPE | - | Euro Stoxx 50 | +17.60 | 4,107.51 | EGYPT | - | EGX 30 | -150.86 | 10,123.06 |
| PHILIPPINES | - | All Shares | +18.69 | 6,956.65 | INDIA | - | Sensex | -185.93 | 52,549.66 |
| PAKISTAN | - | KSE 100 | +135.42 | 47,137.77 | SINGAPORE | - | Straits Times STI | -37.39 | 3,089.49 |

Business

Move could lead to a sharp increase in prices of most commodities

Lebanon hikes fuel prices by more than 35% amid crisis

BEIRUT, June 29, (AP) - Lebanon's energy ministry on Tuesday increased gasoline and fuel prices by 35%, a move that could lead to a sharp increase in prices of most commodities in the crisis-hit country.

The hike came days after caretaker prime minister, Hassan Diab, granted approval for financing fuel imports at a rate higher than the official exchange rate, effectively reducing critical fuel subsidies.

Lebanon is going through an unprecedented economic and financial collapse, coupled with a months-long political deadlock over the formation of a new government.

The developments pose the gravest threat to the small country's stability since the end of its civil war three decades ago. The World Bank said the crisis is among the worst the world has seen in 150 years.

Fistfights and shootings have erupted at some gas stations over the past weeks as frustrated citizens lined up for hours to fill up their tanks and the shortages have led to protests around Lebanon.

Electricity cuts last for much of the day, and people have had to turn off private generators for several hours to ration fuel. Last week, the economy ministry raised the price of subsidized bread by 18%, the fifth time it was raised in a year.

The price of gasoline, which in Lebanon is calculated for 20 liters (about 5 1/2 gallons) reached 62,000 Lebanese pounds at the 35% increase, or about \$3.6 according to black market rates. Despite the hike, motorists still lined up at gas stations Tuesday to fill their tanks. Diesel increased 38%, to 46,100 pounds - about \$2.7 on the black market.

Fuel distributors representative, Fadi Abu Shakra, urged calm. He was quoted by the Lebanese state news agency, NNA, as saying that six fuel tankers began offloading oil products after midnight on Monday to ease demands.

The Lebanese pound hit a new low over the weekend, selling at 18,000 pounds to the dollar on the black market. The pound has lost more than 90% of its value since the crisis began with nationwide protests against the country's political class in late 2019.

There are several exchange rates - including the official rate that still stands at 1,507 pounds to the dollar. Two other exchange rates, both authorized by the Central Bank, are 3,900 pounds to the dollar for withdrawals from bank accounts and 12,000 pounds for \$1 for imports of several products.

The decree signed by Diab on Friday allows the financing of fuel imports at an exchange rate price of 3,900 pounds.

The crisis, rooted in decades of corruption and mismanagement, has worsened in recent weeks with the Central Bank cutting back on financing imports at subsidized dollars. Foreign currency reserves have dropped dangerously low, from \$30 billion at the start of the crisis, to nearly \$15 billion currently. That has prompted merchants to either raise prices or stop imports.



Motorbike drivers wait to get fuel at a gas station in the southern suburb of Beirut, Lebanon, Sunday, June 27, 2021. On Friday, Hassan Diab, Lebanon's caretaker prime minister, granted his approval to allow the financing of fuel imports at a rate higher than the official exchange rate, effectively reducing critical fuel subsidies that have been in place for decades, amid worsening gasoline shortages. (AP)

US April home prices jump

First major economy to rebound from pandemic

WB raises China growth outlook to 8.5%

BEIJING, June 29, (AP) - The World Bank raised its forecast of China's economic growth this year to 8.5% from 8.1% and said Tuesday that a full recovery requires progress in vaccinations against the coronavirus.

The report adds to positive signs for China, the first major economy to rebound from the pandemic. Factory and consumer activity are back above

pre-outbreak levels, though authorities have re-imposed travel controls in some areas to counter outbreaks of new variants of the virus.

Chinese economic growth is likely to decline to 5.4% next year as the rebound from last year's history-making global slump fades and activity returns to normal, the World Bank said.

Its forecast was an increase over a

report in April that said China and Vietnam were the only East Asian economies to achieve a "v-shaped" recovery in 2020 with output back above pre-coronavirus levels.

China is on track to vaccinate 40% of its population by early summer, but "a full recovery will also require continued progress toward achieving wide-spread immunization," the World Bank said.

Fastest pace in over 15 yrs

WASHINGTON, June 29, (AP) - U.S. home prices soared in April at the fastest pace since 2005 as potential buyers bid up prices on a limited supply of available properties.

The S&P CoreLogic Case-Shiller 20-city home price index, released Tuesday, jumped nearly 15% in April from the previous year. That is up from a 13.4% annual gain in March.

Many Americans have sought more living space since the pandemic began, seeking larger homes in suburbs rather than apartments or smaller homes in cities. Historically low mortgage rates, restrained in part by the Federal Reserve's low-interest rate policies, have also spurred demand, just as the large millennial generation ages into a peak home-buying period. The price gains have been so dramatic that home sales have started to slow as more would-be buyers are priced out of the market.

Still, economists said there is little sign that the housing market's blistering price increases are likely to cool off soon.

"The forces that have propelled home price growth to new highs over the past year remain in place and are offering little evidence of abating," said Matthew Speakman, an economist at real estate data provider Zillow.

All 20 cities that make up the index reported higher year-over-year price gains in April than the previous month. Five cities - Charlotte, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, and Seattle - had the largest 12-month price increases on records dating back 30 years.

Even as demand rose during the pandemic, fewer Americans were willing to sell their properties, perhaps reluctant to have waves of potential buyers troop through their homes. That sharply reduced the number of houses available, setting off bidding wars for most properties. Last month, nearly half of homes sold were selling for above their asking price, according to realty company Redfin.

In May, the number of available homes ticked up slightly, to 1.23 million. But that was still down 21% compared with a year earlier.

Sales of existing homes have fallen for four straight months, likely because soaring prices have discouraged some would-be buyers.

Still, demand is strong enough that a typical home was on the market for just 17 days last month, the National Association of Realtors said. Nearly 9 of 10 homes were on the market for less than a month.



In this file photo, shoppers wearing face masks to help curb the spread of the coronavirus walk through the capital popular shopping mall in Beijing. The World Bank raised its forecast of China's economic growth this year to 8.5% from 8.1% and said Tuesday, June 29, 2021, a full recovery requires progress in vaccinations against the coronavirus. (AP)

NBK Academy Celebrates the Graduation of the 24th Batch

National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) Academy celebrated the graduation of the 24th batch, the 1st in 2021, of newly hired employees who successfully met admission criteria for this intensive course, specially designed for fresh Kuwaiti university graduates.

The graduation ceremony was attended by Mr. Salah Al-Fulaij, CEO of NBK - Kuwait, Mr. Sulaiman Al-Marzouq, Deputy CEO of NBK - Kuwait, Mr. Emad Al-Abhani, GM - Group Human Resources and Mr. Mohammed Al-Othman, GM- Consumer Banking Group, in addition to other executives from the bank, in line with all precautionary measures and social distancing to keep everyone safe.

The Academy's training program, which lasted for four months, hosted 13 participants and covered various areas of the banking business, such as banking principles, risk management, financial accounting, marketing, negotiation, consumer and commercial lending, as well as training on creativity, innovation and design thinking. Various blended learning interventions occurred through in person and virtual courses. Furthermore, their development



Najla Al-Sager

continues through eLearning after the academy ends.

On this occasion, Najla Al-Sager, Head of Talent Management, Group Human Resources at National Bank of Kuwait, said: "NBK Academy, launched 12 years ago, embodies the bank's strategy to recruit fresh graduate national talents, and aims to develop and enable them to work in the banking sector."

NBK has a firm belief in the importance of investing in its people by providing a unique environment in the areas of employee training and development, which contributes to enhance their skills and help them build a successful career path that supports sustaining the bank's growth in the future, she added.

It is worth mentioning that the program

content is regularly enhanced to keep pace with the latest international researches and studies related to the banking sector and administrative sciences.

The Academy reflects NBK's vision to support sustainable human capital development as one of its top strategic priorities and a shared responsibility between the various governmental institutions and the private sector.

NBK Academy was inaugurated in 2008 with the aim to pave the way for new Kuwaiti graduates to join the banking services sector. The Academy provides graduates with the best training programs developed in cooperation with leading international institutions and universities to meet the demands of the labor market.



A real estate sign is posted in front of a newly-constructed single family home, Thursday, June 24, 2021 in Auburn, New Hampshire. US home prices soared in April at the fastest pace since 2005 as Americans bid up prices on a limited supply of available properties. (AP)