



PROTESTERS STORM SWEDISH EMBASSY IN BAGHDAD

Kuwait summons envoy in protest



In this photo provided by the Iraqi News Agency, followers of the influential Iraqi Shiite cleric and political leader Muqtada Sadr storm the Swedish embassy in Baghdad, Iraq, Thursday, June 29, 2023, in protest at the burning of a Holy Quran in Sweden. An Iraqi security official has said the Swedish embassy was evacuated by security forces after the protesters breached the building. (AP)

Widespread denunciation

KUWAIT CITY, July 2, (Agencies): Acting at the behest of Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah called in Sweden Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates and Non-Resident Ambassador to Kuwait Liselott Andersson on Friday.

He handed the Swedish diplomat a protest note over the permission of her government for extremists to burn a copy of the Holy Quran in Stockholm on Wednesday.

Sheikh Jarrah expressed Kuwait's strong denunciation of the Swedish authorities for permitting extremists to persist in such repugnant acts, according to a press release from the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry.

The State of Kuwait demanded the Swedish government to shoulder its responsibility for halting immediately the malpractices targeting the Muslims and the Islamic sanctities.

It stressed the need of bringing the perpetrators of such acts to book and preventing them from using the freedom of expression as a ploy to offend Muslims and tamper with the sanctities of the holy faith, the statement noted.

Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed strong denunciation of the setting alight of a Holy Quran copy by a Swedish extremist in front a mosque in Stockholm on Wednesday.

"This serious provocative move offends Muslims around the world, the Ministry said in a statement.

"The State of Kuwait reminds the international community and all countries concerned of their responsibility for acting against hate and religious extremism, and stopping the hostile acts that target the Muslim's sanctities.

"Perpetrators of such hostile acts should be brought to book and prevented from using the principle of freedoms as a ploy to justify hostility against Islam or any holy faith," the Ministry urged, stressing the need to promote the values of tolerance and coexistence among people with different faiths.

Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah spoke to his Swedish peer Tobias Billstrom on Friday to express Kuwait's rejection and condemnation of the burning a copy of Holy Quran by Salwan Momika.

Momika was allowed by the Swedish authorities to

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Algeria follows up death of teen in France

Kuwait embassy tells nationals to avoid protests

PARIS, July 2, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Embassy in Paris has called on Kuwaitis in Paris and other French cities to be vigilant and stay away from gatherings and protests.

In a press statement issued on Friday, the embassy advised Kuwaitis to follow the instructions of the French authorities and contact the embassy for enquiries or assistance on: +33670673834.

Elsewhere, the Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and National Community Abroad said Thursday the government is following up with great concern the developments of the tragic death of Nahel, a 17-year old Algerian teenager who was shot dead by a French policeman in Paris on Tuesday night.

The horrible incident shocked the Algerian government which always stands by its nationals abroad in difficult times, according to a press release from the Ministry.

The Ministry expressed sincere condolences to the bereaved family, adding that it is confident that the French government would shoulder its responsibility for ensuring the safety and security of Algerian expatriates and restore calm.

The tragic incident triggered angry protests in several suburbs of Paris, particularly in Nanterre, over the last two nights while the policeman was remanded in custody pending questioning by prosecutors.

Case filed against Canada

US envoy to Iran in security probe

WASHINGTON, July 2, (AP): The Biden administration's special envoy for Iran has been placed on unpaid leave and had his security clearance suspended pending a review of allegations he may have mishandled classified information, U.S. officials said Thursday.

Rob Malley has led administration efforts to revive the faltering Iran nuclear deal and resolve issues related to detained Americans in Iran, but has not been active in his main job for weeks. He told colleagues he was taking extended personal leave for unspecified family reasons.

Two State Department officials said the agency's Bureau of Diplomatic Security was leading the inquiry, which revolves around Malley's handling of classified documents. The officials said they learned of Malley's change in status from paid to unpaid leave on Thursday, shortly after questions about his status were raised at the State Department's regular afternoon briefing.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity due to privacy reasons.

Malley did not immediately respond to a query about the situation from The Associated Press but said in a short statement to several other news outlets that he had "been informed that my security clearance is under review."

"I have not been provided any further information, but I expect the investigation to be resolved favorably and soon. In the meantime, I am on leave," he said in that statement.

State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said earlier Thursday that Malley officially remains in his post but is on leave and that his deputy, Abram Paley, is currently leading the Iran portfolio as the acting special envoy.

Malley's whereabouts have raised questions since he skipped a classified congressional briefing on Iran on May 16. At the time, State Department officials told lawmakers that Malley was on "extended personal leave" and suggested that his absence might be related to a family health issue.

Malley, a close personal friend of Secretary of State Antony Blinken, had worked for the International Crisis Group during the Trump administration. In that job he met on several occasions with Iranian and Palestinian officials with whom U.S. officials are barred from having contact.

During the Obama administration, Malley served as a National Security Council aide and was closely involved in the negotiations over the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran.

Meanwhile, the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee is demanding that the State Department produce more information about the suspension of the U.S. special envoy for Iran's security clearance.

Rep. Michael McCaul, a Texas Republican, said Friday the Biden administration owed Congress a full explanation for the suspension of envoy Rob Malley's clearance and his being placed on unpaid leave.

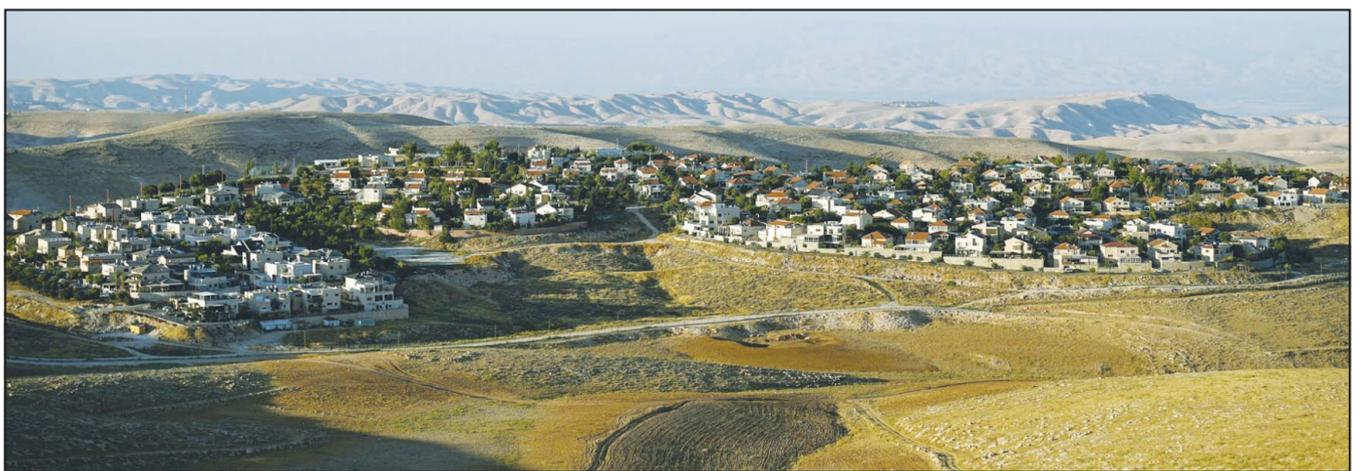


Malley

Also:

THE HAGUE: Iran has filed a case against Canada at the United Nations' top court accusing it of flouting state immunity in allowing relatives of victims of terrorism to seek reparations from the Islamic Republic.

In its case announced Wednesday by the International Court of Justice, **Tehran** argues that Canada is "obliged to respect the jurisdictional immunity which Iran enjoys under international law" and should not allow civil claims against Iran "for alleged support to, or acts of, terrorism."



A view of the Israeli settlement of Kedar, in the West Bank, on June 26, 2023. Israel's far-right government has approved plans to build thousands of new homes in the occupied West Bank, a move that threatened to worsen increasingly strained relations with the United States. (AP)

Dismay over expansion

Foreign ministers of Australia, Canada and the UK have voiced deep concern about the Israeli far-right government decision to build over 5,700 housing units in the illegal West Bank settlements.

"We are gravely concerned by the Government of Israel's approval on June 26 of over 5,700 new settlement units in the West Bank," the foreign ministers said in a joint statement.

"We are also concerned by the changes to the settlement approval process instituted by the Government of Israel on June 18, which facilitate swifter approval of construction in settlements."

They warned that the continued expansion of settlements is an obstacle to peace and negatively impacts efforts to achieve a negotiated two-state solution.

"We call on the Government of Israel to reverse these decisions."

The foreign ministers also expressed deep concerns about the continued violence and loss of life in Israel and in the West Bank.

"We unequivocally condemn all forms of terrorism and violence against civilians. We also condemn the reprehensible and ongoing settler violence targeting Palestinians. We welcome the joint statement from the heads of the Israel Defense Forces, Israel Security Agency and the Israel Police as well as statements by other Israeli leaders condemning these acts. We call on authorities to ensure accountability for all perpetrators of violence," they asserted.

They emphasized that the cycle of violence in Israel and the West Bank must be broken.

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'Shootout' outside US Jeddah consulate kills security guard

WASHINGTON, July 2, (AP): The State Department said a gunman who opened fire on the U.S. consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and a local security guard working at the consulate were killed in an exchange of fire on Wednesday.

The motive for the attack was not immediately clear, the department said.

The consulate went into lockdown as the shooting took place and no Americans or American staff were injured, it said.

The assailant was killed by Saudi security forces, the State Department said, referring questions to the Saudi authorities, who it said were investigating.

Saudi Arabia's state news agency, citing Saudi police, said the man had gotten out of a vehicle outside the consulate carrying a gun.

"Authorities took the initiative to deal with him as required by the situation," the press agency said. It said the slain consulate security worker was Nepalese.

News watch

IDLIB: A Russian airstrike targeted a military post of a group linked to al-Qaida in northwest Syria killing at least six militants, medical officials and a war monitor said.

The airstrike on the **Jabal al-Zawiya** area in the northwestern province of Idlib came two days after another airstrike on a busy vegetable market in the same province killed at least nine people.

The **Britain-based** Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, said the Tuesday morning airstrike killed eight militants and wounded other members of the al-Qaida-linked Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS.

Medical officials in the area said the strike killed six militants and wounded others.

It is not uncommon to have conflicting figures of casualties in the aftermath of airstrikes on Idlib province, the last remaining rebel stronghold in war-torn Syria.

Russia joined the war in September 2015, helping tip the balance of power in favor of President **Bashar Assad** in the 12-year conflict that has killed half a million people. (AP)

BEIRUT: Israel carried out airstrikes on areas near the central Syrian city of **Homs** early Sunday causing material damage but no casualties, the Syrian military said in a statement.

A Syrian anti-aircraft missile exploded over Israeli territory, the Israeli military said, prompting another round of strikes.

Syrian state media quoted an unnamed military official as saying the air defenses shot down some of the missiles fired by Israeli warplanes flying over neighboring **Lebanon**.

Israeli authorities did not comment on the airstrike on Hom. But the military said one of the Syrian air defense missiles exploded over Israeli territory without causing any damage. Israeli police said the rocket's remains landed in the southern Israeli city of **Rahat**.

In response to the rocket, Israeli jets struck the air defense battery from where the anti-aircraft rocket was launched. The military said it also struck other targets, without elaborating. (AP)

IRBIL: More than 50 members of the local parliament in

Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region in the north have submitted their resignations to protest a court decision that deemed as unconstitutional the legislature's postponement of elections by a year.

Jihad Hassan, an MP with the Kurdistan Democratic Party, which holds the largest number of seats in the autonomous region's parliament, said Tuesday that all 45 members of its bloc had resigned the day before from the 111-member parliament, along with nine MPs from other parties.

The Federal Supreme Court in **Baghdad** last month ruled against the regional parliament's decision in October to extend its legislative term, delaying the regional election by a year. The decision came in response to a lawsuit filed by opposition political figures challenging the legality of the extension. (AP)

WASHINGTON: A Texas man was sentenced on Friday to 165 months, or 13 years and nine months, in prison followed by a lifetime of supervised release for attempting to provide material support to the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (IS), a designated foreign terrorist organization.

According to court documents, **Kaan Sercan Damlarkaya**, 23, **Houston** city, attempted to join and support ISIS from August 2017 until his arrest in December 2017.

He pleaded guilty July 8, 2019. In addition to wanting to join IS, Damlarkaya also provided information to ISIS supporters about the use of machetes, homemade construction of an automatic weapon and how to build and use explosive materials. (KUNA)

CAIRO: The Arab League underlined the importance of tropical regions of the Earth, which represents 80 percent of the biological diversity in the world and in turn considered to be a natural treasure for all humanity.

A statement by the League, marking The International Day of the Tropics, noted that these regions do face various challenges, such as climate change, deforestation, logging, urbanization and demographic changes.

The League noted that the International Day of the Tropics celebrates the extraordinary diversity of the tropics while highlighting unique challenges and opportunities nations of the Tropics face.

It provides an opportunity to take stock of progress across the tropics, to share tropical stories and expertise and to acknowledge the diversity and potential of the region. (KUNA)

Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:17	Asr	15:26
Sunrise ..	04:52	Maghrib ..	18:52
Zohr	11:52	Isha	20:23

Local

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

By Day: Very hot with moderate to fresh northwesterly wind with speeds of 20-60 km/h causing rising dust.

By Night: Hot to rather hot with

Weather

light to moderate freshening at times over coastal areas northwesterly wind with speeds of 12-40 km/h.

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

Abdaly	47	30
Jahra	47	32
Salmiyah	43	33
Ahmadi	45	35
Nuwaisib	45	29
Wafra	46	27

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

Kuwait, Austria FMs meet on bilateral ties

Kuwait reiterates support to transparent, accountable Security Council



Relatives shower returning family members with sweets and flowers at the airport.

Photo by Mohammad Morsi

Eid Al-Adha celebrated

Kuwaiti 'Hajj' pilgrims begin returning home

KUWAIT CITY, July 2, (KUNA): Kuwaiti pilgrims started on Saturday returning home after concluding the rituals at the sacred places in Saudi Arabia.

The first flight bringing the pilgrims back home touched down at Kuwait International Airport at 9:35 a.m.

A Saudi airways plane arrived off the terminal T-1 with 330 pilgrims on board, said Mansour Al-Hashemi, the director of operations at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), in a statement to KUNA.

A total of 25 flights for the returning pilgrims are scheduled today. They are set to fly back 8,135 pilgrims, Al-Hashemi added.

The DGCA has worked out an integrated plan to facilitate procedures for the returning devotees.

Fifteen similar flights are due tomorrow.

The Kuwaiti people celebrate Eid Al-Adha with diverse rituals and customarily practices namely sacrificial sheep slaughter, a tradition from which "eid al-lahm" (the meat Eid) derives.

Families prepare for pilgrims' return from sacred sites in Saudi Arabia, eager to receive gifts from Makkah and Medina and prepare dinners in honor for the gathering with their loved ones, said Saleh Al-Mesbah, a historian and chronicler of the Kuwaiti heritage in an interview with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA).

Kuwaitis, like many Muslims elsewhere in the world, slaughter sheep (or other cattle) immediately after prayers, early in the morning. Particularly in the past, they used to do the ritual in the house courtyard, witnessed by family members.

Father of the family, particularly in the old times, himself slaughters the sheep. Aided by relatives, he skins it and distributes the meat to relatives, neighbors and the poor. With no fridges to preserve perishables, the family retains third of the livestock and cook it totally for a celebratory lunch.

A neighborhood (Al-Fereej in Kuwaiti dialect) used to comprise 20-25 households. An average of four-five houses would witness eid slaughter. In case they chose a cow or a camel for the ceremony, a butcher would do the job, Al-Mesbah said.

Family members gather at the eldest house for the eid breakfast that contains cooked beans (locally known as bajella), chickpea (nekihi), regag (homemade bread) and some popular sweets such as darabi.

Households used to fry the livestock liver to be offered at pre-noon time, and serve the slaughtered meat with rice for lunch.

The Kuwaitis, in the past, used to take a week-long Eid holiday. Every day, men perform Al-Ardha (a folkloric dance), brandishing rifles and swords while chanting.

At the playgrounds, children experience enjoyable time with swings and other traditional games amid loud singing. They spend their eid pocket money on buying sweets and fireworks. Not only parents would grant them some money to celebrate the occasion, but neighbors would do so too.

Households clean up the houses on the eid eve. Early in the eid morning, they sprinkle the house with rose water or fragrance and fill the air with bukhoor. The women dye their hair with henna, color their feet and hands with the red substance.

Al-Adha Eid was also an occasion to wear new clothes, and families used to install a red, green or white flag atop the house as a mark that a member performed pilgrimage.

A pilgrim who returned early would assure pilgrims' families about their loved ones safety in the holy places and inform them about time of their expected return. He would be rewarded with gifts, money or food.

Panels return to work

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: The parliamentary committees will resume their work immediately after the Eid Al-Adha holiday.

The Disabled Affairs Committee announced that it will meet on Monday to specify its priorities and discuss the agenda. Chairman of the committee MP Soud Al-Asfour has unveiled the committee's plan to submit its reports on the amendment of Disabled Affairs Law No. 8/2010, which were completed during the tenure of the nullified 2022 Parliament. He called on all concerned parties, individuals and institutions to submit their suggestions to the committee.

Meanwhile, the parliamentary fact-finding committee tasked to investigate violations in the distribution of vocational, industrial and agricultural plots will meet on Monday to continue the investigations.

Call to freeze funds of cash-launders

Real estate fraud rampant

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: The Public Prosecution intends to send letters to the European countries in order to ask them to freeze funds estimated at more than KD1 billion, as some people have been accused of laundering money from Kuwait through real estate fraud, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting a reliable source.

The source confirmed that the prosecution took a number of steps to monitor the flow of State funds at home and abroad in a bid to recover them and punish those involved in money laundering. He said the prosecution recently filed new cases against several individuals and entities accused of money laundering through real estate fraud. He added the prosecution is moving towards more than one direction to track the State funds withheld at home and abroad, while following up the new money laundering cases; some of which were referred to the concerned court upon completion of procedures and collection of evidence.

The source pointed out that the State Funds Tracking Team at the prosecution is implementing a legal plan to speed up the completion of files and cases, in cooperation with various prosecution offices, especially the International Cooperation Prosecution, and to intensify efforts in combating money laundering and recovering misappropriated public funds.

In confirmation of what was published by Al-Qabas on June 28, under the title "The Latest Developments of the Strategic Alternative Project," and that it was

finally submitted to the Minister of Finance, after its final study was approved by the Civil Service Council, in order to express opinions on it and make some amendments to it, or to approve it as it is. Finance Minister Manaf Al-Hajri confirmed that the strategic alternative to salaries is still under study, and its elements that achieve its original goals have not been completed in a way that serves the public administration in the country in particular, and the national economy in general.

Al-Hajri told KUNA that any treatment of the strategic alternative should not affect the sustainability of the state's public finances, or the government's ability to launch tangible projects in clear sectors (such as housing, tourism and transportation), which requires greater capital spending.

Al-Hajri stressed that "no new proposal should cause additional reluctance for Kuwaitis to work in the private sector, as is happening now, due to long working hours, and its focus on measuring employee performance and productivity."

He explained that the issue of the strategic alternative to salaries arose from the need to achieve social justice among state employees, indicating that the goals will not be achieved "if the treatment is done by dealing with salaries only and without addressing performance scale in a modern way that motivates the employee to develop cognitively and professionally."

Al-Hajri added, "What is currently being circulated on social media about the strategic alternative is inaccurate and unrealistic in its numbers."

On a related note, the draft budget for the current fiscal year showed that the salaries item acquired more than 56.7% of the total budget expenditures, as the estimated expenditures on salaries amounted to about 14.9 billion dinars, an increase of 13% in salaries of the previous year, in which the total salaries item amounted to about 13.1 billion dinars, and the draft budget estimated 21,815 new jobs during the current year.

Cooperation pledged, policies backed

Kuwait attends as FAO confab opens

ROME, July 2, (KUNA): The 43rd Session of the General Conference of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) kicked off on Saturday at the Organization's headquarters with Kuwait delegation being led by Ambassador in Rome Nasser Al-Qahtani.

Director-General of the Organization Qu Dongyu, of China, opened the biennial event in the presence of more than 100 ministers of agriculture from the 194 member countries.

The ongoing session will see the election of a new Director-General for the next four (2023-2027) by secret ballot tomorrow, the second day of the event.

Qu, whose term in office has expired, was first elected in June 2019; he is standing unopposed to be re-elected. Holder of this post may serve only two consecutive four-year terms.

The opening session is scheduled to discuss procedural matters, such as the election

of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons, followed by the traditional McDougall Memorial Lecture, which this year will be delivered by Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for Social Policies of Singapore.

The State of Kuwait believes in the active role of the UN agency in ensuring healthy food and sound nutrition in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, he said in statements to KUNA on the fringes of the conference.

"Kuwait actively backs the FAO policies and technical committees, and held the presidency of the Organization's regional Arab Group," Ambassador Al-Qahtani pointed out.

He commended the successful cooperation with the Organization in the UN-led humanitarian effort aiming to ensure food security and decent living particularly in the disaster-hit countries.

NEW YORK, July 2, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait renewed its support to a more transparent, efficient and accountable Security Council and affirmed readiness to support these efforts as the council is the world's peace and security safekeeping body.

This was relayed during councilor's Abdulaziz Ammash speech to the UN's general assembly when discussing the SC report.

Ammash took note of the long suspended issues on the council's agenda, namely the 75-year-old Palestinian issue, saying that this is a call to seriously examine the causes of continuous regression of the situation.

The notable restriction on the council's work in light of what the world is undergoing from accelerating challenges and unprecedented threats, should drive member states to enhance council's work mechanism, augment intergovernmental negotiations aiming to reform the council, remarked the Kuwaiti official.

The state of Kuwait, he expounded, had joined and supported a number of reformative initiatives, including signing the Code of Conduct which calls upon all UNSC members to not vote against any credible draft resolution intended to prevent or halt crimes against humanity, apartheid or war crimes.

On the intergovernmental negotiations, Ammash commented that this session underwent tangible positive developments that with launching a website with displays of documents presented during the session as well as TV broadcasting of said intergovernmental negotiations.

Ammash stated that active change is achieved through true desire and cooperation, and voiced hope for more flexibility and innovation in raising the council's efficiency and transparency.

Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, now leading a delegation on a visit to the Republic of Austria, met with Federal Minister for European and International Affairs Alexander Schallenberg in Vienna on Thursday.

He conveyed the regards of the political leadership of the State of Kuwait to the

Austrian leaders, expressing the best wishes for the Austrian leaders and people.

Both sides discussed the friendly ties and explored ways for strengthening cooperation in various areas.

The talks focused on the efforts to grant the Kuwaiti nationals the privilege of entering the Schengen visa-free zone and lobbying European support for the Kuwaiti drive.

Sheikh Salem expressed upbeat about Austria's role in this regard given the fact that the country is one of the best destinations for Kuwaiti holidaymakers.

On his part, Schallenberg expressed support for the efforts to grant the Kuwaiti nationals access to the Schengen visa-free zone, noting that the move would have a positive impact on the common interests in the tourist, economic and trade areas.

The talks also dealt with a range of regional and international issues of common concern, including the efforts to resolve conflicts with peaceful means, the latest developments of the Middle East peace process, the Syrian crisis and the Ukraine war.

Both sides welcomed the recent Saudi-Arabian agreement to normalize the diplomatic relations between the two Arabian Gulf countries, noting that the deal will impact positively on regional security and stability.

The meeting between Sheikh Salem and Schallenberg saw the signing of a number of a memos on cooperation in several areas.

These include a MoU on political consultations between the Kuwaiti and Austrian ministries of foreign affairs, and MoU on credit cooperation between Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA).

Both sides agreed a memo on health cooperation with will be inked by competent ministers in the near future.



Sheikh Salem

HH Amir congratulates Saudi King

KUWAIT CITY, July 2, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud on the success of the Hajj season 1444 Hijri calendar (2023).

In his message, His Highness the Amir attributed the success to Divine Providence, and the gracious care from King Salman and his wise government.

The dedicated and diligent efforts of all government agencies and sectors in the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia contributed to this success, His Highness the Amir wrote, citing the continuous expansions at the Grand Mosque and the leveraging of modern technologies across the holy sites for pilgrims' convenience.

His Highness the Amir spoke highly of the efforts made by Prince Khaled Al-Faisal - Advisor to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, Governor of Makkah Region and Chairman of the Central Hajj Committee, and Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Naif Al-Saud - the Minister of Interior and Chairman of the Supreme Hajj Committee, to ensure interagency cooperation and

implement the Hajj plans.

He prayed to Allah the Almighty to reward the wise leadership of Saudi Arabia for all the good they have done and grant the sisterly

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud on the success of the Hajj season of 1444 AH. (2023).

In his message, His Highness the Crown Prince said the Hajj season was a complete success thanks to Providence, and the gracious care from King Salman and his wise government.

The dedication of all government agencies and sectors of the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia contributed to this success, His Highness the Crown Prince wrote, extolling the expansion of the Grand Mosque and the leveraging of modern technologies across the holy sites for pilgrims' convenience.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud on the success of the Hajj season of 1444 AH. (2023).

Other Voices

PAAAFR and hunting falcon

By Ahmad alsarraf

More than 8 years ago, a report prepared by the Fatwa and Legislation Department showed that 57% of the agricultural plots were given to those who were not eligible. After a long tug of war, the Court of Cassation recently issued a verdict to withdraw all plots of land that were previously distributed during that period to companies whose activities had nothing to do either with agriculture or with food security, such as the aluminum industry, perfumeries, etc.

During these years, those to whom those plots of land were distributed used them throughout that period and spent money on their development and others sold them to others through sub-contracts, reports Al-Qabas daily.

What is important is that the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fisheries Resources (PAAAFR) did not deny that these violations were related to distribution regulations, some of which are serious violations because these plots of land belonging to the state should not have been given to those who do not deserve and its subsequent approval, in clear violation of the regulations, to sell those holdings to others because in some cases the plot of land was no less than 50,000 square meters.

The court, in its historical ruling returned to the state property from those

who took it unjustly, but the ruling did not address the civil and financial responsibility of dozens of PAAAFR employees who were managing its affairs at the time, and the need to punish them and seek financial compensation for their negligence or deceit, which caused harm to the rights and money of the state, and the rights of some of those who participated in that lottery, even if it was just one innocent participant, knowing that the number of those who won the lottery reached 360, and the plots were withdrawn from them, 8 years after they got them, so why was he punished who had no knowledge of all the violations committed by the PAAAFR administration?

It also requires the concerned authority in the government to not only withdraw these plots from manipulative companies, but also impose penalties on those who violate the terms of participation in the lottery, and write them off from the commercial register, for example.

The topic is long and contains details, reasons and consequences. Things should not pass like this, but rather they should serve as a lesson in future. This judgment and others also showed that the society of "virtue" that we pay lip service to, and the repetition of describing or referring to Kuwaiti society as conservative and religious, by judging the appearance and manifestations of hollow statements, is a description that contradicts the truth, as it is a society, in its majority, corrupt like other societies of the Third World. For these people, religiosity is often a "hawk" or a bird suitable for hunting or sniping!

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'Kuwait has many ingredients to be a tourist spot but lacks tourism law'

"THERE was a governmental desire, many years ago, for Kuwait to be a tourist destination, considering tourism as a source of income and an important financial resource for the state," columnist **Fawaz Ahmed Al-Hamad** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"The march of tourism in Kuwait began through government agencies, through the establishment of a small tourism department, and this department was affiliated with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, then the affiliation of the tourism department was transferred to the Ministry of Information, then the tourism department and a position was created for the appointment of Assistant Undersecretary for Tourism in the Ministry of Information.

"One of the main elements, which must be available in order for there to be tourism, is the establishment of a tourism law, through which the work of tourism in the State of Kuwait is organized, and the issuance of laws and legislation concerned with the work of tourism.

"Other important elements of tourism include the development of external and internal tourism promotional media work, the availability of aviation and a national carrier, the establishment of modern airports and a modern and developed transportation network such as trains, specialized transport buses for tourism, the construction of hotels and hotel apartments, the allocation of places for entertainment and leisure, taxi drivers with a high level of competence and professionalism and oblige the taxi driver to operate the meter for passengers.



Al-Hamad

"One of the important legislation for tourism is that the price of a square meter in shopping malls and in places of entertainment is reduced for companies that want to do recreational tourism activities, as the price per square meter is currently not less than 20 dinars for children's games, while in other countries the price per square meter for children's games does not exceed 5 dinars.

"Every tourist country in the world is characterized by certain services and nature that differs from other countries, for example, there are countries characterized by medical tourism, countries characterized by beach and sea tourism, and other countries characterized by winter games tourism such as climbing and other snow sports.

"Therefore, the government must determine the type of tourism in Kuwait, in order to develop a clear and specific strategy for it. After the establishment of the tourism law, the government must coordinate with the Kuwait University to create a tourism major to attract students to enter the tourism major.

"Among the advantages of tourism is providing job opportunities for Kuwaitis, increasing financial revenues for the state, stimulating the economy and the participation of the private sector and the small projects sector to contribute to the development and construction of this sector, revitalizing the entertainment sector, the restaurant sector and commercial markets, the contracting sector, transportation and storage.

"The establishment of the tourism law must be linked to the establishment of the Tourism Authority to give it legitimacy and a legal and administrative status independent of any ministry and the Tourism Enterprises Company, in order to carry out its role to the fullest.

"Kuwait has many ingredients to be a tourist destination, but we need to take appropriate decisions to establish a tourism law."

Also:

"In the midst of a scene dominated in recent years by instability, regression, and the halting of development, joyful news came recently, which rekindled hope, and made us applaud the government," columnist **Asrar Jowhar Hayat** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"First, the news of the improvement in the classification of Kuwait University in the global QS index, after the university had lagged behind, although it is our only public university, which was a beacon of science in the Gulf region, and even in the Middle East, so the news of its improved classification came as a source of hope especially since, according to Al-Qabas, it was a result of five continuous years of effort, so the efforts are not wasted, and they will inevitably bear fruit.

"Second, the news that Kuwait Airways won the award for the most advanced airline in the world, according to the choice of the international Skytrax company that specializes in rating and evaluating airlines. Its position in the region, to be among the first airlines in the Arab world and even globally.

"Third, Kuwait's ranking improved in the World Competitiveness Year Book, issued by the International Institute for Development (IMD).

"The report stated in its results that in 2023 Kuwait ranked 38th out of 64 countries, advancing 8 places from 2022, noting that this indicator is one of the indicators on which the Corruption Perceptions Index depends.

"And last, but not least, the news of the trend towards hiring high school students in cooperative societies, which is the wonderful step that came with the Ministry of Social Affairs' approval of a project to employ secondary school students (tenth and eleventh) during the summer, to invest students' leisure time, from which 10,000 students will benefit and with a reward between 100 and 200 dinars to encourage them which is an opportunity that will undoubtedly bear positive fruits for students by refining their personalities, to lead society and enter the labor market later.

"Therefore, we applaud the government because of the happy news, but we, in the midst of this applause, would like to remind that some of these achievements are undoubtedly the result of years of work, and therefore we hope that the efforts will continue to read more success for the government.

"Note: Women managed to win only one parliamentary seat, and unfortunately also one government seat, as their representation in the two authorities has declined by half. Therefore, we hope that our wise government will employ women in the hundreds of vacant leadership positions, and make us believe that it believes in empowering women."

"We chose the National Assembly members to represent us. We asked them to activate their constitutional tools to work on the agreed priorities, especially the files accepted by the executive authority," columnist **Dr Turki Al-Azmi** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"I read news about the groups that MPs want to include to the beneficiaries of Afia insurance. I was surprised that housewives were excluded. The woman -- mother, sister or daughter -- prefer to stay at home to take care of the children even if she holds an academic degree. The lawmakers should have given her attention in the form of disbursing aid to housewives who have children, without the age limit.

"Everyone knows about the state of education and healthcare, as well as the way our institutions are managed. Parliamentarians have sources that can be used to ratify bills or amend the existing laws. How could we allow education and health to become a commodity and riddled with corruption?"

"Prices are rising and some laws have remained rigid for decades... How?! The world's economic, educational, health and services situation is changing rapidly. Change for the better is required... Everything has a default age! Members of the Kuwaiti society should stay away from the parties to the conflict. They should not believe whatever is broadcasted by the fake accounts!"

"In diwanias, we talk about the situation and how it is moving in a mysterious direction whose ends are incomprehensible, while some are engaged in backbiting and gossiping. You have 'statesmen' that we consider good. If you deprive them of your voice or their connection to a leadership position, at the very least consult them and take the information from the correct source, away from rumors and other things that have created hatred between us."

"The National Assembly members took a successful step when a number of them decided to focus on development, including the seven proposals of MP Marzouq Al-Ghanim in the interest of the Kuwaiti democracy, such as the bill on the legislative interpretation of the law regarding abusers," columnist **Abdulmohsen Mohammad Al-Husseini** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"He pointed out that the last time this type of proposal was presented was in 1986. It was submitted by former MPs Saleh Al-Fadala, Dr Yaqoub Hayati, Meshari Al-Anjari and Hamad Al-Jaw'an. The proposals of Al-Ghanim included women's representation in the Assembly, resolving the Bedoun issue, establishing the Central Agency for Nationality, and questions related to interference in the elections of the Asian Olympic Committee.

"MP Jinan Bu Shehri presented very important proposals related to the media like the amendment of audio-visual, print, publishing and cybercrime laws in a bid to fill the legislative gaps. We hope the Assembly will approve these proposals to eliminate the chaos that prevail in some media outlets.

"MP Dr Abdul Karim Al-Kandari and five of his colleagues have proposed the cancellation of the local agent condition in the procurement of materials, so the Ministry of Public Works has ample options in the completion of its development projects, foremost of which is road repair.

"MP Muhannad Al-Sayer submitted a proposal on finalizing the strategic alternative to the salary scale in state institutions.

"We hope the Assembly will continue its commitment to meet the needs of the people, adopt several proposals for the benefit of the people, and dedicate the sessions of the Assembly to the discussion of proposals related to development projects.

"It is time for the MPs to show that they are interested in correcting the path. They must focus on proposals related to development projects and avoid rivalries, while their discussions should be on issues beneficial to the public."

"We have many institutions like Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) and others whose role is limited to encouraging young people. Why not play their role to the fullest in order to honor those who excel in various fields and motivate them to contribute to national renaissance, rather than just focusing on maintaining their prestige and investing in personal affairs?" columnist **Eng Adel Al-Khorafi** wrote for **Annahar** daily.

"Kuwaiti youths generally suffer from neglect and lack of programs that encourage them to innovate. For example during summer, why does the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) not organize programs or training courses in various fields of knowledge?"

"On the other hand, what is the role of public benefit societies and KFAS in moving the wheel of knowledge production? Why not honor an elite group of creators every six months? Why do our institutions suffer from 'desertification' of visions and ideas, and weak production at all levels? Is this because of rivalry or is it the state of aging?"

"Indeed, a lot that can be done to combat the pests that kill Kuwaiti youths. Do not know why this matter is not given full attention. Is the State -- any State -- not based on the youths, considering they build the future?"

"Kuwait is rich and has the capabilities to make a difference. It should take care of every young man or woman with an achievement or participates in a competition. These youths should be evaluated and honored for six months.

"I believe the State is capable. I am talking about scientific, mathematical, artistic and literary fields. Institutions can encourage Kuwaiti youths to excel in these fields. Will this be included in the programs of the government, National Assembly and other institutions or will the youths remain on the 'tampons of delay', spending their money, time and lives on innovation? Is there anyone waiting for the fruits of these youths' labor?"

"Patriotism and sacrifice for the nation mean all of us are obliged to participate in the election to push for the development and renaissance of the country," columnist **Wasmiya Al-Mosallam** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"Therefore, we have to choose well who represents the people in the Parliament to avoid the multiplication of mistakes and objections that happened in previous assemblies and the crises which hindered progress.

"The relationship between the executive and legislative authorities must prevail in an atmosphere of positive understanding of dialogue, discussion, trust, respect and reassurance of good intentions. In this manner, the security and sovereignty of the State is protected. This will solve many problems that impede development, such as the lopsided demographic structure, which had no effect in the 1960s.

"They should combat corruption and drugs, focus on supporting the youths and activating their role in society, make good use of oil petrochemical industries, attract investments and implement Kuwait's vision for the year 2035.

"It is necessary to limit, if not eliminate, disputes between the legislative and executive authorities, and put the interest of Kuwait above all else. They have to ensure the strength of the bond between lawmakers and ministers who should cooperate and agree on making decisions in the interest of the country and citizens. They must avoid rifts and bickering over trivial matters.

"The agreement between the two authorities expedites the issuance of vital decisions to guarantee national stability, fortification of national unity, commitment to the rule of law and respect for its principles."

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary



KUNA photo
First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah during his visit to Um Al-Maradem island.

Interior minister affirms priority to monitoring borders

Strategy of the Kuwait security establishment is based on continuing training and employing technology to monitor the borders, said the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior on Wednesday.

Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah made the affirmation during a tour for inspecting personnel serving on Um Al-Maradem island, at Khairan coastal center and the border checkpoint.

The political leadership is keen on installing state-of-

art technology to upgrade the security system, with priority dedicated to the borders security, he said, according to a statement released by the Ministry of Interior.

Minister Sheikh Talal Khaled, who was briefed about the radar systems that monitor trafficking bids, indicated that Um Al-Maradem island is the route for vessels entering the territorial waters. Kuwaiti personnel serving on the island stamp passports of incoming people and record information about departing and entering vessels. (KUNA)

922 expats held for violating laws in June face legal action

Maid kills baby to hide 'affair'; worker electrocuted

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: The Tripartite Committee headed by the Public Authority for Manpower, in cooperation with the Residence Affairs Investigation, arrested 922 violators of labor and residence laws last June, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Recent reports of the committee, a copy of which was seen by Al-Qabas, revealed that the committee organized 24 campaigns during June, targeting eight areas -- Farwaniya, Kabd, Umm Al-Hayman, Al-Dhahr, Shuwaikh, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, Mahboula and Khaitan -- densely populated by marginal workers.

An informed source said that the campaigns last June mainly targeted workers who worked for others other than their sponsors in places such as women's mobile home salons, shops, transportation, random markets, hotels selling new and used tools, shops for repairing and manufacturing iron and selling foodstuffs in Shuwaikh and others.

The source pointed out that a large percentage of those who were arrested are domestic workers, and they were transferred to the residence affairs investigation to take legal measures against the employers.

The source stated that the campaigns also resulted in the seizure of 5 fake offices recruiting domestic workers and those arrested were referred to the competent authorities to take legal action.

Newborn baby killed: An unidentified Filipino household worker who allegedly threw out of the window her newborn baby to cover her illegal affair has been admitted to a hospital under police guard and is expected to be interrogated after she is discharged from hospital to know details of her illegal affair with a man, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to reports a Kuwaiti couple -- employer of the Filipina -- returned home after a morning walk and called out for the maid, and since there was no response for quite some time, the couple walked to the room of the maid and heard her sobbing with the

General Traffic Department

400 citations issued, 40 number plates withdrawn in campaigns

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: A traffic campaign launched by the General Traffic Department in Khaitan, Farwaniya and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh resulted in the issuance of 400 citations and the withdrawal of 40 metal plates.

The General Department of Relations and Security Media at the Ministry of Interior said that, in continuation of the efforts of the traffic sector and operations department to control violators of traffic rules and regulations and reduce negative phenomena on the roads, the GTD carried out a campaigns and arrested 170 violators in Khaitan, 100 in

Farwaniya, and 130 in Jleeb, and seized 40 metal plates for deliberately obstructing traffic and parking on the sidewalk.

The administration called on everyone to cooperate with the traffic men and immediately report any negative manifestations to the emergency phone 112 or the traffic WhatsApp No 99324092.

MoCI denies report: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry denied issuing a decision allowing the export of subsidized food items and allowing people to take two tins of subsidized milk, reports Al-Rai daily.

Firearms, drugs seized: The Criminal Security Sector was able to seize 3 brothers of Gulf nationality, in possession of a large amount of alcohol and psychotropic substances for the purpose of trafficking and abuse, and a number of firearms and ammunition, reports Al-Rai daily.

The Public Relations Department of the Ministry of Interior said the arrest came after investigations were intensified, information was collected, and the suspects were put under surveillance.

After obtaining the necessary permission from the Public Prosecution the brothers were seized in Salmiya.

Following the search of their residence in Sulaibiya, alcohol, psychotropic substances, a Kalashnikov rifle, a type of firearm and ammunition was seized.

The security sourced said police also seized sums of money -- local currency and foreign bank notes.

When confronted with the seizures, they acknowledged and admitted that the seizures belonged to them for the purpose of trafficking and abuse, and admitted to using weapons to defend themselves.

The security sources indicated that they were all transferred to the General Department for Drug Control to take legal measures against them.

door locked from inside.

After the maid refused to open they forced their entry and saw the maid crying with blood all over the place and their second floor apartment window where the maid lived open. The man looked down the window and saw the baby on the compound floor and immediately called the Operations Department of the Ministry of Interior.

When paramedics rushed to the scene they found the newborn dead and handed over the fetus to the Forensic department.

Egyptian dies: An Egyptian died when he was electrocuted while working at a construction site in Salmi recently, reports Al-Rai daily.

The Operations Unit at the Ministry of Interior received information about the incident. Medical emergency and security were then dispatched to the location, where they found the unconscious Egyptian who was rushed to the hospital. However, the attending physician pronounced him dead shortly after his arrival at the hospital.

A case was registered and investigations are ongoing to determine the circumstances leading to the electrocution.

Charity praises philanthropists

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: Member of the Board of Directors and Secretary of Najat Charity Dr Ibrahim Al-Adsani has expressed appreciation for philanthropists who participated in the '10,000 livestock sacrifice' initiative launched recently, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a press statement, Al-Adsani disclosed that the donations collected on the first day of the initiative reached KD100,000 and the total donations exceeded KD124,000; while the cost of each sacrifice KD30.

He pointed out that this year's Eid Al-Adha came with the suffering of many poor countries due to the remarkable increase in the prices of food products brought about by various international crises. "This prompted us to try to alleviate the suffering of needy families in these countries and bring them happiness by distributing meat.

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National Days

HH Amir congratulates Seychelles, Congo, Somalia, Canada, Rwanda & Burundi

KUWAIT CITY, July 2, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has sent a cable of congratulations to Wavel Ramkalawan, President of the Republic of Seychelles, on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir wished him good health and full scale prosperity and progress for his friendly people.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has sent a cable of congratulations

to President Wavel Ramkalawan on National Day of his country.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has sent a cable of congratulations to President Wavel Ramkalawan.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir has sent a cable of congratulations to the President of the Republic of Congo Felix Tshisekedi on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Crown Prince has sent a cable of congratulations to President Felix Tshisekedi on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Prime Minister has sent a cable of congratulations to President Felix Tshisekedi.

In the meantime, His Highness the Amir has sent a cable of congratulations to the President of Somalia Hassan Sheikh Mohamud on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Crown Prince has sent a cable of congratulations to President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Prime Minister has

sent a cable of congratulations to President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud.

Also, His Highness the Amir has sent a cable of congratulations to the Governor General of Canada Mary Simon on her country's National Day.

His Highness the Crown Prince has sent a cable of congratulations to Governor General Mary Simon on her country's National Day.

His Highness the Prime Minister has sent a cable of congratulations to Governor General Mary Simon on her country's National Day.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir sent on Sunday a cable of congratulations to the President of Rwanda Paul Kagame on the occasion of his country's National Day.

His Highness the Crown Prince sent on Sunday a cable of congratulations to the President Paul Kagame on the occasion of his country's National Day.

His Highness the Prime Minister sent a cable of congratulations to President Paul Kagame.

His Highness the Amir also sent on Sunday a cable to the President of Burundi, Evariste Ndayishimiye, congratulating him on the occasion of his country's National Day.

His Highness the Crown Prince sent a cable to President Evariste Ndayishimiye, congratulating him on the occasion of his country's National Day.

His Highness the Prime Minister sent a cable to President Evariste Ndayishimiye, congratulating him on the occasion of his country's National Day.

Al-Shall report says average salary of Kuwaitis is KD1,538

'Number of Kuwaitis in govt sector sees 3pc hike'

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: The Al-Shall weekly report said that the average monthly wage for Kuwaitis, male and female, in the government and private sectors amounted to about 1,538 dinars (1,504 dinars at the end of the first quarter of 2022), while it was about 337 dinars for non-Kuwaitis (342 dinars at the end of the first quarter of 2022), noting that all these figures do not include domestic workers, which will leave a significant impact on the wage rates of non-Kuwaitis, if taken into account, nor do they include the impact of employment support allocations for Kuwaitis working in the private sector, reports Al-Qabas daily.

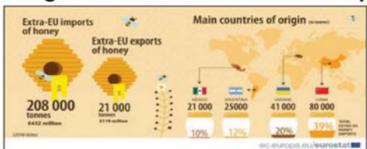
The report indicated that the number of Kuwaiti workers in the government sector amounted to about 373 thousand workers, an increase of 3% (362 thousand workers at the end of the first quarter 2022), and

their number in the private sector reached about 71.7 thousand workers (72.7 thousand workers at the end of the first quarter 2022), i.e. an increase in the public sector, contrary to the declared objectives.

The report stated that the number of workers in Kuwait at the end of the first quarter of 2023, classified according to number, gender, nationality, wages, ages... etc., amounted to about 2.073 million workers without counting the number of domestic workers, with an increase of 10% (1.885 million workers at the end of the first quarter 2022), according to the latest statistics issued by the Central Statistical Administration, which is a rise - if true - contrary to all the goals of adjusting the demographics.

The report revealed that more than a quarter of the total expatriate workers in Kuwait are domestic workers, whose number as at the end of the first quarter of 2023, according to the tables of the Central Administration for Statistics, amounted to about 780 thousand workers, an increase of about 27.2% (613 thousand workers at the end of the first quarter of 2022). Among the males, who number about 357 thousand workers, and the females, who number about 423 thousand.

'Mujezat Al-Shifa': Environmental damage affected bee wealth in Europe



An expert in beekeeping and production and director of the Mujezat Alshifa, Muhammad Al-Majdadi, said: The environmental negatives have shown their impact on the bee wealth, as there has been a decrease in the number of bees in Europe, which has led to a shortage of honey production and the European countries increasingly resorting to importing honey.

He explained that Europe imports honey from outside the European Union, mainly from China, and European consumers refused to eat honey imported from outside the European Union, and demanded that a label be placed for the source of honey and conform to standard specifications according to the standards of the European Food and Agriculture Organization, which prompted European countries to export honey that they import from China to countries outside Europe, which has made huge profits.

'Special legal oath set to be taken'

20 new male, female monitors of domestic violence cases: official

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: According to the Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs Dr. Maryam Al-Azmi, about 20 male and female employees affiliated with the Protection House, the General Secretariat, and specialized and legal researchers at the council passed the training course that qualifies them to receive the status of judicial police, with the participation of some government agencies such as the Ministry of Interior, to monitor cases of domestic violence, in preparation for the issuance of a ministerial decision for them to take the special legal oath before the minister of Social Affairs, reports Aljarida daily.

Dr. Al-Azmi said, "Article 7 of Law No. 16/2020 regarding protection from domestic violence stipulates that specialized employees determined by the president of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs through a decision issued by him have the status of judicial officers to monitor the implementation of the law and the regulations and decisions implementing it."

In addition, they have the right to monitor, control and edit the minutes of meetings and submit them to the concerned authorities. These employees must perform their work honestly, diligently and impartially. They must commit not to divulge the secrets of individuals and families that they come to know by virtue of their work. Each of them must take the legal oath before the president of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs.

The Council of Ministers has been addressed with the new draft executive regulations of the Council for perusal and then approval soon."

Dr. Al-Azmi explained that domestic violence cases are received by the council's Protection Center through reports sent by the Public Prosecution or from the community police, or through the council's accounts via means of communication, or by the one reporting and in his/her personal presence. After that the case is received, a file is opened,



Dr. Maryam Al-Azmi

and it is referred to the Prosecution.

She affirmed the council's keenness, under the direct guidance of Minister Mai Al-Baghli, to launch initiatives that would eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women, provide an enabling environment for them to practice entrepreneurship, and empower them to assume leadership positions.

Dr. Al-Azmi revealed that the council is currently working on unifying the classification of domestic violence cases in Kuwait, especially since the majority of them differ in the relevant government agencies.

She indicated that there are some cases that fall within the Personal Status Law, but they are classified as family violence, such as divorce, the right to seeing children, requesting alimony, and more.

Dr. Al-Azmi said, "Out of the spirit of Minister Al-Baghli's keenness on this matter, she worked to issue a decision for forming a team to collect data for international reports. The data and classifications would be transparent and standardized between the concerned authorities such as the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Justice, and the Central Statistical Bureau, in addition to some civil associations concerned with family affairs that receive cases of domestic violence, and the Human Rights Bureau." She added that the rate of domestic violence cases in Kuwait are considered normal.

Kuwait summons

Continued from Page 1

commit that act in front of a Stockholm mosque on Wednesday as Muslims started celebrating Eid Al-Adha.

During the phone conversation, Sheikh Salem affirmed that such practices are totally unacceptable as they run counter to all humanitarian principles and values, incite hate, and encourage violence and terrorism.

The Kuwaiti minister held the Swedish government accountable for granting such permissions, which run counter to all international principles, calling for peaceful co-existence, tolerance and moderation.

Sheikh Salem also called on the Swedish government to take an immediate action to prevent these repeated offenses that target Muslims' sanctities and to hold the perpetrators accountable.

In addition, the minister urged Sweden's authorities not to allow persons to make use of freedom as a justification to commit these offensive acts against Islam.

Elsewhere, hundreds of followers of the influential Iraqi Shiite cleric and political leader Muqtada Sadr briefly stormed the Swedish Embassy in Baghdad on Thursday in protest of the burning of a Holy Quran in Sweden.

An Iraqi security official said the Swedish Embassy was evacuated by security forces after the protesters breached the building, raising pictures of Sadr and flags of his militia, the Mahdi Army. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak to the media.

Some of the protesters also burned rainbow flags, a symbol of LGBTQ+ pride. Iraqi officials didn't make any public statement on the storming of the embassy.

On Wednesday, a man who identified himself in Swedish media as a refugee from Iraq burned a Holy Quran outside a mosque in central Stockholm.

The Iraqi security official said the man was an Iraqi Christian who had previously fought in a Christian unit of the Popular Mobilization Forces, a collection of mostly Shiite militias that were incorporated into the country's armed forces in 2016.

Police authorized the protest, citing freedom of speech, after a previous decision to ban a similar protest was overturned by a Swedish court.

The act, coming during the Eid al-Adha holiday, drew widespread condemnation in the Muslim world.

The Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement that it had summoned the Swedish ambassador and called on Sweden's government "to take the necessary measures to stop the repeated insults to the Holy Quran." The ministry also called on Sweden to extradite the man who had burned the Quran for prosecution in Iraq.

"Legal justifications and freedom of expression do not justify allowing offense to religious sanctities," the statement said.

Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs called in Sweden Ambassador in Baghdad Jessica Svardstrom on Thursday to relay a message of strong protest over the permission of her government for extremists to burn copy of the Holy Quran in Stockholm yesterday.

The Ministry demanded the Swedish government to take the necessary legal steps against recurrence of offending malpractices against Muslims.

It stressed that freedom of expression

could by no means justify desecration of religious sanctities, according to a press release from the Ministry.

Meanwhile, Turkiye's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan tackled on Saturday over phone with Saudi counterpart Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud a range of issues, including the burning of a copy of the Quran in Sweden this week.

A statement by the Turkish news agency (Anadolu) said the two also talked about preparations for the extraordinary session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's executive committee to discuss the consequences of the desecration.

The ministers also touched upon the need to combat Islamophobia, and issues of regional cooperation.

There has been widespread outrage and condemnation in the Islamic world since a person identified as Salwan Momika burned a copy of the Muslim holy book under police protection in front of a Stockholm mosque on Wednesday.

The act was timed to coincide with Eid al-Adha, one of the major Islamic religious festivals celebrated by Muslims worldwide.

In Brussels, the European Union Saturday rejected the burning of the Quran in front of a mosque in Stockholm, Sweden, on Wednesday.

In a statement, EU spokesperson for foreign affairs and security policy, Nabila Massrahi, said, "The EU joins the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its strong rejection of the burning of a Quran by an individual in Sweden. This act in no way reflects the opinions of the European Union."

Dismay over

Continued from Page 1

"Australia, Canada and the UK continue to support a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in the Middle East, including the creation of a Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel," they said, adding that this vision can only be achieved through direct negotiations between the parties.

Meanwhile, the Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC) of the European Parliament Tuesday stated that Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories are illegal under international law and demanded their immediate end.

The FAC today adopted a set of recommendations on how the EU should deal with the Palestine question with 41 votes in favour, 24 against with 9 abstentions.

It said that these illegal settlements constitute a major obstacle to the viability of the two-state solution, including lasting peace and security. It called for new efforts to end the latest cycle of settlement related violence and say the EU should consider targeted measures specifically addressing settlement expansion in the West Bank.

They also express concern about EU policy and EU financial assistance in the Palestinian territories being undermined by illegal Israeli settlements and demand compensation for the demolition of all EU-funded infrastructure in the area.

The text notes that, in 2022, 101 structures funded by the EU or EU member states valued at 337,019 euros (USD 369,000) were demolished or seized by Israeli-occupation regime. (KUNA)

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Kuwaiti FM discusses cementing ties with French counterpart and Macron's adviser

'Kuwait, France share desire to strengthen ties'



KUNA photo
Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Catherine Colonna.



Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs with Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna.



KUNA photos
The Foreign Minister discusses with the Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency bilateral cooperation in development and technology.

Kuwait Foreign Minister meets with IAEA chief on scientific cooperation

VIENNA, July 2, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, now on a visit to the Republic of Austria, met with Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Mariano Grossi in Vienna on Friday.

The meeting reviewed the close relationship between the State of Kuwait and the UN nuclear watchdog and the ways to enhance cooperation in areas of hi-tech experi-

ence exchanges and the peaceful applications of the nuclear energy. Both sides discussed the IAEA's efforts to promote economic development by means of renewable energy as well as to ensure the safety of nuclear facilities.

They also discussed the latest developments in the Iranian nuclear dossier, the Agency's efforts to protect the nuclear facilities of Ukraine and ensure sound implementation of the nuclear safeguards worldwide.

Kuwait civil aviation, Korean counterpart sign MoU



KUNA photo
Part of the signing of the memorandum of understanding between the Kuwaiti General Administration of Civil Aviation and its counterpart in South Korea.



KUNA photo
EPA's campaign against harmful acts on beaches, and islands in cooperation with environmental police.

PARIS, July 2, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said his country agreed with France to promote cooperation in all areas and open new horizons for the bilateral ties.

In statements to KUNA and Kuwait TV on Wednesday at the end of his visit France, Sheikh Salem expressed satisfaction with the outcome of the visit.

He noted that he discussed with French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Catherine Colonna yesterday the prospects of the relationship, including the possibility of facilitating the issuance of Schengen visas for Kuwaiti nationals.

The French top diplomat showed understanding of Kuwait's demand for renewable Schengen visas for several years, he said, noting that there is a progress in this issue.

During his stay in Paris, Sheikh Salem signed a number of agreements, including a MoU on launching a strategic dialogue between Kuwait and France.

"Such dialogue will provide an institutionalized framework for the bilateral ties and allow expansion of cooperation in various sectors," he pointed out.

Cooperation

Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) and the French Development Agency (AFD) have also signed MoU to promote cooperation in area of economic development, he went on.

Earlier today, Sheikh Salem met with Olivier Becht, French Minister Delegate for Foreign Trade, Economic Attractiveness and French Nationals Abroad to discuss cooperation in the investment and economic sectors.

Later on he discussed with the President of Mouvement des Entreprises de France (MEDEF) Francois Touazi and other representatives of French major companies to discuss the economic, investment and trade relations.

On Monday, Sheikh Salem arrived in France, the first leg of his European trip that will take him to Italy, Austria and Hungary.

Kuwaiti minister of foreign affairs held talks Tuesday with French counterpart and French president's adviser on buttressing bilateral ties and coordination on regional and international issues of common interest.

At the beginning of his meeting with French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Catherine Colonna, the Kuwaiti top diplomat Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah conveyed the greetings of Kuwait's political leadership to the French Republic and their wishes for further growth, progress and prosperity for France and its people.

Sheikh Salem expressed his deep pride in the close relations between the two friendly countries and the high level they have achieved in all fields.

He also praised the steady progress of mutual cooperation at all levels, especially in the humanitarian and development fields.

The talks tackled all aspects of the close historical ties that bind the two friendly countries, as well as the framework for strengthening and developing these ties at various levels to take bilateral cooperation to new horizons in the interests of the two friendly countries and their people.

The issue of exempting Kuwaiti nationals from Schengen visa requirements was high on the agenda



Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs with OPEC Secretary-General pose for a group photo.



KUNA photos
Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs and OPEC Secretary-General discuss cooperation between Kuwait and organization.

Kuwaiti FM, OPEC chief discuss world oil market

Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, now on a visit to the Republic of Austria, met on Friday with OPEC Secretary-General Haitham Al-Ghais to discuss cooperation between Kuwait and organization.

They reviewed the latest regional and international geopolitical developments and their impacts on the global oil market as well as the challenges related to

climate change. Sheikh Salem highlighted the significance of the OPEC members' keeping constant coordination of their energy policies to ensure stable supplies to the global market.

On his part, Al-Ghais briefed the Kuwaiti minister on the Organization's efforts to maintain the balance of the oil market and the stability of the energy industry. (KUNA)

of today's talks, as were joint efforts to mobilize European support for the Kuwaiti demand and the future steps in this regard.

For her part, French Foreign Minister Colonna expressed her country's support for the exemption of Kuwaiti citizens from Schengen visa requirements and stressed the positive impact of this step on common interests at various levels.

On the other hand, Minister Colonna hailed the high level of cooperation between Kuwait and France at all levels and their ambition to continue the pattern of this strong cooperation and extend it to broader and more comprehensive horizons.

She admired Kuwait's wisdom and the balance of its foreign policy, as well as its efforts to consolidate the pillars of security and peace in the region and its principled and consistent stance in international forums.

She lauded Kuwait's humanitarian projects and its support for development around the world.

The talks also focused on intensifying joint coordination on many regional and international issues and joint efforts to promote international peace and security.

Sheikh Salem expressed appreciation for the French Republic's historic commitment to safeguarding the security of the State of Kuwait and its efforts to establish stability and peace

in the region.

The two ministers discussed recent developments at the regional and international levels and exchanged views on a number of crucial and important issues in the region.

They also discussed the framework for enhanced joint coordination, in particular developments in the Syrian crisis and international efforts to find a political solution that ends the suffering of the Syrian people, as well as developments in Iraq and Yemen.

The crisis in Ukraine and its implications at the regional and international levels were also a topic of discussion. In addition, ways to improve joint cooperation in dealing with the consequences of the crisis were discussed, as well as other regional and international issues of common interest.

Commitment

The two ministers reaffirmed their joint commitment to promoting stability and security in the region, preserving international order, spreading the values and principles of international law and maintaining international peace and security.

The bilateral talks culminated in the signing of a series of memoranda of understanding between the two friendly countries, including a memorandum of understanding on the establishment of a joint strategic dialogue between the governments

of Kuwait and France and a memorandum of understanding between the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development and the French Development Agency for cooperation in the development field.

They also signed the joint statement of the first session of the strategic dialogue between the State of Kuwait and the French Republic, reflecting the determination of the two friendly countries to develop and consolidate bilateral relations in all fields and at various levels.

Later, Sheikh Salem met with Adviser of the French President on North Africa and the Middle East Patrick Dorrell.

During the meeting, the minister conveyed the greetings of Kuwait's political leadership to the President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, and their wishes to friendly France for further progress and prosperity.

For his part, Dorrell conveyed Macron's greetings to the State of Kuwait and its wise leadership, stressing that close relations with Kuwait and its leadership are a priority for the French leadership.

He also invited Kuwait's political leadership to visit France to strengthen historical ties between the two friendly countries.

They discussed how to improve and expand the existing cooperation between Kuwait and France.



Kuwait University
Center of Community Service & Continuing Education
Continuing Education Department Present

Arabic Language
for Non-native Speakers – Level 1
9/7/2023-16/8/2023
(Sun.-Tues.- Wed.) 7-9 p.m
Fees: 80 K.D

Registration:

Applicants can register at Sabah Al-Salem University City – AlShadadiya, Administration Building - 5th Floor, Center of Community Service and Continuing Education – registration & follow up department, from 8:30 am to 01:00 pm . or click on the link in the BIO on Instagram or in the center's website (visit the useful links) to complete the registration process and electronic payment.

For inquiry: Continuing Education department
24987978 - 24987300

EPA launches campaign to clean up Kuwait's beaches

KUWAIT CITY, July 2, (KUNA): Environment Public Authority, aided by the environmental police, has launched a campaign to keep Kuwait's beaches and islands clean.

Samira Al-Kandari, EPA acting director general, citing relevant laws and rules, indicated in a statement on Saturday that penalty for littering and harming living creatures is in the range of KD 5,000 (approx. USD 15,000).

Assigned teams have already combed beaches in the capital, Hawalli and Mubarak Al-Kabeer, she said, revealing that 15 violations were recorded for littering and using prohibited fishing tools.

Al-Kandari urged citizens and expatriates to heed relevant environmental rules and laws and contribute to preserving the environment. EPA judicial officers are engaged in the phased and continuous campaign to maintain cleanliness of the beaches and the islands.

Kuwait is a coastal country in the north of the Gulf. Its territorial waters, including Kuwait Bay, are dotted with several islands.



Salma Al-Hajjaj, GM of Human Resources

Gulf Bank continues to invest in developing its employees

To obtain training courses and certificates from prestigious institutions and universities

Salma Al-Hajjaj: Our employees are the basis of our success and the secret of our excellence, and that is why we are keen to invest in their professional development.

As part of its continuous effort to provide high-level training opportunities, Gulf Bank is equipping all its employees with extensive training and learning possibilities, through Coursera, one of the world's largest online learning platforms – ena-

bling them to have access to courses and certificates from prestigious educational institutions and universities.

Over the past decade, Coursera has become one of the most popular learning platforms around the world, providing thousands of online training and development courses that are available from anywhere and at any time. The platform provides training for various disciplines – ranging from professional and specialized courses to MBA and Certified Public Accountant certificates.

Furthermore, the platform also offers a range of features, including interactive videos, tests and assessments, that help employees acquire, and retain, information more effectively in multiple languages. Employees can also track their progress and performance feedback.

Gulf Bank's General Manager of Human Resources, Ms. Salma Al-Hajjaj, commented saying: "The new service stems from Gulf Bank's commitment to continuously develop the professional skills of its employees."

Market Movements

2-07-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts		
SAUDI	- Tadawul	+0.30	11,493.91	UAE	- DFM	-0.01	3,791.99
EGYPT	- EGX 30	+2.18	17,665.29	JAPAN	- Nikkei	-0.14	32,189.04
				PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	-0.15	41,326.50
				PHILIPPINES	- PSEi	-0.67	6,468.807

Business

US unemployment claims fell to a 4-week low of 239K

Fed's preferred gauge, Core PCE, shows signs of slowing inflation'

United States

Core PCE Price Index Declines

Inflation in the United States, as measured by the Fed's preferred gauge the Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) price index fell on an annual basis to 3.8% from 4.3% previously in April. Moreover, annual Core PCE inflation edged lower to 4.6% versus 4.7% previously, which represents a monthly core print of 0.3% as opposed to last month's 0.4% reading. The headline figure is the lowest inflation reading seen since April 2021, over two years ago following a decline in energy and food prices. Meanwhile, despite the decline in core readings, it remains historically elevated and the slower pace of deceleration compared to headline figures indicate that stickiness in inflation remains entrenched in the economy.

First Quarter GDP Revised Sharply Upward

US gross domestic product was revised upward to a 2% annualized rate for the first quarter, notably up from the second estimate of 1.3%. The figure was also above expectations of a 1.4% rate. The department's final estimate of first-quarter GDP reflected an upward revision to exports, consumer spending, state and local government spending, and investment from housing businesses. The figure reveals that the economy is in much better shape than previously believed, thanks to resilient US consumers, despite economists saying momentum has slowed in recent months.

Unemployment Claims at 4-Week Low

The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits fell to a one-month low of 239K. New jobless claims declined by 26K from a revised 265K the week prior. The data indicates the US labor market remains robust, and calms fears of a recession, which usually accompanies a rise in unemployment.

Powell's Comments

As annual inflation runs well above the Federal Reserve's 2% target and the labor market remains tight, most central bank policymakers expect they will need to raise interest rates twice more by year-end, Fed Chair Jerome Powell said on Thursday. He noted that banking stresses which emerged in March "may well lead" to more tightening in credit conditions than would be expected from rate hikes alone. He also made note of still

Highlights

- Inflation in the United States showed signs of softening after PCE came in at 3.8% versus 4.3% previously, and Core PCE came in at 4.6% from 4.7% previously.
- First quarter GDP in the US was revised sharply higher to 2% y/y.
- US unemployment claims fell to a 4-week low of 239K.
- US consumer confidence rose to 109.7 in June, marking the highest reading since January 2022 as the labor market remains strong.
- Canada's annual inflation came in at 3.4% in May, marking the slowest pace in two years and weakening the case for another interest rate hike next month by the Bank of Canada.
- Australia's inflation slowed to a 13-month low in May, largely driven by a sharp pullback in fuel prices. The consumer price index rose by 5.6% in May, down from an annual pace of 6.8% in April.

too-high inflation, and the "long way to go" before inflation can be returned to the Fed's 2% goal.

Following 10 straight rate hikes since March 2022, the Fed's policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee earlier this month opted to leave its policy rate unchanged at the 5%-5.25% range. "We made this decision in light of the distance we have come in tightening policy, the uncertain lags in monetary policy, and the potential headwinds from credit tightening," Powell said. At the same time, he said, "a strong majority of Committee participants expect that it will be appropriate to raise interest rates two or more times by the end of the year." The Fed will hold four more policy meetings this year, with the next one on July 25-26. Markets are pricing in an 81% probability of a 25 bps hike.

Consumer Confidence Jumps to 18-Month High

US consumer confidence jumped in June alongside a strong labor market, which continues to buoy the US

economy. The Conference Board reported last week that its consumer confidence index rose to 109.7 in June from 102.5 in May, marking the highest reading has been since January of 2022 and much higher than forecasted. Meanwhile, the board's expectations index (a measure of consumers' six-month outlook for income, business and labor conditions) climbed to 79.3 this month from 71.5 in May. Usually, a reading under 80 signals a recession in the coming year. The Conference Board noted that reading has come in below 80 every month but one since February of 2022.

Canada

May's Inflation Rate Slows

Canada's annual inflation came in at 3.4% in May, marking the slowest pace in two years and weakening the case for another interest rate hike next month by the Bank of Canada. On a monthly basis, the consumer price index was up 0.4%, slightly lower than the 0.5% expected. Energy prices slid 12.4% in May compared to a year earlier, when supply uncertainty stemmed from the war in Ukraine led to a surge in energy prices. Contributing largely to the fall in energy prices was an 18.3% drop in gasoline prices and the first year-over-year decline in natural gas prices since August 2020.

The annual rate is broadly in line with the Bank of Canada's expectation for inflation to cool to around 3% by mid-year. The central bank hiked its overnight rate to

a 22-year high of 4.75% earlier in June following a series of surprisingly strong data, such as an unexpected uptick in April inflation. Money markets are now pricing in a 52% probability of a 25 bps hike this month, down from 64% prior to the release of the inflation figure. For the rest of the year, the BoC is expected to keep interest rates on hold. The Canadian dollar weakened as the USD/CAD pair gained 0.42% last week, ending at 1.3236

Asia-Pacific

Australia Inflation Remains High

Inflation slowed to a 13-month low in May, largely driven by a sharp pullback in fuel prices. The consumer price index rose by 5.6% in May, down from an annual pace of 6.8% in April but still well above the Reserve Bank's 2-3% target. Although electricity and some staple food prices rose by double-digit figures over the year, petrol prices have fallen compared with the same month in 2022. The Reserve Bank of Australia has delivered 12 increases so far in just 13 months, marking the most aggressive pace of monetary policy tightening since 1989. The RBA is not expecting inflation to fall back to 3% until June 2025. Markets are pricing in just a 25% probability of a 25 bps hike at the next meeting.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30705.

Rates - July 2nd, 2023

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.0895	1.0833	1.0976	1.0910	1.0850	1.0980	1.0963
GBP	1.2707	1.2589	1.2759	1.2704	1.2686	1.2804	1.2709
JPY	143.55	142.93	145.07	143.55	141.90	143.98	142.30
CHF	0.8973	0.8910	0.9017	0.8953	0.8924	0.9006	0.8872

Fed may tighten financial rules after US bank failures – Powell

Proposals likely to face resistance

WASHINGTON, July 2, (AP): Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said that the central bank may have to tighten its oversight of the American financial system in the wake of the failure of three large U.S. banks this spring.

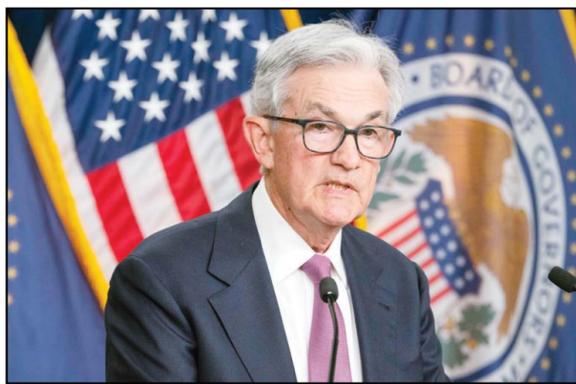
Powell said in prepared remarks delivered at a banking conference in Madrid that tougher regulations put in place after the 2007-2008 financial crisis have made large multinational banks much more resilient to widespread loan defaults, such as the bursting of the housing bubble that led to that crisis.

But the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank, Signature Bank and First Republic Bank exposed different vulnerabilities that the Fed will likely address through new proposals, Powell said.

He did not provide details, but other Fed officials have said banks should be required to hold more capital in reserve to guard against loan losses.

Such proposals are likely to face resistance from the banking industry and some congressional Republicans, who argue that the Fed had the necessary tools to prevent the bank collapses but failed to use them.

One reason regulators missed the threats to the three banks was "the natural human tendency to fight the



Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell speaks during a news conference following a Federal Open Market Committee meeting, Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at the Federal Reserve Board Building in Washington. Powell says the central bank may have to tighten its oversight of the American financial system after the failure of three large U.S. banks this spring. (AP)

last war," Powell said.

The 2008 financial crisis occurred because of widespread defaults after the housing bubble burst. But Silicon Valley Bank failed for different reasons: A rapid increase in interest rates sharply lowered the value of its bond holdings, because they paid out lower interest rates than newer bonds.

"These events suggest a need to strengthen our supervision and regulation of institutions of the size of SVB," Powell said. "I look forward to evaluating proposals for such changes and implementing them where appropriate."

In a question and answer session, he indicated that the rules needed to be updated to account for how quickly a bank run could happen.

"A bank run used to be people standing in line at an ATM," the Fed chief said. "That's very different from what we saw at Silicon Valley Bank," with depositors using smartphones to move money instantly.

Fed supervisors had spotted bank vulnerabilities, including exposure to rising rates, but were working within a system that moved too slowly to head off trouble, Powell said.

"The supervisors were on the right

issues, but they were operating under a standard playbook where you escalate things fairly carefully, fairly slowly," he said.

An ongoing review of Fed supervision would "try to find ways to be more agile and, where appropriate, more forceful," Powell said.

Banks with \$100 billion to \$250 billion in assets - which included all three failed banks - were freed from some requirements in 2018 under legislation passed by Congress and rules issued by the Fed.

Last week, Powell faced significant pushback from Republicans during House and Senate hearings over the potential for tighter rules. Michael Barr, the Fed's top regulator, has said the central bank might require larger banks to hold more capital in reserve.

Yet GOP members of Congress charge that such requirements would limit banks' ability to lend and slow the economy.

Powell said during those hearings that a proposal might be issued next month. But he repeated Thursday that any new rules would require a public comment process and would be phased in over time, meaning they might not come into effect for several years.

"The bank runs and failures in 2023 ... were painful reminders that we cannot predict all of the stresses that will inevitably come with time and chance," Powell said. "We therefore must not grow complacent about the financial system's resilience."

than what the CBO anticipates.

For 2023, the CBO projects that debt, measured as a percentage of the gross domestic product, this year will be 2 percentage points higher compared the estimate in last year's long-term budget impact report.

Also this year, the report estimates the U.S. hitting a 4.7% unemployment rate, though the current jobless rate sits at 3.7%.

On the same day as the report's release, President Joe Biden traveled to Chicago to deliver a speech about the nation's economic growth after the once-in-a-generation pandemic.



The seal of the Board of Governors of the United States Federal Reserve System is displayed in the ground at the Marriner S. Eccles Federal Reserve Board Building, Feb. 5, 2018, in Washington. In a report issued Wednesday, June 28, 2023, the nation's 23 largest banks passed the Federal Reserve's so-called 'stress tests' this year, a sign that the nation's banking system remains resilient despite the recent banking crisis that led to the failure of Silicon Valley Bank, Signature Bank and First Republic Bank. (AP)

Fed's 'stress tests' show

The largest US banks would survive a severe recession

NEW YORK, July 2, (AP): The nation's 23 largest banks passed the Federal Reserve's so-called stress tests this year, a sign that the nation's banking system remains resilient despite the recent banking crisis that led to the failure of Silicon Valley Bank, Signature Bank and First Republic Bank.

The Fed's report issued Wednesday did show some relative weakness among the midsize banks and "super regional" banks, with some getting a passing grade with a smaller cushion than usual. Those results could raise eyebrows among investors and policymakers.

Fed policymakers also hinted that they could make the tests harder in future iterations, due to the banking crisis earlier this year.

"We should remain humble about how risks can arise and continue our work to ensure that banks are resilient to a range of economic scenarios, market shocks, and other stresses," said Michael Barr, the Fed's vice chair for supervision, in a statement.

The "stress tests" have become an annual report card for the nation's financial system since being implemented after the Great Recession and 2008 financial crisis. The tests vary from year to year, but generally involve the Fed testing to see how steep the losses in the banking industry would be if unemployment were to skyrocket and economic activity were to severely contract.

The Fed has also used current events to determine their scenarios. For ex-

ample, the central bank has previously tested banks against the possibility of a double-dip recession caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

In the 2023 tests, the Fed hypothesized a scenario where there was a severe global recession that caused a 40% decline in commercial real estate prices and a substantial increase in office vacancies, as well as a 38% decline in home prices. Under the Fed's worst scenario, the unemployment rate would rise to 10% - it's currently 3.7%.

Commercial real estate has been a worry spot for investors and bank regulators for some time, as post-pandemic work-from-home policies have allowed companies to reduce the amount of office space they need. Many of the banks heavily invested in commercial real estate are small-to-midsize banks that have been under some pressure this year.

In this scenario, the 23 largest banks would have collective losses of \$541 billion and their capital ratios would fall from 12.4% to 10.1%. That's comparable to previous years, the Fed said.

A bank must have a stressed capital ratio of at least 4.5% to be considered for a passing grade. The collective average was well above that figure. Failing the test would subject a bank to automatic restrictions on its ability to pay out dividends to shareholders and buy back shares.

Banks likely will start announcing their plans for returning capital to shareholders on Friday after the market closes.

US public debt is projected to reach 181% of economic activity in 30 yrs

WASHINGTON, July 2, (AP): The Congressional Budget Office is giving the world a concerning look at the U.S. government's ledgers: ever higher deficits, greater government spending and tax revenues that only begin to increase when existing tax cuts expire.

The nonpartisan agency estimates in its latest 30-year outlook, released Wednesday, that publicly held debt will be equal to a record 181% of American economic activity by 2053. That compares with a projected 98% at the end of this budget year, a sign the government is getting more dependent on debt to pay for Social Security,

Medicare, the military, infrastructure and an array of programs that benefit millions of households.

The higher debt load is not all that shocking given the deficit spending of the past two decades. But the CBO figures do offer a bit of comfort in that annual deficits after 2042 are lower than forecasted in the agency's report from last year. This is because the primary borrowing and interest rate costs are lower than what the CBO model year showed then, meaning this fiscal crystal ball can improve as the numbers are refined.

Yet there is a clear warning that lawmakers will be constrained as spending

increases after 2026, driven largely by increased healthcare and Social Security costs tied to an aging population and a projected lower labor force participation rate of 60.3% in 2053, from 62.2% now.

Revenues also are expected to increase after 2026. But that is due in large part to increased individual income tax receipts after the tax cuts under President Donald Trump are set to expire after 2025. The problem with the CBO forecast is that the White House wants to preserve some of those tax cuts and the GOP wants to make them largely permanent, so revenues could be lower

This achievement is a testament to KFH's leadership in sustainable Islamic finance: Almutawa

KFH wins Kuwait's Best Bank for Sustainable Finance Award

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) received Kuwait's Best Bank for Sustainable Finance in 2023 Award during the Investment Banks and Sustainable Finance Awards Ceremony hosted annually by Global Finance Magazine. KFH Capital, the investment arm of KFH Group, also picked up Kuwait's Best Investment Bank Award.

KFH was named as Kuwait's best bank for sustainable finance by the respected editors and researchers at the global leading financial publication, with input from a range of executives, investors and consultants worldwide. Criteria for evaluation include governance policies and goals, achievements in environmental and social sustainability financing, industry leadership and third-party assessments.

Furthermore, global and regional awards require submissions detailing hard measures of ESG activity, such as year-on-year growth in sustainable instruments or green Sukuk as a percentage of total Sukuk, as well as softer metrics such as goal alignment with leading ESG norms or innovative product development.

KFH General Manager Corporate Banking, Yousef Almutawa said: "We are proud to be recognized by Global Finance as Kuwait's Best Bank for Sustainable Finance. This achievement serves as a recognition and a testament to our longstanding leadership in sustainable Islamic finance and our commitment to create more sustainable future."

Almutawa added "During its 46-year journey of excellence, KFH has led the Islamic banking sector as demonstrated by its

comprehensive approach to scaling up sustainable finance, bringing robust Sharia-compliant sustainable solutions, and implementing an in-depth transformation of its governance, processes and skills".

In its annual review process, Global Finance named KFH Capital as Kuwait's Best Investment Bank 2023, using a series of criteria to select the winner of this award, including market share, number, size and complexity of deals, service and advice, structuring capabilities, distribution network, efforts to address market conditions, innovation, aftermarket performance of underwritings and market reputation.

Abdulaziz Al-Marzouq, CEO at KFH Capital, said that "Over the course of the past years, KFH Capital has long been a fully-fledged investment house of choice for equity and Sukuk transactions and advisory services thanks to its comprehensive range of tailored financial services, successful combination of innovation, and the strengthening of its electronic platforms."

He explained: "This accolade recognizes our consistent efforts to maintain our position as a primary gateway to capital markets for Kuwait and our markets. It also reflects the precious trust we built with our clients by meeting their financing needs and exceeding the growing sophistication of financial products and services."

Founded in 1987 and headquartered in New York, Global Finance is a reliable information source which provides a valuable source of data on 192 countries as well as offering analyses, articles and awards that are the legacy of over 30 years of experience in international financial markets.

'Your excellence proves that self-learning and modern scientific research tools have grown'

Zain celebrated Kuwait's top students at its annual event



Al Roudhan and Al Suleimani with the honored students.

KUWAIT CITY, July 2: Zain recognized Kuwait's top high school students at its headquarters in Shuwaikh during the company's annual event that welcomed them and their families to celebrate their exceptional achievements. The ceremony was attended by Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al Roudhan and the Ministry of Education's Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Development and Activities, Dr. Ghanim Al Suleimani.

At the end of every academic year, and as soon as the official results are unveiled by the Ministry of Education, Zain holds a special ceremony to recognize Kuwait's top-performers who excel in their high school journey. This year, Zain honored top graduates in four categories: top graduates nationwide (sciences and humanities), top Kuwaiti graduates (sciences and humanities), top graduates of Religious Education, as well as top graduates of Special Education (sciences and humanities).

Addressing the students and their families, CEO Eaman Al Roudhan said: "I'm happy to welcome you all to Zain's Wonderful World. Seeing you today with big smiles upon your faces and your parents' faces is a source of joy for us all at Zain and the entire nation."

Al Roudhan congratulated the graduates by saying: "I applaud you for your exceptional achievements, and I'm sure that all of Kuwait is proud of you. Today we gather to celebrate and honor you for excelling in your studies, and we extend our congratulations to your esteemed families too."

"We not only extend congratulations to you and your parents, but to all of Kuwait for bringing forth such an exceptional group of brilliant young people. The number of top graduates this academic year, from studies of both sciences and humanities, is enough proof of the advancement of self-learning tools and modern scientific research, helped by the rapid growth of advanced technologies," Al Roudhan added.

"Sources of information, references, notes, journals, and more are now easily and abundantly accessible online more than ever. I believe that this requires the redesign of the educational process, and the way students are evaluated across academic levels, so that they are built on the ability to self-learn and conduct scientific research in place of traditional methods. This is especially true with the rapid spread of emerging technologies like AI," Al Roudhan pointed out.

Al Roudhan went on to say: "We as parents, MOE and government officials, private sector representatives, and the entire Kuwaiti community trust in your capabilities and skills in leading the future of our nation, Arab World, and the Islamic World."

"We hope that our recognition today will drive your passion to achieve the best for this nation, because nations are built upon the dedication of their youth. And it is the duty of each and every one of us to give back the best we can to this nation that gave us so much," Al Roudhan added.

The CEO noted: "These words are for all our dear students, even those who will leave to their motherlands to start college. You all are the children of this nation, and Kuwait will continue to embrace its youth, and the youth of the entire Arab World."

Al Roudhan affirmed the importance of the next phase: "Now, the most important stage of your academic life lies ahead. You'll notice how colleges and universities will compete for your attention, and whether you choose to go with a local or international school, always remember to pick the studies that centers around your passion in life."

Inflation in Europe 'slips' but that won't stop CB rate hikes

Annual rate of 5.5% down from 6.1% in May

FRANKFURT, Germany, July 2, (AP): Inflation in Europe slid again in June but fell too slowly to offer much relief to shoppers grumbling over price tags or to stop more interest rate hikes that will raise the cost of borrowing across the economy.

The annual rate of 5.5% was down from 6.1% in May in the 20 countries that use the euro currency, the European Union statistics agency Eurostat said Friday.

While that is a big drop from the peak of 10.6% in October, persistently high prices in the U.S., Europe and the United Kingdom pushed some of the world's top central bankers to make clear they are going to keep raising rates and leave them there until inflation drops to their 2% goal considered best for the economy.

Consumers in Europe saw relief on energy costs, which dropped 5.6% after last year's crisis, while food prices rose 11.7% from a year earlier, easing from 12.5% in May.

Core inflation, which excludes volatile food and fuel costs and offers a clearer picture of longer-term price pressures, rose slightly to 5.4% from 5.3% the month before.

Inflation varied widely across the eurozone - Slovakia had the highest at 11.3%. Germany, Europe's largest economy, recorded 6.8%, and France saw 5.3%. Three countries came in under the ECB's 2% goal: Luxembourg at 1%, Belgium at 1.6% and Spain at 1.6%.

The initial outbreak of inflation was fueled by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which sent energy and food prices higher. The global economy's rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic also strained supplies of parts and raw materials.

Energy and wheat prices have subsided to pre-war levels and supply chain problems have eased, but inflation has kept snaking through other parts of the economy.

Companies providing services instead of goods - a huge swath of the economy including everything from office cleaning to haircuts and medical care - have raised their prices. Hotels and airlines are charging summer travelers more, and workers are pressing for pay raises to make up for their lost purchasing power.

The European Central Bank - along with its peers around the world - has been rapidly raising interest rates, the chief medicine against inflation. Increases in the ECB's benchmark rate make it more expensive for people to borrow to buy homes and cars and for

businesses to acquire new office buildings and factory equipment. That reduces demand, working to drop price levels.

One obvious impact has been in housing, with prices starting to fall after a yearslong rally across Europe as homebuyers avoid asking for mortgages. Those who have to refinance their home loans also are facing the prospect of paying thousands more than they used to.

While inflation fell rapidly as the first rate hikes took hold, going the last mile to 2% may take longer and be more difficult, central bankers say.

ECB President Christine Lagarde warned this week that inflation is turning out to be more persistent than hoped. At the bank's annual policy conference in Sintra, Portugal, she joined U.S. Federal Reserve Chair

Jerome Powell and Bank of England Gov. Andrew Bailey in making clear that rates will go higher and stay there for as long as necessary.

The strength of core inflation in Friday's figures means the "ECB will keep hiking," said Jack Allen-Reynolds, deputy chief eurozone economist at Capital Economics.

Lagarde has all but promised an increase at the ECB's July 27 meeting, and Allen-Reynolds said there was "a good chance of another hike at the following meeting in September, too."

The ECB has raised rates eight times in row, from minus 0.5% to 3.5%. High rates have raised concerns about their potential impact on growth, especially because the eurozone economy contracted slightly at the end of last year and the beginning of this year.

Ueda, who took over the job this year, was the outlier Wednesday, saying inflation did not call for rate rises yet.

The comments from some of the world's top central bank leaders underscored that inflation is turning out to be more widespread than originally hoped - and that borrowing costs are likely to go higher, and stay high for longer, than many had anticipated.

That could hold back economic growth as borrowing becomes less affordable for everything from auto loans to credit cards, raising the risk of recession. Growth has been weak globally, and Europe's economy already shrank for two straight quarters - one definition of recession.

But with unemployment at lows, that gives little indication of a true recession. The central bankers said their economies have been more resilient than expected and they don't foresee a contraction.

The small dip in output in Europe was more like stagnation, Lagarde said, and the ECB's baseline forecast "does not include a recession, but it's part of the risk out there."

Despite the risk of recession, the central bankers emphasized that they expect to keep rates at their peaks for some time - likely longer than buoyant stock and bond markets expect.

"I've always been interested that the market thinks that the peak will be quite short-lived in a world where we're dealing with more persistent inflation," Bailey said.

Since early 2021, almost 95% of the world's central banks have raised rates, even more than during the inflationary oil price shocks of the 1970s, according to the Bank for International Settlements, a Switzerland-based global organization of central banks.

Top central bankers assert need for higher interest rates to tackle persistent inflation



Yousef Al-Mutawa receiving the award from Global Finance.

New challenges face OPEC+

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

WITH three crude oil production cuts and another one on the way from next month, there are new challenges facing OPEC+, as the oil prices are still staying stubbornly below \$75 per barrel. Nothing seems to be moving oil prices up, despite the various analytic predictions about higher oil prices this year.



Al-Harami

The disunity in OPEC+ after the last meeting set the direction of many differences in opinions, which resulted in Saudi Arabia taking the sole decision of cutting its own production by one million barrels per day within the coming few days.

Moreover, Russia has almost refused any cuts and reductions in its production level, as it is in desperate need for foreign cash flow in any form, regardless of the value of its Ruble. What matters for it is to continue selling its crude oil and maximizing its income without losing the market share.

Some members reached their limits for making any further production cuts, while others were asking for future increases in production and quotas. Strange as it sounds but compromises come in many forms.

Hence, the last meeting of OPEC+ was not easy, as it may lead to further frustrations and cracks in the unity of the organization. On the face of it, it should have been an easy and smooth session.

Where do we go from here with just six months left for the year to end, and with most OPEC+ members facing huge deficits in their year end budgets.

This forces them to search for alternatives to borrow, against last year's expectation for oil prices to remain strong, which will lead to higher spending and expenditures.

On one hand, Russia just cannot cut or risk its production volume, or the foreign currency income. It will sell the maximum volume regardless, as it is a matter of national security. It is not prepared to face domestic consequences, and hopes to be back and reach a compromise with OPEC later.

Some other members complained of not achieving the targeted volume of the agreed quota because of a dispute on border fee with Turkey, as in the case with Iraq, thereby losing revenues of close to 200,000 barrels per day.

African oil producers were told to commit themselves to a fixed production volume without any room for compromise.

The last Vienna meeting was not healthy, as it ended with a cracked and copy-paste agreement, and with the majority going their own ways, leaving Saudi Arabia with a huge burden of solely reducing production by one million barrels per day starting from July 1, to await the oil market's reaction the following Monday.

The current global economic conditions, with concerns about overgrowth in China and the strong US currency, certainly will not help, and will not lead to growth in demand. In addition, the higher interest rates are damping any hope of price recovery, which may force an extension of the Saudi production cuts into the second month.

We must remind ourselves that the USA is the main beneficiary of the current oil situation, making it easier for it to fill its strategic reserve at the earliest.

Division or split in OPEC+ is perhaps not a bad thing today, as all members are seeking ways and means to minimize their losses. Certainly, borrowing or digging into their savings, and delaying mega projects seem to be the alternative choices.

The uncertainty surrounding the oil markets is making it difficult for OPEC+ members to come together as one united front.

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In this Feb. 16, 2016 file photo, a view of a supply ship at the Edvard Grieg oil field, in the North Sea. Norway has given the green light to 19 oil and gas projects on the Norwegian continental shelf. (AP)



Norway approves 19 oil and gas projects

Norway announced Wednesday it approved 19 oil and gas projects on the Norwegian continental shelf, saying the total investments are worth over 200 billion kroner (\$19 billion). "The projects are also an important contribution to Europe's energy security," said Terje Aasland, Norway's minister for petroleum and energy. Norway was the only net exporter of oil and gas in Europe, he said, adding, "By carrying out

these projects we ensure new production from the latter half of the 2020s, so that we can maintain high Norwegian deliveries." The projects consist of new developments, further development of existing fields, and investments in projects for increased extraction at existing fields. Norway, one of the world's wealthiest countries due to its vast oil and gas reserves, said earlier this month that it wants

to open parts of its continental shelf for commercial deep-sea mining in line with the country's strategy to seek new economic opportunities and reduce its reliance on the oil and gas industry. The conflict in Ukraine has boosted Norway's revenues as European countries previously reliant on Russia seek alternative energy sources. However, Norway has fended off accusations that it's profiting from the war in Ukraine.

In February, the Storting, the Norwegian parliament, announced that the Scandinavian country is donating 75 billion kroner (\$7.4 billion) to Kyiv as part of a five-year support package, making Norway one of the world's biggest donors to war-torn Ukraine. The money was from oil income, and the donation should not affect the Norwegian economy. (AP)

'The world has an urgent need to provide energy security'

Intel Tech helping design prototype fusion power plant

SANTA CLARA, Calif., July 2, (Business Wire): As part of a collaboration with Intel and Dell Technologies, the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) and the Cambridge Open Zettascale Lab plan to build a "digital twin" of the Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production (STEP) prototype fusion power plant. The UKAEA will utilize the lab's supercomputer based on Intel technologies, including 4th Gen Intel® Xeon® Scalable processors, distributed asynchronous object storage (DAOS) and oneAPI tools to streamline the development and delivery of fusion energy to the grid in the 2040s.

Fusion energy, with its potential to provide near limitless and highly sustainable energy, is often heralded as the ultimate alternative power source, but a functioning fusion power plant that can deliver energy to the grid is still years away. Engineering a new breed of power plant requires a lot of advanced tools and massive amounts of modeling and simulations, all while fusion research and technology continue to advance.

As they work toward the functioning fusion facility, UKAEA and the Cambridge Open Zettascale Lab will use supercomputing and a "digital twin," or prototype, of the STEP machine design to accelerate engineering and help future-proof progress, even as things evolve.

"I firmly believe the future of sustainable energy will rely upon supercomputing," said Rob Akers, director of Computing Programmes, UKAEA. "The world has an urgent need to provide energy security and combat climate

change. This is a journey we must embark upon together, delivering access and capability to all those who will be instrumental in delivering commercial fusion energy."

Working inside the industrial metaverse - a digital representation of an industrial environment that people can interact with - the UKAEA team can adapt their design as new information becomes available and technologies are developed. The supercomputer at the Cambridge Open Zettascale Lab leverages Dell PowerEdge servers based on 4th Gen Xeon processors to run the massive amounts of modeling and simulations needed for fusion research.

oneAPI, which allows developers to use a single codebase to deploy applications across multiple architectures, addresses one of the biggest inhibitors of simulation functionality and performance: code portability. Intel oneAPI tools and optimized AI frameworks deliver performance for deep learning and molecular dynamics. As a oneAPI Center of Excellence, the Cambridge Open Zettascale Lab is focused on broadening this application set to include engineering, fusion materials and plasma simulation.

Storage speed is another potential roadblock in fusion research, which involves large simulations running across thousands of graphics processing unit nodes and then transferring a huge amount of data for fast post-simulation analysis. A single plasma turbulence simulation can output hundreds of petabytes of data in a very short window. Intel DAOS is an open source, software-

defined, scale-out object store that provides high bandwidth, low latency and high I/O operations per second (IOPS) storage containers for high performance computing (HPC) applications. For fusion research, it offers a fast and frictionless pathway for analysis and calculations that need to happen in an incredibly small window of time.

Full Case Study and Video | Intel® AI Analytics Toolkit (AI Kit) | Intel oneAPI 2023 Tools | Powering Fusion Energy on Earth by 2040 (Dell Video, Episode 1) | Feeding and Watering the Next-Gen Data Center (Dell Video, Episode 2) | Managing at the Speed of AI (Dell Video, Episode 3) | Industrial Metaverse Essential for UK Fusion Energy Development (UKAEA News Release)

Intel (Nasdaq: INTC) is an industry leader, creating world-changing technology that enables global progress and enriches lives. Inspired by Moore's Law, we continuously work to advance the design and manufacturing of semiconductors to help address our customers' greatest challenges. By embedding intelligence in the cloud, network, edge and every kind of computing device, we unleash the potential of data to transform business and society for the better. To learn more about Intel's innovations, go to newsroom.intel.com and intel.com.

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Finland to become the leading hydrogen economy in Europe

H2 Cluster Finland publishes a hydrogen economy strategy

HELSINKI, July 2, (Business Wire): "The new government program is based on Finland becoming a powerhouse of clean energy. It is the most important industrial and climate action of the decade, and it is based on hydrogen economy," commented, Minister of the Environment and Climate.

Finland holds a favourable position: the society is stable, infrastructure is well-planned, grid electricity is clean and the price is competitive in Europe, there is a favourable ratio of wind and solar power, and there is immense potential for developing both. By 2030, Finland could produce over 14% of emission-free hydrogen in the EU. Hydrogen economy will contribute to Finland's well-being by reducing dependence on imports in various industrial sectors, thereby strengthening self-sufficiency and energy security. Additionally, hydrogen economy has the potential to create up to 115,000 new jobs by 2035.

The strategy has been developed in collaboration with officials, industry unions, and companies involved in the entire hydrogen value chain. Achieving the set goals requires seamless and agile cooperation across industries. It also defines practical measures to achieve the set objectives. Minister Mykkänen states that the newly formed government also intends to promote hydrogen economy in practise by expediting and streamlining permitting processes, creating incentives for diverse electricity production growth, and aiming for rapid and comprehensive adoption of carbon capture and utilization by the mid-2030s.

"Finland needs to define which opportunities we want to focus on to genuinely leverage the unique opportunity to position Finland as a pioneer in Europe's hydrogen economy," says, CEO of Gasgrid and leader of the Hydrogen Cluster's strategy team.



The Occidental Petroleum headquarters building is seen in Los Angeles, Jan. 26, 2010. Billionaire Warren Buffett's company keeps buying shares of Occidental Petroleum, and Berkshire Hathaway now controls more

than 25% of the oil producer. A new filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission Wednesday, June 28, 2023, shows Berkshire bought another 2.1 million Occidental shares this week worth \$123 million. (AP)

Buffett's firm buys more Occidental Petroleum and now owns more than 25 percent of the oil producer

OMAHA, Neb., July 2, (AP): Billionaire Warren Buffett's company keeps buying shares of Occidental Petroleum, and Berkshire Hathaway now controls more than 25% of the oil producer.

A new filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission shows that Berkshire bought another 2.1 million Occidental shares this week worth about \$123 million.

The latest purchases give Berkshire more than 224 million shares worth nearly \$13 billion that have all been purchased over the past year and a half.

And Buffett may not be done buying because the price of Occidental stock is still right around where he bought shares at this week even after a modest 43-cent bump Thursday morning to trade at \$57.89. Buffett has been consistently buying the stock when it dips below \$60.

Crude prices are down 13% this year and shares of Occidental are down 8%.

Often, other investors rush into a stock after Berkshire discloses a purchase because of Buffett's remarkably successful track record over the decades. But their enthusiasm may be tempered in this case because Buffett told shareholders at his annual meeting that he has no plans to buy all of Occidental.

But last year, Buffett did get permission from federal regulators to

buy up to 50% of the Houston-based oil producer, and Berkshire holds warrants to buy another 83.9 million shares for \$59.62 apiece, so more purchases seem likely.

In addition, Berkshire also holds 91,964 preferred shares of Occidental worth more than \$10 billion that it picked up in 2019 when it helped finance Occidental's acquisition of Anadarko. Berkshire used to hold more of those preferred shares, but Occidental has started redeeming them this

year at \$110,000 apiece to eliminate the hefty dividend the oil producer has to pay on them.

Berkshire owns a portfolio worth several hundred billion dollars that includes major stakes in Apple, Bank of America and Coca-Cola stock. But the Omaha, Nebraska-based conglomerate also owns dozens of companies outright including Geico insurance, BNSF railroad, several large utilities and an assortment of manufacturing and retail firms.



Berkshire Hathaway Chairman and CEO Warren Buffett smiles during an interview in Omaha, Neb., May 7, 2018. (AP)

Joint Venture formed in Saudi

Lifera, CENTOGENE, enter a 'strategic collaboration'

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, July 2, (PR Newswire): CENTOGENE N.V. (Nasdaq: CNTG), the essential life science partner for data-driven answers in rare and neurodegenerative diseases, and Lifera, a biopharmaceutical company wholly-owned by the Public Investment Fund (PIF), have announced a strategic collaboration with the formation of a Joint Venture (JV) to increase local and regional access and rapid delivery of world-class multiomic testing to patients in Saudi Arabia and countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Under the terms of the collaboration, CENTOGENE will receive a \$30 million mandatory convertible loan from Lifera.

CENTOGENE, the current market leader in outsourced genetic testing for patients in Saudi Arabia, will provide its leading diagnostics and multiomics expertise to the JV, which together with Lifera's strong local presence and resources, will establish widespread access to local state-of-the-art genetic sequencing tailored to regional needs. The JV will build an advanced laboratory and bioinformatics infrastructure - leveraging the CENTOGENE Biodatabank, the world's largest real-world integrated multiomic data repository in rare disease biobanks globally and neurodegenerative diseases, which has more than 70 million and over 35,000 Saudi Arabian patient datasets. The JV will develop capabilities for genetic testing and interpretation working collaboratively with CENTOGENE globally - serving as a vehicle for large national screening and genomics programs. As such, patients in Saudi Arabia and the GCC, a rapidly growing region with over 56 million inhabitants, will have increased access to the world's most advanced and effective diagnostic offerings, which is at the core of Lifera's strategic objectives, contributing to improving national resilience and health outcomes in Saudi Arabia.

Dr. Ibrahim Aljufalli, Chairman of the Lifera Board, said: "This strategic collaboration is a reflection of Lifera's mission to grow Saudi Arabia's biopharma sector. With CENTOGENE's expertise in the field of rare, metabolic and neurodegenerative diseases, we see tremendous potential value for the JV to provide more timely and accurate diagnoses which are crucial to patients and their families, driven by a comprehensive diagnostic portfolio that goes beyond standard laboratory testing and medical interpretation. This collaboration will also enable biopharma research in rare diseases and provide resources to foster collaborative re-

search across Saudi Arabia and with global partners."

Kim Stratton, Chief Executive Officer at CENTOGENE, said: "Teaming up with Lifera marks a significant step forward in our mission to deliver data-driven, life-changing answers to patients around the world and forms a pathway to achieving sustainable growth and profitability for CENTOGENE."

And added: "As part of Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia has designed impressive programs to improve health outcomes throughout the region. This JV will now build on CENTOGENE's extensive know-how and current leading position in the Saudi market, as well as Lifera's deep understanding of the local healthcare landscape to actively contribute to these healthcare initiatives. This, along with Lifera's investment, secures CENTOGENE a committed strategic partner for the future."

Under the terms of the agreement, Lifera and CENTOGENE will make an investment into the JV. CENTOGENE will also be eligible for significant JV performance-related milestone payments and revenue-based royalties until the year 2033. Both parties will be represented on the board of the JV. The agreement also foresees that two Lifera representatives will join CENTOGENE's Supervisory Board.

Notes: About Lifera Lifera is a new biopharmaceutical company dedicated to advancing Saudi Arabia's biopharmaceutical sector and building national health resilience. By developing local manufacturing capacity for vaccines, insulin, plasma therapeutics and other biologics, as well as investing in genetic testing and precision medicine, Lifera aims to ensure people in Saudi Arabia have access to reliable and affordable medicines. For more information visit www.lifera.com.sa

About CENTOGENE CENTOGENE's mission is to provide data-driven, life-changing answers to patients, physicians, and pharma companies for rare and neurodegenerative diseases. We integrate multiomic technologies with the CENTOGENE Biodatabank - providing dimensional analysis to guide the next generation of precision medicine. Our unique approach enables rapid and reliable diagnosis for patients, supports a more precise physician understanding of disease states, and accelerates and de-risks targeted pharma drug discovery, development, and commercialization.

IMF: Without reforms, Lebanon faces ballooning inflation and public debt

BEIRUT, July 2, (AP): Without reforms, Lebanon will continue to see triple-digit inflation, and public debt in the small, crisis-ridden country could reach nearly 550% of GDP by 2027, the International Monetary Fund warned in a report Thursday.

The report came as a follow-up to a nine-day visit by IMF officials in March.

Progress toward finalizing a sorely needed IMF bailout package for the struggling country has largely stalled.

Since reaching a preliminary agreement with the IMF more than a year ago, Lebanese officials have made limited progress on reforms required to clinch the deal. They include restructuring the country's debts and its ailing banking system, revamping its barely functioning public electricity system and improving governance.

Since the country fell into an economic crisis in 2019, the country's "GDP has declined by about 40 percent, the (currency) has lost 98 percent of its value, inflation is at triple-digits, and the central bank has lost two thirds

of its foreign currency reserves," the IMF report noted.

The economic situation stabilized somewhat by the end of 2022, it said, due to "the end of COVID restrictions, a rebound in tourism, strong inflow of remittances, and a gradual decline in international energy and food prices in the second half of 2022."

The delay in restructuring the country's financial system and stabilizing its collapsing currency has benefited borrowers while harming those who deposited their savings in the banks, the report noted.

While some in the private sector have been able to leverage the currency crisis to their advantage by repaying loans taken out before the crisis at "below-market exchange rates," this left the country with less dollar reserves that can be used to pay depositors whose savings are trapped in the banks.

The central bank's reserves have declined to about \$10 billion, compared to a pre-crisis peak of \$36 billion, the report noted.

Egypt launches petrochemical projects valued at USD 9 bln

CAIRO, July 2, (KUNA): Egyptian Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources announced on Saturday launching new refining and petrochemical projects with investments at USD nine billion.

In a statement, the Ministry said the they are working on launching new refining projects valued at USD 7.5 billion, including the expansion of Midor refinery in Alexandria, which has completed its first and second phases and started experimentally operating,

as well as the diesel production complex project at Assiut's ANOPC.

It also added other projects including the Suez Petroleum Processing Company's coking complex and diesel production, the condensate distillation project at Nasr Petroleum Company in Suez, and the air distillation project at Assiut's oil refiner.

The ministry succeeded in operating eight new projects in fields of oil refining, with investments

of USD 5 billion, as part of a strategy launched in 2016 to develop the petroleum refining industry and increase its production capacities to reduce imports.

The strategy's success led to doubling the domestic production of petrochemical materials to more than 4.3 million tons annually by the end of 2021/2022, compared to 2.1 million tons in 2015/2016, following the expansions that were added in 2016 and 2017 with a total investment of about USD 4 billion.

Biden names WH digital chief

Musk imposes daily limits on reading posts on Twitter

SAN FRANCISCO, July 2, (AP): Twitter owner Elon Musk has limited the amount of tweets that most users can view each day - restrictions he described as an attempt to prevent unauthorized scraping of potentially valuable data from the social media platform.

The site is now requiring people to log on to view tweets and profiles - a change in its longtime practice to allow everyone to peruse the chatter on what Musk has frequently touted as the world's digital town square since buying it for \$44 billion last year.

The restrictions could result in users being locked out of Twitter for the day after scrolling through several hundred tweets. Thousands of users complained Saturday of not being able to access the site.

In a Friday tweet, Musk described the new restrictions as a temporary measure that was taken because "we were getting data pillaged so much that it was degrading service for normal users."

Musk has pushed back on what he calls misuse of Twitter data to train popular artificial intelligence systems like ChatGPT. They scour reams of information online to generate human-

like text, photos, video and other content.

Musk elaborated on the limits Saturday, saying unverified accounts will temporarily be restricted to reading 600 posts per day, while verified accounts will be able to scroll through up to 6,000.

After facing backlash, he tweeted that the thresholds would be raised to 800 posts for unverified accounts and 8,000 for verified accounts before later settling on 1,000 and 10,000 tweets, respectively.

The crackdown began to have ripple effects, causing more than 7,500 people at one point Saturday to report problems using the social media service, based on complaints registered on DOWNDetector, a website that tracks online outages.

Although that's a relatively small number of Twitter's more than 200 million worldwide users, the trouble was widespread enough to cause the #TwitterDown hashtag to trend in some parts of the world.

The higher threshold allowed on verified accounts is part of an \$8-per-month subscription service that Musk rolled out earlier this year in an effort to boost Twitter revenue. It has fallen

sharply since the billionaire Tesla CEO took over the company and laid off roughly three-fourths of the workforce to cut costs and stave off bankruptcy.

Advertisers have since curbed their spending on Twitter, partly because of changes that have allowed more sometimes-hateful and prickly content that offends a wider part of the service's audience.

Musk recently hired longtime NBC Universal executive Linda Yaccarino as Twitter's CEO to try to win back advertisers.

An Associated Press inquiry about Saturday's access problems triggered a crude automated reply that Twitter sends to most media queries without addressing the question.

Also:

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden on Friday named Christian Tom to serve as director of the White House Office of Digital Strategy, aiming to continue building relationships with creators and influencers to promote his agenda ahead of the 2024 presidential election.

Tom replaces Rob Flaherty, who departed the White House this week



Elon Musk, who owns Twitter, Tesla and SpaceX, speaks at the Vivatex fair, June 16, 2023, in Paris. Thousands of people logged complaints about problems accessing Twitter on July 1, after Musk limited most users to viewing 600 tweets a day - restrictions he described as an attempt to prevent unauthorized scraping of potentially valuable data from the site. (AP)

for an expected senior role on Biden's reelection campaign. Tom is a veteran of Biden's 2020 campaign effort, and served as the deputy director of the digital office after Biden entered the

White House before taking on a role last year with the McCourt Institute, a nonprofit focused on advancing digital governance.

"Christian is an innovator," Biden

said in a statement welcoming him back to the White House. "He helped develop a first-of-its-kind digital strategy in 2020 - one that has continued to be a key part of this administration's approach to reach Americans in new, creative, and authentic ways. As a Day 1 member of my team, Christian returns to the White House with a wealth of experience in the ways technology, digital media, and social platforms can be used to strengthen our democracy and bring people together."

"The way we consume information is undergoing a fundamental shift," Biden added. "Under Christian's leadership, my Office of Digital Strategy will remain at the forefront of this change, navigating how people exchange information on a daily basis."

Tom, who starts July 6, will be the first person of color to lead the White House digital office and the first person of East Asian background to serve as one of Biden's top White House aides. He previously held roles at YouTube, Twitter and NowThis.

The White House also announced Patrick Stevenson as a senior adviser to Biden on digital strategy and Tericka Lambert as deputy director of the digital office.



Text from the ChatGPT page of the OpenAI website is shown in this photo, in New York, Feb. 2, 2023. More than 150 executives are urging the European Union to rethink the world's most comprehensive rules for artificial intelligence. In an open letter to EU leaders on June 30, 2023, the executives say the upcoming regulations will make it harder for companies in Europe to compete with rivals overseas, especially when it comes to the technology behind systems like ChatGPT. (AP)

Top execs voice concerns

Europe urged to 'rethink' its world-leading AI rules

LONDON, July 2, (AP): More than 150 executives are urging the European Union to rethink the world's most comprehensive rules for artificial intelligence, saying that upcoming regulations will make it harder for companies in Europe to compete with rivals overseas, especially when it comes to the technology behind systems like ChatGPT.

Officials at companies from French planemaker Airbus and carmaker Renault to Dutch beer giant Heineken signed an open letter to EU leaders saying the 27-nation bloc's groundbreaking legislation may put shackles on the development of generative AI. That technology gives popular AI chatbots like ChatGPT the power to generate text, images, video and audio that resemble human work.

"Such regulation could lead to highly innovative companies moving their activities abroad" and investors withdrawing their money from AI development in Europe, the letter said. "The result would be a critical productivity gap between the two sides of the Atlantic."

The executives say laws requiring "rigid compliance" would be ineffective when so little is still known about the risks and uses of generative AI. They urged the EU to revise the AI Act to focus broadly on the risks.

With growing concerns about the impact of AI on all parts of life, the letter does acknowledge "a clear need to properly train these models and ensure their safe use."

Adapt

The corporate leaders called for a regulatory body of experts that can regularly adapt rules to new developments and respond to risks that emerge. They also pointed to the need for transatlantic standards.

It's the latest letter to weigh in on the future of AI, which has dazzled users but raised concerns about data privacy, copyright infringement and disinformation. That has sent governments worldwide racing to rein in the technology.

There are also fears about more existential threats to humankind, which scientists and tech industry leaders, including high-level executives at Microsoft and Google, warned about last month.

Sam Altman, CEO of ChatGPT maker OpenAI, and Geoffrey Hinton, a computer scientist known as the godfather of AI, were among the hundreds of leading figures who signed that statement.

Missing was Yann LeCun, chief AI scientist of Meta and another AI pioneer, who signed the letter Friday from European executives.

The EU is still putting the finishing touches on its AI Act, and the rules are not expected to take effect for two years.

"I am convinced they have not read the text but have rather reacted on the stimulus of a few," Dragos Tudorache, a Romanian member of the European Parliament who is co-leading the measure, said of the executives who signed the letter.

He noted that the letter's "only concrete suggestions" are already part of

'Promotes DX'

Uhuru joins top cos as members of 'FII'

TOKYO, July 2: Uhuru Corporation has announced that it has become members of Future Investment Initiative ("FII") Institute, a global non-profit organization from Saudi Arabia to the world with one pressing agenda: Impact on Humanity. Driven by data, FII Institute fosters great minds from around the world to turn ideas into real-world solutions and actions in four critical areas: Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Robotics, Education, Healthcare and Sustainability.

The FII Institute was established in 2019 and is funded by its strategic partners including its founding partner, the Public Investment Fund (PIF), which is Saudi Arabia's premier sovereign wealth fund, as well as its Vision Partner, Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Investment, and international strategic partners like Aramco, EMAAR, HSBC, NEOM, Red Sea Global, SoftBank Vision Fund, and Standard Chartered.

FII Institute's international members are changemakers, coming from a variety of industries, sectors, and backgrounds, to gather under the Institute's "XCHANGE" pillar during its annual FII flagship conference and regional PRIORITy summits to discuss global issues, investment, and business opportunities in Saudi Arabia and beyond. Further, guided by experts and partnered with esteemed academia, FII Institute's THINK pillar pursues thought leadership in the service of humanity with its publications and initiatives. Finally, its ACT pillar catalyzes leading innovations aligned with its ESG principles to ensure these ideas to make it out of that lab and into the real world, where they can be deployed in the service of all.

Richard Attias, CEO of FII Institute noted, "We are delighted to welcome members to FII Institute. Each member brings unique expertise, strategies and thought leadership, crucial to supporting our mission. Our members come from leading international organizations and have expressed their eagerness to join the movement - coming together to make an Impact on Humanity."

With the philosophy of "creating a sustainable society through technology and outside-the-box thinking," Uhuru supports and promotes digital transformation (DX) and data utilization by companies and society, and is also involved in smart city projects.

Through its membership in FII Institute, Uhuru will strengthen its international collaboration, share its capabilities with the member network, and work toward the realization of a sustainable world for all.

the legislation, including "an industry-led process for defining standards, governance with industry at the table and a light regulatory regime that asks for transparency."

Moody's, Microsoft develop enhanced analytics solutions using generative AI

NEW YORK/REDMOND, Wash., July 2: Moody's Corporation (NYSE:MCO) and Microsoft (NASDAQ:MSFT) announced a new strategic partnership to deliver next-generation data, analytics, research, collaboration and risk solutions for financial services and global knowledge workers. Built on a combination of Moody's robust data and analytical capabilities and the power and scale of Microsoft Azure OpenAI Service, the partnership creates innovative offerings that enhance insights into corporate intelligence and risk assessment, powered by Microsoft AI and anchored by Moody's proprietary data, analytics and research.

Rob Fauber, president and chief executive officer of Moody's Corporation, said, "Generative AI represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to enhance how companies navigate the ever-evolving world of exponential risk. By combining Microsoft's cutting-edge AI capabilities with our proprietary data, research and analytics, Moody's is positioned to lead the next generation of risk analysis, helping our customers make better decisions by unlocking deeper, more integrated, and unmatched perspectives on risk. We have activated our 14,000 global employees to drive unprecedented experimentation and ignite new innovations across our suite of products and solutions. We are excited to partner with Microsoft to set the standard for how generative AI will pioneer new advancements across our industry."

Strategic partnership highlights
■ Microsoft and Moody's are co-creating new products and services for research and risk assessment, built on Azure OpenAI Service for enhanced data and risk management.

■ "Moody's CoPilot," an internal copilot tool, is now deployed to Moody's 14,000 global employees, and will combine Moody's proprietary data, analytics and research with the latest large language models (LLMs) and Microsoft's world-class generative AI technology to drive firm-wide innovation and enhance employee productivity in a safe and secure digital sandbox.

■ Moody's is adopting Microsoft Teams to provide a new platform for its knowledge workers and customers

Tech juggernaut marks another milestone

Apple is world's first \$3 trillion company

SAN FRANCISCO, July 2, (AP): Apple became the first publicly traded company to close a trading day with a \$3 trillion market value, marking another milestone for a technology juggernaut that has reshaped society with a line-up of products that churn out eye-popping profits.

Apple shares closed up 2.3% at \$193.97 Friday, bringing its market value to \$3.04 trillion. Apple is one of a handful of technology companies, including Microsoft and chipmaker Nvidia, that helped drive the S&P 500 to a gain of nearly 16% in the first half of the year.

The 47-year-old company co-founded by Silicon Valley legend Steve Jobs had briefly eclipsed a \$3 trillion market value on back-to-back days in January 2022, but couldn't hold on by the time the market closed. Instead, Apple's stock sunk into a prolonged descent that pushed its market value briefly below \$2 trillion earlier this year amid a slowdown in growth and investor jitters about rising interest rates that affected the entire tech sector.

Apple didn't come close to the \$3 trillion threshold again until earlier this month when the company unveiled what could be its next big product - a high-priced headset called Vision Pro that thrusts users into artificial settings known as virtual reality.

that will enhance collaboration, productivity, and communication, while maintaining the highest compliance standards.

■ For internal use and co-innovations, Microsoft is leveraging Moody's broad range of solutions, including Moody's Orbis database - one of the world's most powerful databases on companies - with applications that include third-party reference data, counterparty risk assessment, and supply chain management.

■ Microsoft and Moody's will collaborate on the opportunity to deliver data to their shared customers through Microsoft Fabric, a new analytics platform for end-to-end data management.

■ Moody's commits to using Microsoft's Azure cloud platform to power its growing suite of generative AI capabilities and cloud-based applications.

Rob Fauber, president and chief executive officer of Moody's Corporation, said, "Generative AI represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to enhance how companies navigate the ever-evolving world of exponential risk. By combining Microsoft's cutting-edge AI capabilities with our proprietary data, research and analytics, Moody's is positioned to lead the next generation of risk analysis, helping our customers make better decisions

Although the significance of reaching a \$3 trillion market value is largely symbolic, its magnitude is still breathtaking.

Consider, for instance, that \$3 trillion could buy nearly 9 million homes in the U.S., based on the average sales price during the past year as calculated by Zillow. It could also buy the 50 most valuable sports teams in the world with plenty of change to spare. If \$3 trillion were distributed equally to every person in the United States, each person would receive about \$9,000.

Values

Microsoft is the second-most valuable public company at \$2.5 trillion. Oil giant Saudi Aramco has a market value of \$2.08 trillion. Alphabet, the parent of Google, Amazon and Nvidia have market values above \$1 trillion.

It took Apple less than two years to close with a \$3 trillion market value after topping \$2 trillion for the first time in August 2021, which occurred about two years after the Cupertino, California, company reached \$1 trillion for the first time.

The cascading trillions have been driven by the technology empire that Apple has built since Jobs returned to the company in 1997 after being pushed aside by then-CEO John Sculley in 1985. At the time of Jobs' come-

back, Apple was flirting with bankruptcy and so desperate for help that it turned to its once-bitter rival Microsoft for a cash infusion.

Today, Apple makes so much money that it can afford to pay \$105 billion annually in investor dividends and repurchases of its own stock - and still be left with nearly \$56 billion in cash at the end of its last fiscal quarter.

The iPhone, unveiled by Jobs in 2007 with his hallmark showmanship, remains the crown jewel in Apple's kingdom. Last year, the device accounted more than half of the company's nearly \$400 billion in sales.

The rest of Apple's revenue flows in from other products such as the Macintosh computer, iPad, Apple Watch, AirPods and a services division that includes music and video streaming, warranty programs, fees collected through the iPhone app store and advertising commissions that Google pays to be the default search engine on the iPhone.

Although most of Apple's innovations were hatched while Jobs was running the company, most of its wealth has been created under the reign of its current CEO, Tim Cook, who took over as CEO shortly before Jobs died in October 2011. When Jobs passed the baton to Cook, Apple's market value stood at \$350 billion.

research.

Bill Borden, corporate vice president of worldwide financial services at Moody's said, "Our partnership will bring together world-class insights from Moody's with the capabilities, trust and breadth of Microsoft Cloud - including Azure OpenAI Service, Fabric and Teams - to enable next-gen solutions that will unlock powerful business intelligence and transform productivity and collaboration. We look forward to the new opportunities and value this will bring to employees and firms across banking, capital markets and insurance as well as those in other industries such as manufacturing, telecommunications, transportation and utilities."

Additionally, through the partnership, Moody's will leverage Microsoft Teams to create a new collaboration, productivity and communication platform for its knowledge workers and customers. With the integration of Moody's copilot tools, Teams will automate and streamline manual workflows, provide more efficient access to data and content, and synthesize and summarize information from across multiple data sets, resulting in better insights, improved productivity and compliance, and enhanced employee and customer experiences.

"This way we can address the most important vulnerabilities without unnecessarily disrupting the global production of chips," she said.

Partnership offers innovative offerings to financial services

China slams new measures

Dutch semiconductor machine export restrictions from Sept

THE HAGUE, Netherlands, July 2, (AP): Dutch companies that produce machines that make advanced semiconductor processor chips will be required to have export licenses before they can sell them overseas starting in September, the government announced Friday.

The new measure, which was first announced in March, "is country neutral," the government said. But it is seen as part of a US policy that aims at restricting China's access to materials used to make such chips, which can be used in military technology. The requirement will notably affect Dutch company ASML, the world's only producer of machines that use advanced ultraviolet lithography to make advanced semiconductor chips. The Dutch government has prohibited the Veldhoven-based company from

exporting some of its machines to China since 2019.

"We have taken this step in the interest of our national security. It is good that the companies concerned now know where they stand. This way they can adapt to the new regulations in time," Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Minister Liesje Schreinemacher said in a statement.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte visited US President Joe Biden in January for talks that included discussions about ASML's advanced chip machines.

The Biden administration in October imposed export controls to limit China's access to advanced chips, which it says can be used to make weapons, commit human rights abuses and improve the speed and accuracy

of its military logistics. It urged allies like Japan and the Netherlands to follow suit.

Unreasonable

In a statement on the website of its Dutch embassy, China slammed the new measures as "completely unreasonable and untenable."

It said such restrictions "will not only damage the legitimate rights of Chinese companies, but also cause losses to Dutch companies, destabilize the global industrial and supply chains and hurt the good reputation of the Netherlands in supporting free trade."

ASML, headquartered in the southern Dutch town of Veldhoven, has continued to ship lower-quality chip lithography systems to China despite the government's restrictions on advanced

machines. The company said in a statement that it will now have to apply for export licenses for all shipments of its most advanced deep ultraviolet lithography systems.

"The Dutch government will determine whether to grant or deny the required export licenses and provide further details to the company on any conditions that apply," ASML said. The company added that it does not expect the restrictions "to have a material impact on our financial outlook."

Schreinemacher said the restrictions were carefully considered and as precise as possible.



Scanbox pro still - 3D

DentalMonitoring reinvents scan experience

DentalMonitoring has announced their latest innovation, ScanAssist, the only AI-guided scan process available in orthodontics, designed to provide a fun, engaging patient experience, while also providing unprecedented photo quality for clinical analysis.

ScanAssist helps patients complete their scans quickly and efficiently with AI guided instructions and real time feedback. Providing a 3D model of a mouth that follows patients as they scan, this in-app system guides patients through scan movements to ensure high-quality pictures and detailed analysis of their treatment

progression and oral health. The feature provides patients with a game-inspired experience, including visual and audio cues designed to increase motivation and compliance.

"Innovation is the motor that drives us to create solutions like ScanAssist, which uses one-of-a-kind AI-powered technology to guide patients at every step," says DentalMonitoring CEO Philippe Salah. "We're thrilled doctors and patients can use our solutions to create the best treatment experience possible."

ScanAssist is the newest addition to the DentalMonitoring app, which uses software and AI

to detect more than 130 intraoral observations for braces and aligners treatments for all patients. Doctors interested in learning more on how their practice can benefit from AI-based orthodontic solutions can visit dental-monitoring.com.

DentalMonitoring exists to make orthodontics smarter. Powered by the most advanced AI in the industry, DentalMonitoring has developed comprehensive doctor-driven solutions to help orthodontists grow and optimize their practice, provide superior clinical care, and deliver a better patient experience.

The Conversation

Obesity medicine physician explains seismic shift taking place

BMI will no longer be a go-to measure for weight management

By Scott Hagan, MD
University of Washington

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

Amid the buzz around weight loss drugs and rising rates of obesity worldwide, many health care professionals are questioning one of the key measures that has long been used to define obesity.

On June 14, 2023, the American Medical Association adopted a new policy, calling on doctors to de-emphasize the role of body mass index, or BMI, in clinical practice.

The statement by the AMA, the US's largest association representing physicians, signals a significant shift in how clinicians regard BMI as a measure of general health. With over 40% of Americans having obesity as defined by BMI, a movement away from BMI could have broad implications for patient care.

As a board-certified obesity medicine physician with a research interest in patient-centered obesity care, I have written before about my concerns over use of BMI as a measure of health. The AMA's policy statement creates an important opportunity to review the current use of BMI in health care settings and to consider what the future holds for the assessment of the health risks of elevated body weight.

Body mass index is a measurement taken by dividing body weight in kilograms by height in meters squared. The metric was developed to estimate a normal body weight depending on an individual's height, given that taller people tend to weigh more.

It rose to prominence for clinicians in the 1990s following the World Health Organization's adoption of the metric as the official screening index for obesity.

Research has consistently shown that BMI at a population level correlates strongly with body fat percentage and risk for serious health conditions. The index is easy to measure and inexpensive to calculate, allowing its wide implementation in health care settings.

Predicts

Because of that ample body of evidence from previous decades, one of the long-standing assumptions in the use of BMI as a measure of general health is that it accurately predicts an individual's body fat percentage and, therefore, the potential health risks of elevated weight.

However, while BMI may have strong correlations with the amount of body weight composed of body fat in studies of averages of large groups of people, it does not directly measure body fat for an individual. Therefore, people with the same BMI may have substantially different body fat percentage based on a variety of factors such as age, muscle mass, sex and race. In an example from one large

study, adults with a BMI of 25 had a body fat percentage ranging from 14% to 35% for men, and 26% to 42% for women.

Ultimately, BMI cannot provide doctors with precise information about the portion of body weight comprised of body fat, nor can it tell us how that fat is distributed in the body. But this distribution is important because research has shown that fat stored around the internal organs has significantly higher health risks than that distributed in the extremities.

Further, just as a variety of health factors may affect the accuracy of BMI to predict how much body fat someone has, health outcomes such as developing diabetes at a specific BMI can vary substantially based on factors such as a person's race, sex, age and physical fitness level.

Metabolically

Finally, a significant number of adults may have metabolically healthy obesity, defined as having a BMI above 30 without having high blood pressure, blood sugar or cholesterol. Adults with metabolically healthy obesity have significantly lower health risks associated with a high BMI and therefore may not benefit from weight loss.

Although research in the 1970s suggested that any BMI above a normal (18.5-24.9) range shortened life expectancy, some modern studies suggest that BMI in the overweight (25-29.9) to class I obesity (30-34.9) range does not raise risk for early death.

The potentially lower risk of death in modern studies for people with higher body weight might be explained by improved treatment of conditions such as high cholesterol and blood pressure, common contributors to shortened life expectancy for people with a BMI over 30.

Clinicians commonly use BMI as the metric to decide whether to recommend weight loss, drawing from recommendations such as those released by the United States Preventive Services Task Force, an independent, national panel of health care experts that writes guidelines on preventive health. The task force recommends lifestyle-based weight loss programs such as diet and exercise for adults with a BMI above 30, or above 25 if they have other obesity-associated health conditions such as high blood pressure or high blood sugar. Its members cite the potential for lifestyle-based weight loss interventions to reduce obesity-related health risks as justification for the recommendation.

However, in their 2018 evidence review for these guidelines, task force researchers found no significant improvements in cardiovascular events, mortality or health-related quality of life in studies comparing those who received a lifestyle-based or medication-based weight loss intervention, or both, versus those who did not. (AP)

Humira biosimilar launched in the US at a more affordable cost

Hadlima expands treatment options for 'autoimmune diseases' patients

'Tuberculosis one of the world's deadliest diseases'

Wellcome and Gates to fund late-stage development of TB vaccine candidate

JERSEY CITY, NJ, July 2: Organon & Co. (NYSE: OGN) & Samsung Bioepis Co., Ltd. have announced that Hadlima™ (adalimumab-bwvd), a biosimilar referencing Humira (adalimumab), is now available to patients in the United States. Consistent with Humira, Hadlima is available in both citrate-free high concentration (100 mg/mL) and citrate-containing low concentration (50 mg/mL) to provide patients with seamless continuity of care.

"As the largest loss-of-exclusivity event in pharmaceutical history, this is a singular moment for the US health care system to embrace biosimilars. Every stakeholder should be invested in the success of this market to realize the value biosimilars can create for patients, providers, and the US health care economy," said Kevin Ali, Chief Executive Officer of Organon. "We are thrilled to now provide Hadlima in the US at a more affordable cost and expand much-needed access to adalimumab. With our deep biosimilar commercial experience, a new comprehensive patient support program, and our dedication to providing exceptional HCP support, we are immediately well-positioned to make a positive impact."

Concentration

"The availability of Hadlima, both high and low concentration, marks an important milestone towards expanding treatment options for millions of patients suffering from chronic autoimmune diseases in the United States. Based on our robust track record over the past four years with approximately 6.8 million units of our adalimumab biosimilar supplied in ex-US markets, we are well-positioned to deliver this life-changing medicine to patients through stringent quality control, rigorous manufacturing, and supply resilience," said Christopher Hansung Ko, President and Chief Executive Officer of Samsung Bioepis. "Our mission is to positively impact and ensure the sustainability of health care systems by offering affordable, clinically proven biologic medicines. We will continue to work with our partners and other stakeholders to ensure wider availability of this medicine in the US," he added.

Hadlima is a tumor necrosis factor (TNF) blocker indicated for appropriate patients with rheumatoid arthritis, juvenile idiopathic arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis,

LONDON and SEATTLE, July 2: Wellcome and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation have announced funding to advance a tuberculosis (TB) vaccine candidate, M72/AS01E (M72), through a Phase III clinical trial. If proven effective, M72 could potentially become the first new vaccine to help prevent pulmonary TB, a form of active TB, in more than 100 years.

In 2021, an estimated 10.6 million people fell ill with TB and 1.6 million died—about 4,300 people per day. The disease primarily affects people in low- and middle-income countries, and those at highest risk are often living in poverty, with poor living and working conditions and undernutrition. Up to a quarter of the world's population is thought to have latent TB, a condition in which a person is infected with the bacterium that causes TB but does not have any symptoms and is at risk of progressing to active TB disease.

"Despite being curable, TB remains one of the leading causes of death in South Africa," said Nomathamsanqa Majazi, head of public engagement at Africa Health Research Institute. "In the area where I live and work, more than half of all people have had, or will have, TB at some point in their lives. The consequences are devastating, both at a personal and a community level. M72 offers us new hope for a TB-free future."

To support the M72 Phase III clinical trial, which will cost an estimated US\$550 million, Wellcome is pro-

viding up to US\$150 million and the Gates Foundation will fund the remainder, about US\$400 million.

"TB remains one of the world's deadliest infectious diseases," said Julia Gillard, chair of the Board of Governors at Wellcome. "The development of an affordable, accessible vaccine for adults and adolescents would be game-changing in turning the tide against TB. Philanthropy can be a catalyst to drive progress, as shown by this funding of the M72 vaccine as a potential new tool in preventing escalating infectious diseases to protect those most affected."

Progress

Sustainable progress against TB and wider disease threats will depend on global collaboration, financial backing, and political will. By working with communities and researchers in countries with a high burden of the disease, we can get one step closer to eliminating TB as a public health threat."

The only TB vaccine in use today, bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG), was first given to people in 1921. It helps protect babies and young children against severe systemic forms of TB but offers limited protection against pulmonary TB among adolescents and adults.

"With TB cases and deaths on the rise, the need for new tools has never been more urgent," said Bill Gates, co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. "Greater investment in safe and effective TB vaccines alongside a suite of new diagnostics and

treatments could transform TB care for millions of people, saving lives and lowering the burden of this devastating and costly disease."

Over 25 years, a vaccine with at least 50% efficacy could prevent up to 76 million new TB cases and 8.5 million deaths, avert the need for 42 million courses of antibiotic treatment, and prevent US\$41.5 billion in TB-related catastrophic household costs, especially for the world's poorest and most vulnerable people, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

The Phase III clinical trial to assess the candidate vaccine's efficacy at preventing progression from latent TB infection to pulmonary TB will be sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Medical Research Institute (the Gates MRI), a nonprofit organization and subsidiary of the Gates Foundation dedicated to the development and effective use of novel biomedical interventions to address substantial global health concerns. Conducted in collaboration with an international consortium of TB clinical investigators, the trial will enroll approximately 26,000 people, including people living with HIV and without TB infection, at more than 50 trial sites in Africa and Southeast Asia. Additional details about the trial design and participants will be announced by the Gates MRI in the coming months. The Gates MRI is the license holder for M72 in low- and middle-income countries with high TB burden.

and other malignancies, some fatal, have been reported in children and adolescent patients treated with TNF blockers including adalimumab products. See additional safety information below.

Hadlima (a carton including two pre-filled pens or two pre-filled syringes) is available at a list price (wholesale acquisition cost) of \$1,038, which represents an 85% discount in comparison to the list price of Humira, in order to enable expanded access to patients.

Samsung Bioepis's adalimumab biosimilar (also known as SB5, marketed under different brand names ex-US) has been available in 24 markets globally since 2018 and is supported by extensive clinical experience across rheumatologic, dermatologic and gastroenterological conditions. SB5 has also been evaluated in more than 20 real-world studies including data from over 5,100 patients.

Hadlima is available in both a pre-filled syringe and PushTouch autoinjector option.

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Hollywood's actors may join its writers on strike. Here's why

LOS ANGELES, July 2, (AP): Hollywood actors may be days from joining screenwriters in what would be the first two-union strike in the industry in more than six decades, with huge consequences for film and television production. Here is a look at how it could play out, and why it's happening.

The contract between the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Radio and Television Artists and the studios, streaming services and production companies that employ them had been set to expire Friday night at midnight Pacific time. But hours before that the two sides said they had agreed to extend the current contract, and talks on the next one, through July 12. Unionized actors have voted overwhelmingly to authorize their leaders to call a strike if no deal is reached. Talks also went past the deadline in 2014 and 2017, and agreements resulted both times.

Reports have said the talks have been productive. But some actors have expressed worry that their leaders may not be pushing hard enough. More than 1,000 of them, including Meryl Streep, Jennifer Lawrence and Bob Odenkirk, have added their names to a letter to negotiators saying they are willing to strike, and are concerned they are "ready to make sacrifices that leadership is not." The letter says "this is not a moment to meet in the middle."

The guild, led by president and former "Nanny" star Fran Drescher, represents over 160,000 screen actors, stunt performers, broadcast journalists, announcers, and hosts, but a strike would involve only actors working on television shows and films.

Many of the same issues that drove writers to strike are on the table for actors, including what the guilds say is shrinking compensation

brought on by a streaming ecosystem in which royalty payments are no longer tethered to the popularity of a film or TV show. A role or a writing credit on a show that became a hit with a long life in reruns is no longer the cash cow that it once was. And the unions say inflation is outpacing the scheduled pay bumps within their contracts.

For both scribes and performers, the move to streaming and its ripple effects have also meant shorter seasons of shows with longer gaps between them, and therefore less work.

And like the writers, actors fear the threat of unregulated use of artificial intelligence. SAG-AFTRA said in a memo to members that the burgeoning ability of AI to recreate the performances of its members is "a real and immediate threat" that it wants to head off.

Auditions

Issues particular to actors include the new and increasing burden of self-taped auditions - the cost of which used to be the responsibility of casting and productions.

Movie and TV actors last went on strike for three months in 1980, though actors in broadcast commercials have gone on strike twice since then. Overall they have had far more labor peace than screenwriters, whose walkouts have been far more frequent. That includes the current standoff, in which 11,500 members of the Writers Guild of America have been on strike for nearly two months, with no end in sight.

In 1960 the actors' union, led by then-SAG president and future US President Ronald Reagan, went on strike for six weeks that fell in the middle of a five-month writers' strike, the only time two major Hol-

lywood unions walked off the job at the same time.

Actors have shown broad support for striking writers, and many have joined them on picket lines in an act of what has so far been symbolic solidarity.

The writers' strike had an almost instant effect on late-night network talk shows, including NBC's "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon," ABC's "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" and CBS's "The Late Show With Stephen Colbert," which all went on hiatus immediately. "Saturday Night Live" axed its last three episodes of the season.

In the two months since, many scripted television series have also shut down, including Netflix's "Stranger Things," Max's "Hacks," Showtime's "Yellow Jackets," and Apple TV+'s "Severance." Some movies have reportedly also been paused.

Actors joining writers would force nearly every other show or film that hasn't already been shot into a similar shutdown. Forthcoming seasons of television shows would be delayed indefinitely, and movie releases will be pushed back.

Streaming menus on Netflix or Amazon Prime Video will show no immediate differences, though lovers of those outlets' original series would eventually have to wait longer for their favorites to return.

Exceptions would be productions taking place outside the United States. And reality shows, game shows and most daytime talk shows will likely be unaffected.

The two strikes are also casting doubt on the viability of the Emmy Awards, whose nominations are scheduled to be announced on July 12 before a September ceremony, though the Tony Awards and BET Awards managed to shows go on despite the writers strike.

Film

Variety



This image released by Lucasfilm shows Harrison Ford in a scene from 'Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny.' (AP)

Film

Corenswet, Brosnahan cast as Superman and Lois Lane

Ford gets heroic sendoff in 'Indiana Jones'

Goodbyes don't tend to mean much in the Hollywood franchise system. Death isn't a reliable end for characters or, lately, even actors. Technology, nostalgia and the often-inflated value of brands and IP have created a nightmarish cycle of resurrection and regurgitation, curdling what we love most.

And yet when someone like Harrison Ford says he's hanging up Indiana Jones' fedora, for better or worse, you believe him. "Indiana Jones" producer Frank Marshall has also said that they won't recast the character, which seems more dubious and, though well-intentioned, something he won't be able to guarantee. All it takes is a new executive demanding a reboot.

Not that it would ever really work, though. Any self-respecting movie fan knows the truth: The magic of Indiana Jones belongs wholly to Harrison Ford. Apparently, he doesn't even necessarily need Steven Spielberg behind the camera, though, to be fair, the foundation was well-laid for a veteran like James Mangold to step in. But there is no Indy - none that we care about anyway -without Ford.

In this way, it's hard not to go into "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny," in theaters Friday, without a sense of melancholy - not exactly the ideal state of mind for what should be, and mostly is, a fun summer blockbuster. But it certainly adds a poignancy to the whole endeavor whether the film merits it or not.

If only it didn't start with that pesky de-aging technology (the best it's ever looked but it remains unsettling), giving us a 45-year-old Indiana Jones doing some of the wildest stunts we've ever seen our beloved archeology professor attempt - atop a speeding train to boot. This sequence is ostensibly there to introduce the film's MacGuffin, Archimedes Antikythera, a real celestial calculation machine with extraordinary predictive capabilities that in the film is bestowed with some otherworldly powers.

But we know the real reason: It's there to let us gaze at that familiar face and to go on one last adventure with the Indy we grew up with, before being thrust back reality with a nearly 80-year-old Ford (he's 81 in July) playing a 70-something Indy.

This isn't inherently sad, but Dr. Jones is certainly re-

introduced in the most unglamorous way possible: Sleeping on a reclining chair in a sad New York apartment, a glass of something alcoholic in his hand and threadbare boxer shorts on his person. He's depression personified, retiring from the university where the kids barely pay attention to him anyway (long gone are the "I love you" eyelids), estranged from Karen Allen's Marion and watching the world go space crazy around him.

We'll have to see him work back up to his adventuresome self. No training montages required, thankfully, just a plane ticket, his classic uniform (still fits!) and his old improvisational spirit. The cumbersome plot (script is credited to Jez Butterworth, John-Henry Butterworth, David Koepp and Mangold) strains to justify and give meaning to the search for the Antikythera: The FBI is on the hunt for it, as is Nazi scientist Jürgen Voller (Mads Mikkelsen) for whom the war hasn't ended, and the daughter (Phoebe Waller-Bridge) of Indy's late partner Basil (Toby Jones) who was driven mad by the gadget. It's a bit much, as are many of the overly elaborate and strangely murky-looking action sequences from the train in 1944 to a deep-sea diving sequence with killer eels. The movie hits its action high notes when it sticks to the tactile classics, like a brilliantly executed rickshaw chase in Tangier.

Enjoyable

Waller-Bridge's Helena is an enormously enjoyable character, too - a brilliant archeologist herself who's chosen a more glamorous, dangerous and decidedly black market kind of existence, selling stolen antiquities to the world's wealthiest and working her way out of debt. She's introduced as a wild card and a lot of the tension is derived from whether Indy should trust her. It's a very good non-romantic pairing of sharp-witted old souls, a generation apart. But you'd think in an almost two-and-a-half-hour film there might have been more time for one of our returning favorites, like John Rhys-Davies Sallah (he does get a few good moments).

I'm not sure anyone had an especially burning need to know what Indiana Jones was up to lately, but at least it gives everyone a chance to end on a higher note than "Kingdom of the Crystal Skull." Or maybe Ford just

needed some closure on one of his iconic characters so that everyone will stop asking him about them.

"Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny" might not be "Raiders" or "The Last Crusade" but it's solid, swash-buckling summer fare and a dignified sendoff to one of cinema's most flawless castings.

"Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny," a Walt Disney Co. release in theaters Friday, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for, "language, action, sequences of violence, smoking." Running time: 144 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: James Gunn has found his new Superman and **Lois Lane** in **David Corenswet** and **Rachel Brosnahan**.

The DC Studios co-chair, who is also writing and directing "Superman: Legacy" for July 2025, tweeted about the casting Tuesday, which a representative from Warner Bros. also confirmed.

There has been much speculation over who would fill Superman's shoes after **Henry Cavill's** decade playing the character on the big screen. Corenswet reportedly won the role over the likes of **Nicholas Hoult** and **Tom Brittney**. The 29-year-old Philadelphia native starred in **Ryan Murphy's** Netflix series "The Politician" and "Hollywood," as an aspiring actor, and more recently played a theater owner who gets mixed up with **Mia Goth's** aspiring actress in Ti West's "Pearl."

Brosnahan is the more well-known of the two having recently concluded her run leading "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" for five seasons. Her portrayal of Midge Maisel earned her an Emmy and two Golden Globe awards. **Emma Mackey** and **Phoebe Dynevor** were among the actors reportedly also testing for the Lois Lane role.

Gunn was hired alongside veteran producer **Peter Safran** last year to help revamp Warner Bros.' DC strategy. Their ambitious 10-year plan kicks off with "Superman: Legacy," which Gunn said deals with the superhero's journey to make sense of both his aristocratic Kryptonian heritage and his small town, mid-western upbringing as **Clark Kent**. (AP)

Features

ARABO TIMES

MONDAY, JULY 3, 2023

LOS ANGELES: Naomi Campbell has welcomed baby No. 2.

"My little darling, know that you are cherished beyond measure and surrounded by love from the moment you graced us with your presence," she posted Thursday on Instagram. "A True Gift from God - blessed!"

The supermodel and host of the reality competition series "The Face" confirmed the baby is a boy. Campbell, 53, did not offer further details.

In May 2021, she introduced her firstborn on Instagram, followed by the cover of British Vogue, saying only that the child, a girl, "wasn't adopted. ... She's my child."

On Thursday, Campbell's post was accompanied by a photo showing the new baby from behind as she held him with her daughter's tiny hand joining theirs.

"It's never too late to become a mother," Campbell wrote. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: Madonna has postponed her career-spanning Celebration tour due to what her manager called a "serious bacterial infection."

Manager **Guy Oseary** wrote on Instagram Wednesday that the singer had spent several days in an intensive care unit after becoming ill on Saturday. He said the 64-year-old singer is expected to make a full recovery.

The tour was set to kick off in Vancouver on July 15.

"Her health is improving, however she is still under medical care," Oseary wrote.

Live Nation confirmed the tour postponement, citing Oseary's post.

The Celebration tour is scheduled to make stops in **Detroit, Chicago, New York, Miami, Los Angeles, Denver, Atlanta** and **Boston**, among other cities, and its first leg was slated to end on Oct. 7 in **Las Vegas**. Oseary said details about rescheduled dates would be shared soon. (AP)

ROME: Italian police said they believe the man filmed while engraving his name and that of his apparent girlfriend last week on the ancient Roman Colosseum is a tourist who lives in **Britain**. The identification was made

using photographic comparisons, Italian Carabinieri said in a press release. The statement did not provide the name of the suspect nor his whereabouts. When reached by phone, police said no further information could be given.

Italian officials have vowed to find and punish the tourist who carved "Ivan+Haley 23" on the the



Campbell



Madonna

wall of the Colosseum in Rome, a crime that has resulted in hefty fines in the past.

The vandal was filmed in the act by an American tourist, **Ryan Lutz of Orange, California**, who posted the video on social media after he said Colosseum guards failed to show interest in his footage. It was at least the fourth time

this year that such graffiti was reported at the Colosseum, an act that carries fines up to \$15,000 and five years in prison. (AP)

SAVANNAH, Ga: Rapper **Quando Rondo** has bonded out of jail after he was indicted on drug and gang charges in his hometown

of Savannah. Court records show a judge granted a \$100,000 bond for the 24-year-old rapper, whose given name is **Tyquan Terrel Bowman**. He was released Monday, according to the **Chatham County Sheriff's Office**.

A grand jury indicted him along with 18 others on June 14. (AP)

People & Places

Obit

Uniquely talented

Oscar-winning actor Alan Arkin dies at 89

LOS ANGELES, July 2, (AP): Alan Arkin, the wry character actor who demonstrated his versatility in everything from farcical comedy to chilling drama as he received four Academy Award nominations and won an Oscar in 2007 for "Little Miss Sunshine," has died. He was 89.

His sons Adam, Matthew and Anthony confirmed their father's death through the actor's publicist on Friday. "Our father was a uniquely talented force of nature, both as an artist and a man," they said in a statement.

Hollywood was in mourning, with Paul Reiser, Michael Rapaport and Patton Oswalt among those praising Arkin. "Such a wonderful, original voice for comedy. And on the few occasions I was in his presence, a kind and generous soul. I learned so much from watching him. And the laughs I got from his glorious work seem endless," tweeted Jason Alexander.

A member of Chicago's famed Second City comedy troupe, Arkin was an immediate success in movies with the Cold War spoof "The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming" and peaked late in life with his win as best supporting actor for the surprise 2006 hit "Little Miss Sunshine."

More than 40 years separated his first Oscar nomination, for "The Russians are Coming," from his nomination for playing a conniving Hollywood producer in the Oscar-winning "Argo." In recent years he starred opposite Michael Douglas in the Netflix comedy series "The Kominsky Method," a role that earned him two Emmy nominations.



Arkin

Trademarks

"When I was a young actor people wanted to know if I wanted to be a serious actor or a funny one," Michael McKean tweeted Friday. "I'd answer 'Which kind is Alan Arkin?' and that shut them up." Character actor (cross head) Arkin once joked to The Associated Press that the beauty of being a character actor was not having to take his clothes off for a role. He wasn't a sex symbol or superstar, but was rarely out of work, appearing in more than 100 TV and feature films. His trademarks were likability, relatability and complete immersion in his roles, no matter how unusual, whether playing a Russian submarine officer in "The Russians are Coming" who struggles to communicate with the equally jittery Americans, or standing out as the foul-mouthed, drug-addicted grandfather in "Little Miss Sunshine." "Alan's never had an identifiable screen personality because he just disappears into his characters," director Norman Jewison of "The Russians are Coming" once observed. "His accents are impeccable, and he's even able to change his looks. ... He's always been underestimated, partly because he's never been in service of his own success." While still with Second City, Arkin was chosen by Carl Reiner to play the young protagonist in the 1963 Broadway play "Enter Laughing," based on Reiner's semi-autobiographical novel.

He attracted strong reviews and the notice of Jewison, who was preparing to direct a 1966 comedy about a Russian sub that creates a panic when it ventures too close to a small New England town. In Arkin's next major film, he proved he could also play a villain, however reluctantly. Arkin starred in "Wait Until Dark" as a vicious drug dealer who holds a blind woman (Audrey Hepburn) captive in her own apartment, believing a drug shipment is hidden there.

He recalled in a 1998 interview how difficult it was to terrorize Hepburn's character.

"Just awful," he said. "She was an exquisite lady, so being mean to her was hard." Arkin's rise continued in 1968 with "The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter," in which he played a sensitive man who could not hear or speak. He starred as the bumbling French detective in "Inspector Clouseau" that same year, but the film would become overlooked in favor of Peter Sellers' Clouseau in the "Pink Panther" movies.

Character

Arkin's career as a character actor continued to blossom when Mike Nichols, a fellow Second City alumnus, cast him in the starring role as Yossarian, the victim of wartime red tape in 1970's "Catch-22," based on Joseph Heller's million-selling novel. Through the years, Arkin turned up in such favorites as "Edward Scissorhands," playing Johnny Depp's neighbor; and in the film version of David Mamet's "Glengarry Glen Ross" as a dogged real estate salesman. He and Reiner played brothers, one successful (Reiner), one struggling (Arkin), in the 1998 film "The Slums of Beverly Hills." "I used to think that my stuff had a lot of variety. But I realized that for the first twenty years or so, most of the characters I played were outsiders, strangers to their environment, foreigners in one way or another," he told The Associated Press in 2007.

"As I started to get more and more comfortable with myself, that started to shift. I got one of the nicest compliments I've ever gotten from someone a few days ago. They said that they thought my characters were very often the heart, the moral center of a film. I didn't particularly understand it, but I liked it; it made me happy." Voice (cross head) Other recent credits included "Going in Style," a 2017 remake featuring fellow Oscar winners Michael Caine and Morgan Freeman, and "The Kominsky Method." He played a Hollywood talent agent and friend of Douglas' character, a once-promising actor who ran an acting school after his career sputtered.

He also was the voice of Wild Knuckles in the 2022 animated film "Minions: The Rise of Gru." Arkin also directed the film version of Jules Feiffer's 1971 dark comedy "Little Murders" and Neil Simon's 1972 play about bickering old vaudeville partners, "The Sunshine Boys." On television, Arkin appeared in the short-lived series "Fay" and "Harry" and played a night court judge in Sidney Lumet's drama series "100 Centre Street" on A&E. He also wrote several books for children.

Born in New York City's borough of Brooklyn, he and his family, which included two younger brothers, moved to Los Angeles when he was 11. His parents found jobs as teachers, but were fired during the post-World War II Red Scare because they were Communists.

"We were dirt poor so I couldn't afford to go to the movies often," he told the AP in 1998. "But I went whenever I could and focused in on movies, as they were more important than anything in my life." He studied acting at Los Angeles City College; California State University, Los Angeles; and Bennington College in Vermont, where he earned a scholarship to the formerly all-girls school.



Kelsea Ballerini performs during CMA Fest 2022 in Nashville, Tenn., on June 10, 2022. Ballerini was hit by a bracelet while performing during her concert Wednesday evening. (AP)

Music

From human ashes to phones, artists hit by projectiles

What's going on with concert fans?

NEW YORK, July 2, (AP): From flinging bras to tossing flowers, concertgoers have long been a bit extra in showing adoration for their beloved artists - but a recent spate of artists being hit by weightier projectiles raises concerns about extreme fan culture and security.

Country singer Kelsea Ballerini was the latest artist to be struck by a flying object, Wednesday evening at a Boise concert. In the moment caught on video, Ballerini is playing her guitar onstage when a bracelet hits her face and she takes a step back.

Ballerini, clearly caught off guard, takes a moment before a brief intermission is called.

"Hi, i'm fine," she later said on Instagram. "Someone threw a bracelet, it hit me in the eye and it more so just scared me than hurt me."

Ashley Highfill, 30, was at the Idaho Botanical Garden show and said Ballerini seemed visibly upset. Highfill, who often attends concerts with her friends, said it's become a normal occurrence to see fans throwing items onstage at concerts.

"Stuff like that can be very dangerous," she said. "It's disheartening to see even though there is no bad intention, people are not thinking of the consequences that these people are putting on a show."

That same day, rapper Sexxy Red cut short her own show when fans refused to stop throwing water bottles at the stage.

Morgan Milardo, managing director of the Berklee Popular Music Institute in Boston, said some venues will have signs that say "no mosh pits" or "no crowd surfing" - but perhaps signs that explicitly say "no throwing items at the stage" now need to be added to protect artists.

"Everyone in attendance at a concert is responsible for keeping one another safe," she said. "Concerts are supposed to offer a community where folks can

come together to share in the magic of live music, not have to worry about a chicken nugget hitting them in the eyeball."

Long gone are the days of in-person fan clubs, but social media users can join in with the Swifties or the Beyhive at any moment online or get daily updates from accounts run by or dedicated to celebrities. Social media has created a deeper sense of connection and emotional closeness for fans, said Laurel Williams, a professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Baylor College of Medicine.

That sense of closeness played out at a recent concert where one fan tossed their mother's ashes onto the stage as Pink was performing.

"Is this your mom?" Pink asked the fan. "I don't know how to feel about this."

Celebrities

David Schmid, a pop culture expert at the University at Buffalo College of Arts and Sciences, said the idea of tossing items on stage historically goes back to the etymology of the word "fan." Short for fanatic, it was a term originally associated with religious devotion. And many tend to see celebrities "as if they are gods or at least semi-divine beings," he said.

"From that perspective you can read the stage as a kind of altar and the objects that are thrown onto the stage as devotional objects," Schmid said.

The role of social media has also changed the nature of the items being thrown onstage. Rather than toss a note, some are hurling heavy cellphones onstage, hoping the performer will grab it and record a moment for them. In some cases, it ends up being a dangerous grab for attention.

A man was arrested after throwing a cellphone that struck pop star Bebe Rexha in the face on June 18. According to a court criminal complaint, the man later told a third party that he hit

the artist because he thought "it would be funny." After the New York concert, Rexha shared a photo of her black eye and bandaged face to Instagram, with a thumbs up.

"Im good," she said in the post. "Although the show ended in an unfortunate way it was still an amazing show in my hometown," she wrote in a subsequent post.

While female artists have been the targets this month - including singer Ava Max, who was slapped at her Los Angeles show - even male performers like Harry Styles have faced projectiles heftier than underwear. At a November 2022 concert, Styles could be seen tossing his head back in pain after he was hit in the eye by a projectile.

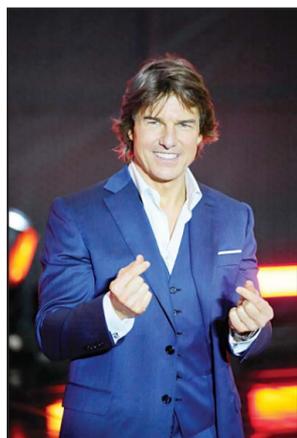
Mid-concert provocations from fans aren't necessarily new: Rock legend Ozzy Osbourne notoriously bit the head off a live bat after a fan tossed it to him onstage. Some punk fans might remember the days when concertgoers would spit at artists to show appreciation.

But with such behavior seemingly becoming more mainstream, venues, promoters and artists might look to reinforce security.

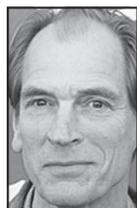
Paul Wertheimer, founder of Crowd Management Strategies/Crowdsafe, said artists often have security contracts with the promoter that lists out what kind of security the artist will pay for or wants at the show. Venues can also decide to limit what can be brought inside or sold at the event space.

"You need to have proper security to protect the artist," Wertheimer said.

After the deadly 2021 Astroworld crowd surge, protocols around safety at concerts have been called into question. With recent advancements in surveillance technology, like facial recognition and crowd monitoring with artificial intelligence, fans may no longer be able to fade into the crowd after hurling a personal item at their adored artist - even if done in jest.



Actor Tom Cruise gestures during the red carpet event for the movie 'Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part One' in Seoul, South Korea, Thursday, June 29, 2023. The film is to be released in the country on July 12. (AP)



Sands



Osborne

Variety

LOS ANGELES: Actor Julian Sands, who starred in several Oscar-nominated films in the late 1980s and '90s including "A Room With a View" and "Leaving Las Vegas," was found dead on a Southern California mountain five months after he disappeared while hiking, authorities said.

An investigation confirmed that it was Sands whose remains hikers found Saturday in wilderness near Mount Baldy, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department said. The 65-year-old actor was an avid and experienced hiker who lived in Los Angeles and was reported missing Jan. 13 after setting out on the peak that rises more than 10,000 feet (3,048 meters) east of the city. Crews aided by drones and helicopters had searched for him several times, but, severely hampered by wintry conditions that lasted through spring, no sign of him was found until the civilian hikers came upon him.

The chances of Sands being discovered alive had long since diminished to nearly nothing, but the Sheriff's Department, which conducted an official search the day before he was found, emphasized that the case remained active.

An autopsy has been conducted, but further test results are needed before the cause of death can be determined, authorities said.

Sands, who was born, raised and began acting in England, worked constantly in film and television, amassing more than 150 credits in a 40-year career. During a 10-year span from 1985 to 1995, he played major roles in a series of acclaimed films. After studying at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in London, Sands embarked on a career in stage and film, playing small parts in films including "Oxford Blues" and "The Killing Fields." He landed the starring role of George Emerson, who falls in love with Helena Bonham Carter's Lucy Honeychurch while on holiday in Tuscany, in the 1985 British romance, "A Room With a View."

The film from director James Ivory and producer Ismail Merchant won the British Academy of Film and Television Arts award for best film, and was nominated for eight Oscars, winning three.

In the wake of its success, Sands moved to the United States to pursue a career in Hollywood.

He played the title role in the 1989 horror fantasy "Warlock" and its sequel. In the 1990 horror comedy "Arachnophobia,"

with Jeff Daniels and John Goodman, Sands played an entomologist specializing in spiders. (AP)

HAZARD, Ky: Bluegrass musician Bobby



Actor Russell Crowe receives the Crystal Globe award for his contribution to the world of cinema from Festival President Jiri Bartoska, (left), during the opening ceremony of the 57th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (KVIFF), in Karlovy Vary, Czech Republic, Friday June 30, 2023. (AP)

Osborne, who helped popularize the song "Rocky Top," died early Tuesday, according to a statement from the college where he worked. He was 91.

Osborne and his brother Sonny made up "The Osborne Brothers," and their version of the song "Rocky Top" in 1967 became an official state song of Tennessee, his website said. Osborne was a member of the Grand Ole Opry and the International Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame.

"To say he was a legend falls short of the impact he had on all of us," said Paul Schiminger, interim executive director at the International Bluegrass Music Association. "An innovative musical pioneer, Bobby set and held the gold standard for bluegrass vocals."

While Osborne and his brother will be remembered by many for the song "Rocky Top," Schiminger said that barely scratches the surface of the many songs they recorded and performed.

A native of Hyden, Kentucky, Osborne taught at the Hazard Community and Technical College's Kentucky School of Bluegrass and Traditional Music in Leslie County for several years.

In January, he received the Governor's Awards in the Arts for his dedication to sharing Kentucky's rich history in the arts around the world.

Osborne was still performing and teaching last year when he told WYMT-TV that "as long as I can open my mouth and sing, I ain't going to quit." (AP)

Space

'Universe still a mystery'

EU telescope launched to explore dark matter

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., July 2, (AP): A European space telescope blasted off Saturday on a quest to explore the mysterious and invisible realm known as the dark universe.

SpaceX launched the European Space Agency's Euclid observatory toward its ultimate destination 1 million miles (1.5 million kilometers) away, the Webb Space Telescope's neighborhood. It will take a month to get there and another two months before it starts its ambitious six-year survey this fall.

Flight controllers in Germany declared success nearly an hour into the flight, applauding and shouting "Yes!" as the telescope phoned home after a smooth liftoff.

"I'm so thrilled, I'm so excited to see now this mission up in space, knowing it is on its way," the European Space Agency's director general, **Josef Aschbacher**, said from the Florida launch site.



Aschbacher

Named for antiquity's Greek mathematician, Euclid will scour billions of galaxies covering more than one-third of the sky. By pinpointing the location and shape of galaxies up to 10 billion light-years away - almost all the way back to the cosmos-creating Big Bang - scientists hope to glean insight into the dark energy and dark matter that make up most of the universe and keep it expanding.

Scientists understand only 5 percent of the universe: stars, planets, us. The rest is "still a mystery and an enigma, a huge frontier in modern physics that we hope this mission will actually help to push forward," the European Space Agency's science director, **Carole Mundell**, said just before liftoff.

The telescope's highly anticipated 3D map of the cosmos will span both space and time in a bid to explain how the dark universe evolved and why its expansion is speeding up.

The lead scientist for the \$1.5 billion mission (1.4 billion euros) said Euclid will measure dark energy and dark matter with unprecedented precision.

"It's more than a space telescope, Euclid. It's really a dark energy detector," **Rene Laureijs** noted.

Sensitive

Fifteen feet (4.7 meters) tall and almost as wide, Euclid sports a 1.2-meter (4-foot) telescope and two scientific instruments capable of observing the cosmos in both visible light and the near infrared. A huge sunshield is designed to keep the sensitive systems at the properly frigid temperatures.

NASA, which contributed Euclid's infrared detectors, has its own mission coming up to better understand dark energy and dark matter: the Roman Space Telescope due to launch in 2027. The US-European Webb telescope can also join in this quest, officials said.

Euclid was supposed to launch on a Russian rocket from French Guiana in South America, Europe's main spaceport. The European and Russian space agencies cut ties following the invasion of Ukraine last year, and the telescope switched to a SpaceX ride from Cape Canaveral. Waiting for Europe's next-generation, yet-to-fly Ariane rocket would have meant a two-year-plus delay, according to project manager **Giuseppe Racca**.

Meanwhile, a team of Italian researchers reached the edge of space Thursday morning, flying aboard a rocket-powered plane piloted by Virgin Galactic as the space tourism company prepares for monthly commercial flights.

The flight launched from Spaceport America in the New Mexico desert, with two Italian Air Force officers and an engineer with the National Research Council of Italy focusing on a series of microgravity experiments during their few minutes of weightlessness.

One wore a special suit that measured biometric data and physiological responses while another conducted tests using sensors to track heart rate, brain function and other metrics while in microgravity. The third studied how certain liquids and solids mix in that very weak gravity.

Virgin Galactic livestreamed the flight on its website, showing the moment when the ship released from its carrier plane and the rocket was ignited. The entire trip - from lifting off at Spaceport America to gliding back down to the runway - took about 90 minutes. The space plane reached a peak altitude of more than 52 miles (85 kilometers).

In all, there were six aboard - two Virgin Galactic pilots, the three Italians and another Virgin Galactic employee who oversees training for passengers.

With the ship's pilot, it marked the most Italians in space at the same time. **Col. Walter Villadei**, a space engineer with the Italian Air Force, celebrated by unfolding an Italian flag while weightless.

For Villadei, it was even more historic as the Italian Air Force is marking its 100th year. He said he sees commercial flight as an opportunity for more researchers to access space and to foster the development of new technologies.

"It's a kind of changing of the mindset," he told The Associated Press in an interview. "We are sharing the risk, we are growing up together, we are learning (from) each other - the private (sector) from the institutions and the institutions from the private (sector). This is amazing to me."

Next up for Virgin Galactic will be the first of hundreds of ticket holders. Many have been waiting years for their chance at weightlessness and to see the curvature of the Earth. Those commercial flights are expected to begin in August and will be scheduled monthly, the company said.

Flight

Virgin Galactic has been working for years to send paying passengers on short space trips and in 2021 finally won the federal government's approval. The company completed its final test flight in May.

The Italian research flight was initially scheduled for the fall of 2021 but Virgin Galactic at the time said it was forced to push back its timeline due to a potential defect in a component used in its flight control system. Then the company spent months upgrading its rocket ship before resuming testing in early 2023.

After reaching a specific altitude, Virgin Galactic's space plane is released from a carrier aircraft and drops for a moment before igniting its rocket motor. The rocket shuts off once it reaches space, leaving passengers weightless before the ship then glides back to the runway at Spaceport America.

Virgin Galactic has sold about 800 tickets over the past decade, with the initial batch going for \$200,000 each. Tickets now cost \$450,000 per person.

The company said early fliers have already received their seat assignments.

Villadei said it was an honor to be among the first of Virgin Galactic's passengers, and while his focus was on running experiments, he did not miss the opportunity to look outside.

"The boundaries between the black of the sky and the colors of the Earth beneath us was amazing," he said, noting that his expectations were surpassed even though he has years of training under his belt.

Villadei and his colleagues collected blood and urine samples before and after the flight as part of their numerous experiments. He said it will take months to analyze the data and the results will help to formulate new experiments aimed at better understanding microgravity.

"The future is definitely something that is going to deal with space. Space is the new frontier," he said. "We are going to expand our knowledge and our capability to live and work and spend time in space."



This photo provided by BioMarin in June 2023 shows a vial and packaging for their drug Roctavian. US officials on Thursday, June 19, 2023 approved the drug-maker's gene therapy for the most common form of hemophilia, an infused treatment that can significantly reduce dangerous bleeding problems. (AP)

Health

\$2.9m treatment reduces risky bleeding problems

FDA OKs gene therapy for hemophilia

WASHINGTON, July 2, (AP): US officials on Thursday approved drug-maker BioMarin's gene therapy for the most common form of hemophilia, a \$2.9 million infused treatment that can significantly reduce dangerous bleeding problems.

The Food and Drug Administration approved Roctavian for adult patients with severe cases of hemophilia A, the inherited blood-clotting disorder that can lead to bleeding after minor injuries or scrapes. It's the first gene therapy for those patients.

The IV therapy is a long-awaited alternative to current treatments, including weekly doses of a protein needed to help blood clot. Some patients take a newer, longer-acting biotech drug that replaces the protein.

BioMarin said in a statement that the FDA approval was based on a three-year study showing a 50% reduction in annual bleeding incidents among 134 patients who received the treatment. Most patients continued to respond to the treatment beyond three years, without needing regular IV infusions, the company said.

BioMarin said Roctavian's \$2.9 million price tag reflects "the possibility of freedom from years" of infusions, which cost about \$800,000 annually for a typical patient. The price is less than the \$3.5 million announced last year for a similar gene therapy for hemophilia B, a less common form of the disease.

Like most medicines in the U.S., the new treatment will mainly be paid for by insurers, not patients.

Information

BioMarin said it estimates about 2,500 U.S. patients will be eligible to receive the therapy under the terms of the FDA's approval. Patients with certain underlying health problems and conditions are excluded under the prescribing information.

Hemophilia is caused by mutations that prevent the production of proteins needed for blood clotting. Hemophilia A is the most severe variant of the condition, and some patients can experience spontaneous bleeding even without any injury. Left untreated, the condition can cause bleeding that seeps into joints and organs, including the brain.

Roctavian uses an inactivated virus, created in a lab, to deliver a replacement gene to the liver cells that produce the clotting protein. When the therapy is successful, patients can then produce the protein themselves. The label warns that rare, severe allergic reactions can occur.

Australia first country to prescribe psychedelics for depression, PTSD

SYDNEY, July 2, (AP): Australia is now the first country to allow psychiatrists to prescribe certain psychedelic substances to patients with depression or post-traumatic stress disorder.

Beginning Saturday, Australian physicians can prescribe doses of MDMA, also known as ecstasy, for PTSD. Psilocybin, the psychoactive ingredient in psychedelic mushrooms, can be given to people who have hard-to-treat depression. The country put the two drugs on the list of approved medicines by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

Scientists in Australia were surprised by the move, which was announced in February but took effect July 1. One scientist said it puts Australia "at the forefront of research in this field."

Chris Langmead, deputy director of the Neuromedicines Discovery Centre at the Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, said there have been very few advancements on treatment of persistent mental health issues in the last 50 years.

The growing cultural acceptance has led two U.S. states to approve measures for their use: Oregon was the first to legalize the adult use of psilocybin, and Colorado's voters decriminalized psilocybin in 2022. Days ago, President Joe Biden's youngest brother said in a radio interview that the president has been "very open-minded" in conversations the two have had

about the benefits of psychedelics as a form of medical treatment.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration designated psilocybin as a "breakthrough therapy" in 2018, a label that's designed to speed the development and review of drugs to treat a serious condition. Psychedelics researchers have benefited from federal grants, including Johns Hopkins, and the FDA released draft guidance late last month for researchers designing clinical trials testing psychedelic drugs as potential treatments for a variety of medical conditions.

Still, the American Psychiatric Association has not endorsed the use of psychedelics in treatment, noting the FDA has yet to offer a final determination.

And medical experts in the US and elsewhere, Australia included, have cautioned that more research is needed on the drugs' efficacy and the extent of the risks of psychedelics, which can cause hallucinations.

"There are concerns that evidence remains inadequate and moving to clinical service is premature; that incompetent or poorly equipped clinicians could flood the space; that treatment will be unaffordable for most; that formal oversight of training, treatment, and patient outcomes will be minimal or ill-informed," said Dr. Paul Likhnitzyk, head of Monash University's Clinical Psychedelic Lab.

Dr. Margaret Ragni called Roctavian "a major improvement in terms of reducing the burden of disease." But she notes that many patients are comfortable with their current treatments and may be hesitant to try a new gene therapy.

"I think there's a group that will want to do this, but patients need to hear what the risks and benefits are," said Ragni, who treats patients at the Hemophilia Center of Western of Pennsylvania in Pittsburgh.

BioMarin was among the first companies to begin testing an experimental gene therapy in patients more than six years ago.

The San Rafael, California-based company excluded patients with cer-

tain potentially complicating conditions, including liver disorders and resistance to the standard blood clotting protein, which often develops in some hemophilia patients. BioMarin's president for research and development, Dr. Henry Fuchs, said the company is conducting studies in some of those excluded groups to see if they can safely receive the therapy.

Another key question is how long the therapy's benefits last. BioMarin has followed the patients for more than three years and they continue to experience reduced bleeding. But levels of the clotting protein in the bloodstream fall over time, suggesting additional treatments may eventually be needed.



A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket lifts off from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Fla., Saturday, July 1. Liftoff of the rocket, carrying the Euclid Space Telescope, lifted off at 11:12am EDT. (AP)



Panapitiya

Code

Ecology

Feds call off pesticide spraying: Federal land managers have called off plans to spray pesticides near the Rio Chama in northern New Mexico as part of an effort to eradicate invasive grasshoppers.

The decision has been announced by the Bureau of Land Management followed an outcry by environmentalists and others who worried that dispersing 670 gallons (2,536 liters) of carbaryl - a potent neurotoxin - would also kill bees, monarch butterflies and other insects vital to the area's ecosystem.

Although the US Agriculture Department conducted an environmental assessment earlier this year, the Bureau of Land Management said additional analysis and outreach was needed.

"Due to the time needed to carry out additional analysis, the project cannot be achieved this season and will no longer take place. We will continue to work on this important issue in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service," said Pamela Mathis, the BLM's Taos field manager.

The plan called for spraying the pesticide across 39 square miles (101 square kilometers) in Rio Arriba County. The US Agriculture Department had concluded that grasshoppers had proliferated to the level deemed a severe outbreak and would not only consume grasses essential to grazing cattle but also would pose a threat to the ecosystem.

Recent surveys in the area tallied 35 grasshoppers per square yard, or more than quadruple the eight per yard considered an outbreak and a threat to rangeland ecosystems, the Santa Fe New Mexican reported.

The Xerces Society and other environmental groups argued that the pesticide could inflict widespread collateral damage for the ecosystem. Some critics also noted that the chemical has been found to be carcinogenic to humans.

Aimee Code, Xerces' pesticide program director, acknowledged that the agencies' initial action was centered on helping ranchers.

"Now we've taken a step back and said 'let's figure out what's the right solution for the ranchers, for the recreationalists, for the tribes and the pueblos, for the many people that use this area and the wildlife that are there,'" Code said.

Federal officials had planned to set up no-spray buffers 500 feet (152 meters) from water bodies and a quarter-mile from riparian areas such as the Chama, Nutrias and Cebolla rivers. But critics were concerned that the pesticide would drift into other locations.

Terry Sloan, director of Albuquerque-based Southwest Native Cultures, said he feared that any contamination of the Rio Chama could flow downstream to the Rio Grande and ultimately farms and tribal lands along the two waterways. (AP)

Elephant to return in Thailand: Vet-

erinarrians are preparing to airlift an Asian elephant from Sri Lanka back to its home country after it spent more than two decades at a Buddhist temple where activists alleged it was abused.

The Thai royal family gave the elephant as a gift in 2001 to Sri Lanka's government, which in turn gifted it to the temple where it was named Muthu Raja and given honored roles in religious processions.

However, the activist group Rally for Ani-

mal Rights and Environment, or RARE, raised allegations it was being mistreated, including that it had a stiff leg from a long-neglected injury. It lobbied last year for the intervention of Thai officials, who asked Kande Viharaya temple officials to allow the animal's return to Thailand for medical treatment.

"This is not the end, but the beginning of a new life for Muthu Raja," RARE group founder **Panchali Panapitiya** said.

The temple agreed to transfer the elephant last November to Sri Lanka's National Zoological Garden, where it has been receiving treatment and preparation for the airlift to Thailand planned for Sunday.

Madusha Perera, a veterinary surgeon at the zoo, said two big abscesses the elephant was suffering from when it arrived have mostly healed. However, the zoo has not been able to fully treat the animal's leg because of a lack of facilities, she said.

"Once he gets back to Thailand the experts there will attend to the conditions so that one day we will be able to see him walk the normal way," Perera said.

Visit **Arsaithamkul**, a visiting Thai veterinarian, said the treatment in Thailand could include hydrotherapy, laser treatment and acupuncture.

At the zoo, Muthu Raja's morning routine has included veterinarian check-ups, bathing in a small pond and practice getting into the container that will carry him on the nearly six-hour flight to Chiang Mai, Thailand. (AP)



This June 2023 image provided by the Space Telescope Science Institute shows the planet Saturn and three of its moons, (from left), Enceladus, Tethys and Dione, captured by the James Webb Space Telescope. In infrared, the planet appears dark because sunlight is absorbed by methane in the atmosphere. (AP)

Green remains with Warriors in free agency

Lakers keeping Reaves, Russell; Bucks agree to keep Lopez

WASHINGTON, July 2, (AP) — The Los Angeles Lakers kept two of their best guards. The Milwaukee Bucks retained their big man, as the early trend in free agency of most players staying put continued Saturday.

Dillon Brooks, though, is off to a new beginning in Houston. Austin Reaves agreed to a four-year deal that could be worth \$56 million, and D'Angelo Russell returned to the Lakers as well on a \$37 million, two-year deal, people with knowledge of those transactions told The Associated Press. The Athletic first reported the agreement with Reaves, and ESPN first reported the agreement with Russell.

Reaves and Russell were both starters in the postseason for the Lakers, who made the Western Conference finals before falling to the eventual NBA champion Denver Nuggets.

Also Saturday, Milwaukee — which had already retained Kris Middleton — kept center Brook Lopez on a two-year deal, a person familiar with the agreement told the AP. The Athletic and ESPN reported the deal was worth \$48 million for the 35-year-old Lopez, who averaged 15.9 points in 78 games this season for the Bucks.

Russell Westbrook is also staying where he ended last season, agreeing to a two-year deal with the Los Angeles Clippers — after starting the last 21 games for them in the regular season and their five playoff games. The second year is at Westbrook's option, a source said. ESPN reported the deal was worth \$8 million.

Brooks — who made tons of headlines for his talking, on and off the court, during Memphis' first-round playoff series against

the Lakers — is getting a new home in Houston, after agreeing to a four-year deal worth nearly \$80 million, a source told AP. ESPN reported it may become a sign-and-trade, one that would create a massive trade exception for the Grizzlies.

Brooks was fined by the NBA for not talking to the media after some playoff losses, including the last one that happened to be the worst playoff loss in franchise history. He was ejected from Game 3 of that series for striking LeBron James in the groin. That was after he called James "old" and led the NBA with 18 technical fouls this season, earning a pair of one-game suspensions in the process.

Brooks was offered an extension last year but turned it down. The Grizzlies later decided he wouldn't be in their future plans.

BASKETBALL

While Reaves, Russell, Lopez and Westbrook stayed put, Max Strus found a new home.

Strus — who helped Miami get to the NBA Finals — is headed to the Cleveland Cavaliers, agreeing to a \$63 million, four-year deal that was finalized Saturday by making the transaction part of a three-team trade, according to two people familiar with the negotiations.

Strus goes to the Cavaliers, who will send Cedi Osman and Lamar Stevens to San Antonio while Miami gets future second-round draft compensation, said the people who

spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the trade terms have not been approved by the NBA.

ESPN first reported the trade agreement.

Strus was a starter for Miami in its playoff runs over the last two years, including this past season's trip to the finals against Denver. He averaged a career-best 11.5 points this past season and has shot 37% from 3-point range in his career.

Cleveland clearly prioritized shooting. The Cavs struck deals with Caris LeVert (\$32 million, two years) and Georges Niang (\$26 million, three years) on Friday; Niang is a career 40% shooter on 3s, and LeVert shot a career-best 39% from beyond the arc this past season.

The Knicks, who beat the Cavaliers in the first round for their first postseason victory in a decade, added another former NCAA champion from Villanova by agreeing to a deal with Donte DiVincenzo. The swingman joins college teammates Jalen Brunson and Josh Hart with a four-year, \$50 million deal, a person with knowledge of the details said.

Also Saturday, Orlando retained Moritz Wagner (\$16 million, two years) and the Heat added Thomas Bryant (\$5.4 million, two years, second at his option) to give them some extra size. Bryant was with the Nuggets for their title run.

Dwight Powell agreed to return to the Mavericks on a three-year contract, which could push the Dallas tenure past 10 years for a secondary piece in the trade that brought Rajon Rondo from Boston in 2015. Rondo only spent that partial 2014-15 season with the Mavs.

Powell, meanwhile, has been a solid role player at center, starting 243 of his 582 games in Dallas. The 6-foot-10 Canadian has averaged 7.6 points and 4.6 rebounds for the Mavs. This is Powell's third contract with the Mavs and was confirmed to AP by a person with knowledge of the details.

Most deals cannot be finalized until July 6, and Strus became one of the biggest names to leave for a new team in the early stages of free agency. Fred VanVleet (\$130 million, three years) left Toronto for Houston, and Bruce Brown Jr. (\$45 million, two years) left Denver for Indiana.

Many players stayed put: Jerami Grant (\$160 million, five years) remained in Portland, Kyrie Irving (\$126 million, three years) remained in Dallas, Cam Johnson (\$108 million, four years) stays in Brooklyn, Middleton (\$102 million, three years) stayed in Milwaukee, Kyle Kuzma (\$102 million, four years) remained in Washington and Draymond Green (\$100 million, four years) remained with Golden State.

And some players eligible for rookie-scale extensions also cashed in Saturday on deals that will take effect in 2024-25.

Desmond Bane in Memphis and Tyrese Haliburton in Indiana struck agreements in the wee hours of Saturday on contracts that will be worth an estimated \$207 million apiece over five years, with Haliburton potentially able to reach \$260 million if he makes an All-NBA team. Later Saturday, LaMelo Ball agreed to the framework of a similar deal with Charlotte, a person with knowledge of the details said, and he could also see the value escalate from \$207 million to \$260 million if he reaches All-NBA status.

St Louis City keep Rapids reeling

Placed 22nd

Caleb Dressel 'fails' to qualify for worlds

NYCFC end skid, snap Montreal's shutout streak

ST. LOUIS, July 2, (AP) — St. Louis City scored two quick goals and Roman Bürki made three saves to lead St. Louis City to a 2-0 victory over the Colorado Rapids on Saturday night.

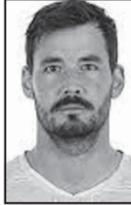
Defender Tim Parker gave St. Louis City (11-7-2) the lead in the 4th minute when he used a pass from Aziel Jackson to score for a second time this season.

Jared Stroud notched his fourth goal of the campaign, scoring in the 11th minute for a 2-0 lead. Samuel Adeniran and Kyle Hiebert had assists.

Bürki earned his fourth clean sheet of the season for expansion St. Louis City.

William Yarbrough had five saves for Colorado (2-10-8).

Colorado falls to 1-5-0 in its last six road matches against first-year clubs with all five losses by shutouts. The Rapids' only win was a 1-0 victory over



Bürki

Austin in 2021.

Minnesota United 4, Timbers 1

In Saint Paul, Emanuel Reynoso scored twice after Minnesota United benefited from an own-goal in a 4-1 victory over the Portland Timbers.

The match was scoreless until Minnesota United (6-7-6) used an own-goal by Portland's Diego Chara in the 43rd minute to grab the lead. Reynoso followed with an unassisted goal in the fourth minute of stoppage time to give Minnesota United a 2-0 lead at halftime.

Franck Boli scored for a sixth time this season, using assists from Nathan Fogaça and Chara in the 60th minute to get the Timbers (5-9-7) within 2-1.

Minnesota United wrapped up the victory when Bongokuhle Hlongwane put a shot in the net in the 74th minute and Reynoso followed three minutes later with his third goal of the season. Hlongwane's fifth netter this season came with an assist from Zarek Valentin. Hlongwane had an assist on Reynoso's goal.

Clint Irwin saved two shots in his third start this season for Minnesota United. Aljaz Ivacic had seven saves for Portland.

NYCFC 1, Montreal 0

In Montreal, Mattias Pellegrini scored a first-half goal and Luis Baraza made it stand up as New York City FC snapped an 11-match winless streak with a 1-0 victory over CF Montreal after thunderstorms delayed the start for 90 minutes.

SOCCER

Pellegrini's first goal of the season came when he took passes from Braian Cufre and Santiago Rodríguez in the 33rd minute and found the net.

Baraza finished with three saves to earn the clean sheet for NYCFC (5-7-9). Jonathan Sirois turned away six shots for Montreal.

The goal Sirois surrendered was the first one Montreal (8-10-2) has allowed at home in the last seven matches. It's the second longest shutout streak at home since Sporting Kansas City blanked eight straight opponents in 2000.

NYCFC came into the match without a win in its last 11 matches (0-5-6). The skid matched a club record set in 2015 — its first season in the league.

Montreal has posted 10 clean sheets in its last 17 matches in all competitions after just nine shutouts in its previous 47 in all competitions.

Sporting KC 3, Whitecaps 0

In Kansas City, Rémi Walter and Alan Pulido scored first-half goals and Sporting Kansas City breezed to a 3-0 victory over the Vancouver Whitecaps.

Walter found the net for the first time this season when he took a pass from Gadi Kinda in the 33rd minute and scored the only goal Kendall McIntosh and Sporting KC (6-10-6) would need.

Pulido used assists from Walter and Tim Leibold in the second minute of stoppage time to put Sporting KC



Austin FC forward Sebastián Drussi (left), attempts shot on the goal past Inter Miami midfielder David Ruiz (right), during the first half of an MLS soccer match in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (AP)

up 2-0 at halftime. Pulido has scored seven of his eight goals this season in his last six appearances. Erik Thommy scored unassisted in the 53rd minute to complete the scoring. It was Thommy's third goal of the campaign.

McIntosh stopped one shot to earn the clean sheet for Sporting KC. Yohei Takaoka had one save for Vancouver.

Vancouver (6-6-7) was coming off a 2-0 road win over defending champion Los Angeles FC that snapped a 15-match winless run away from home. The Whitecaps have not won two in a row on the road since August of 2018.

Nashville 2 DC United 0

In Nashville, Randall Leal scored twice in the first half and Joe Willis made it stand up as Nashville SC defeated D.C. United 2-0.

Leal took a pass from Hany Mukhtar in the 18th minute and found the net and he followed with an unassisted goal in the 37th minute to put Nashville up 2-0 at halftime. Leal entered play with one goal on the season.

Willis finished with two saves to earn the clean sheet for Nashville (11-5-5). Tyler Miller saved one shot for DC United (7-9-5).

Nashville was coming off two straight shutout losses following a club-record 10-match unbeaten streak. The club has never lost three straight and has won all six times following two-match skids.

Mukhtar has a goal contribution in seven straight home matches — eight goals, five assists. He has 32 goal contributions in 43 home matches since 2021.

Real Salt Lake 1, Toronto 0

In Toronto, Anderson Julio scored in the second minute of second-half stoppage time to rally Real Salt Lake to a 1-0 victory over Toronto FC.

The victory extends Real Salt Lake's club-record unbeaten streak on the road in all competitions to 10. It is the longest unbeaten road run since an 11-match streak by the Portland Timbers spanning the 2012-13 seasons.

Real Salt Lake (8-7-6) improves to 2-5-3 all-time on the road against Toronto (3-8-10). Toronto falls to 3-2-6 at home this season. Toronto has surrendered only four goals in 10 home matches with RSL.

Julio scored the winner unassisted. It was his second netter of the campaign.

Dallas 2, LAFC 0

In Frisco, Bernard Kamungo scored early in the second half, defender Sam Junqua added a late goal and FC Dallas beat Los Angeles FC 2-0.

LAFC (9-5-5) entered the match having won four of its last five matchups with Dallas (8-7-5), including a 2-1 win at home earlier this season.

LAFC has won five of the 10 all-time meetings but just once in Dallas.

Kamungo found the net for a second time this season when he took a pass from Nkosi Tafari in the 56th minute to give Maarten Paes the only goal he would need. Junqua's first netter of the season came in the 90th minute with an assist from Tsiki Ntsabeleng.

Paes saved three shots to earn the clean sheet for Dallas. John McCarthy did not make a save for LAFC.

Dallas came into the match with a 1-4-0 record in its last five matches, including two straight shutout losses for the first time since August of 2021. The club has never been shut out in three consecutive matches.

Orlando City 3, Fire 1

In Orlando, Facundo Torres scored a goal in each half to propel Orlando City to a 3-1 victory over the Chicago Fire.

Orlando City (8-5-7) has gone unbeaten in six straight matches at home, tying a club record.

Orlando City took a 1-0 lead into halftime on a goal by Torres in the 38th minute. Kyle Smith and Martín Ojeda picked up assists on Torres' sixth netter of the season.

Torres struck again in the 55th minute on a penalty kick to stretch Orlando City's lead to 2-0.

Chicago (5-7-8) cut its deficit in half on a PK goal by Xherdan Shaqiri in the 66th minute. It was Shaqiri's second score of the season.

Ramiro Enrique gave Orlando City a two-goal lead again when he took passes from Iván Angulo and Rafael Santos and scored his second goal of the campaign.

Pedro Gallese saved two shots for Orlando City. Chris Brady totaled six

saves for Chicago.

Crew 2, Red Bulls 1

In Columbus, Cucho Hernández had a goal and an assist and Yaw Yeboah scored early in the second half to lead the Columbus Crew to a 2-1 victory over the New York Red Bulls.

Columbus (10-6-4) upped its win streak at home to five and improved to 12-1-5 in its last 18 home contests.

Columbus took a 1-0 lead in the 19th minute when Hernández used assists from Alexandru Matan and Christian Ramirez to score for a fifth time this season.

New York (5-7-9) got the equalizer from Elias Manoel in the 38th minute. Manoel took passes from Omir Fernandez and Frankie Amaya to score his second goal of the season.

The Crew took the lead for good in the 62nd minute on Yeboah's goal. Mohamed Farsi and Hernández notched assists on Yeboah's third netter of the campaign. The assist was the ninth for Hernández, leaving him in a four-way tie for the league lead.

Sounders 1, Dynamo 0

In Seattle, Albert Rusnák scored a second-half goal and Stefan Frei made it stand up with his league-leading 11th clean sheet of the season as the Seattle Sounders edged the Houston Dynamo 1-0.

Rusnák scored the only goal of the match when he used assists from Léo Chú and Nicolás Lodeiro in the 62nd minute to find the net for a second time this season.

Frei totaled two saves for Seattle (9-7-5). Steve Clark saved four shots for Houston (8-9-3).

Inter Miami 1, Austin 1

In Fort Lauderdale, Josef Martínez



Minnesota United midfielder Will Trapp (left), and Portland Timbers midfielder Marvin Loria battle for possession during the first half of an MLS soccer match in St. Paul, Minn. (AP)

INDIANAPOLIS, July 2, (AP) — Two years after winning five Olympic gold medals, Caleb Dressel didn't even make America's world championship team.

He still smiled about the accomplishments he did make at this week's national championships.

Dressel returned to high-level competition for the first time in nearly a year, prided himself on the effort he mustered following a desperately needed nine-month break from the sport and left satisfied despite failing to make the "A" final in two of his four events. For Dressel, it's a new world.

"I'm proud of myself for the results, believe it or not," he said in his first public comments since his sudden withdrawal at last year's worlds in Budapest, Hungary, citing health reasons. "I know it's shocking. I'm not used to swimming in the 'C' finals so it's definitely something different. But I wouldn't have changed anything about this year, wouldn't change anything about the swim meet."

Dressel hardly resembled the world's best swimmer, which he was when he stepped away.

SWIMMING

He completed Saturday's 50 freestyle in 22.72 seconds, tied for 22nd. In the frantic sprint from one end of the pool to the other, Dressel wound up 1.07 seconds behind top qualifier Ryan Held and 0.59 outside the top eight. And unlike earlier this week, he opted out of the evening heat.

A year ago, the result might have been frustrating, irritating and long-lasting.

But this five-day meet was about far more than record times or podium finishes.

Dressel's friends, teammates, training partners and coaches sensed an inner calm about Dressel, reflected in the ear-to-ear smiles that suggested his long journey back might come just in time for next summer's Olympics in Paris.

"I think he's in a good spot," Katie Ledecky said after dominating the 1,500 free final again. "I don't want to speak for him or how he feels about his races, but just what we see on the deck every day in practice, what we saw here, he seems happy and that's what we all care about."

The good news is Dressel already successfully made this ascent once. The challenge: He also understands what's needed to defend his gold-medal winning swims in the 100 butterfly, the 50 and 100 free and two relays at the Tokyo Olympics.

It took years for him to reach the top and with next year's U.S. Olympic Trials in Indianapolis and Paris Olympics looming, the 26-year-old Floridian needs to get into top form quickly.

But it would be unwise to bet against the first swimmer since Michael Phelps to win seven gold medals at the 2017 worlds in Budapest would. Dressel followed up with six golds and two relay silvers at the 2019 championships in Gwangju, South Korea before his Olympic haul. Then last summer in Budapest, he took two more golds and posted the second-fastest time in the 100 free prelims before pulling out of the meet.

"I think the easiest way to put it is a lot of things all came boiling up at once so I didn't really have a choice," Dressel said. "I used to pride myself on being able to shove things down and push it aside and fight through it and it worked for a very long time in my career. I got results in '17, '19 and '21, but I couldn't do it anymore."

Nesty understood. He gave Dressel the time and space he needed to start anew.

"An athlete like that has a lot on his shoulders, and I wanted him to have everything removed from his shoulders," Nesty said. "He needed to focus on him."

Dressel eventually returned to the pool in late February and gradually ramped up his training schedule before competing at a minor meet in Atlanta in May.

Indy was the second stop on the comeback tour and neither Dressel nor Nesty were surprised at the impact of the long layoff. Dressel's best showing of the week was a third-place finish in the 50 butterfly, a non-Olympic event. He tied for fifth in the 100 fly and failed to make the main final in either the 50 or 100 free.

And while his inability to qualify for the national team will deprive fans of one of the sport's most successful athletes at swimming's second-most important event, Dressel has returned with a new attitude and mentality that he can reclaim her perch next summer.

SPORTS

Verlander 'earns' first victory in nearly 6 weeks, Mets top Giants

Phillies rout Nationals; Cardinals split DH with Yankees

NEW YORK, July 2, (AP): Justin Verlander pitched seven steady innings for his first victory in nearly six weeks and slumping rookie Francisco Alvarez hit the first of three quick homers that powered the New York Mets past the San Francisco Giants 4-1 on Saturday.

Brandon Nimmo and Francisco Lindor launched back-to-back shots as the Mets went deep three times in a span of four batters against Anthony DeSclafani (4-8) in the third.

Tommy Pham added an RBI double off Sean Manaea in the fourth, and New York (37-46) opened July with a much-needed win after going 6-19 in its previous 25 games.

The 40-year-old Verlander (3-4) gave up five hits, struck out six and didn't allow an earned run for his 247th victory and first since May 21 against Cleveland.

The only run the Giants scored came on Thairo Estrada's double-play grounder in the seventh following a throwing error by first baseman Pete Alonso - his second in two days.

San Francisco (46-37) fell to 14-5 in its last 19 games dating to June 11.

Phillies 19, Nationals 4

In Philadelphia, Alec Bohm homered twice and tied his career high with six RBIs, and Philadelphia scored its most runs in five years in winning for the sixth time in eight games and for the 12th time in 16.

Kyle Schwarber had a grand slam, and Nick Castellanos homered, singled and doubled with three RBIs for the Phillies, who scored their most runs since beating Miami 20-1 on April 7, 2018. Philadelphia had 18 hits, including four by Bohm, who matched his career best.

Zack Wheeler (7-4) won his fourth straight decision, giving up four runs and seven hits in five innings.

Bryce Harper doubled, had two hits and drove in two runs, and J.T. Realmuto also had two RBIs.

MacKenzie Gore (4-7) allowed seven runs, six hits and three walks in 2 2/3 innings. Amos Willingham, Joe La Sorsa and Thaddeus Ward gave up four runs each. Dominic Smith homered for Washington.

Braves 7, Marlins 0

In Atlanta, Ronald Acuña and Ozzie Albies homered as part of a six-run first inning to lead Atlanta as Miami's Luis Arraez, the major league batting leader, saw his average dip to .388.

BASEBALL

Charlie Morton (8-6) struck out five in 5 2/3 innings and scattered four hits and one walk in winning his third consecutive start. Kirby Yates, Nick Anderson, Ben Heller, and Joe Jiménez completed the shutout for the Braves out of the bullpen.

Matt Olson went 2 for 4 with a run scored, and Austin Riley was 2 for 4 with two runs scored for the Braves, who have won 23 of their last 27 games and lead the second-place Marlins by eight games in the NL East.

Marlins rookie Eury Pérez (5-4) lasted just a third of an inning, giving up six runs and seven hits. He threw 35 pitches.

Arraez went 1 for 4. He is 3 for 16 over last four games and his .388 average is his lowest since June 17. **Cardinals 11, Yankees 4, 1st game**

Yankees 6, Cardinals 2, 2nd game

In St. Louis, Harrison Bader had a first-inning sacrifice fly in his return to St. Louis, rookie Anthony Volpe hit a go-ahead triple as part of his fifth straight multi-hit game and New York earned a double-header split by winning the nightcap.

St. Louis won the rain-interrupted opener behind Paul Goldschmidt's go-ahead, three-run homer off Luis Severino in a five-run third. Jack Flaherty pitched six shutout innings, Goldschmidt had four RBIs and Nolan Gorman also homered for the Cardinals, who reached double-digit runs for the first time since May 21.

Isiah Kiner-Falefa had three hits in the second game as the Yankees won for the fifth time in their last seven.

Lars Nootbaar homered for St. Louis, which fell to a 34-48, its worst 82-game start since 1990. Nootbaar hit a first-inning homer off opener Ian Hamilton as the Yankees went with a bullpen game because of Friday's rainout.

Michael King (2-4) allowed one hit while pitching scoreless relief over a season-high 3 1/3 innings.



Philadelphia Phillies starting pitcher Zack Wheeler throws during the first inning of a baseball game against the Washington Nationals in Philadelphia. (AP)

Wandy Peralta, Tommy Kahnle and Clay Holmes followed with an inning each.

Flaherty (5-5) won his second straight start after going 0-1 in his previous five. He allowed four hits, struck out four and walked two after giving up six runs in each of his previous two outings.

Severino (1-3) gave up seven runs and nine hits over four innings. Jake Bauers hit a two-run homer off Drew VerHagen in a three-run ninth for the Yankees, who had won four of their previous five games.

Padres 12, Reds 5

In Cincinnati, Juan Soto hit a tie-breaking, three-run homer in the sixth inning, Manny Machado followed three pitches later with the first of his two home runs and San Diego stopped a six-game losing streak.

Soto had four RBIs and Machado and Fernando Tatis three each for the Padres, who have not lost seven in a row since Sept. 24 to Oct. 1, 2021.

Michael Wacha (8-2), pitching on his 32nd birthday, won his third straight decision. Wacha allowed one run and five hits in five innings in his first outing since June 19, after missing a turn because of shoulder discomfort.

San Diego (38-45) had fallen eight games below .500 for the first time since ending 2019 at 70-92. Cincinnati (44-39), which has surged into the NL Central lead, lost for just the fourth time in 19 games.

Red Sox 7, Blue Jays 6

In Toronto, Rafael Devers hit his 20th home run, Justin Turner homered and scored three times as Boston spoiled Canada Day celebrations in Toronto.

Right fielder Alex Verdugo threw out Bo Bichette at home plate for the final out of the game after Vladimir Guerrero Jr. hit an RBI single off Red Sox closer Kenley Jansen. George Springer scored on the play, but Bichette was tagged out by catcher Caleb Hamilton. Toronto's challenge was unsuccessful.

Devers went 3 for 5 with three RBIs and scored twice. Turner finished 3 for 5 with two RBIs as Boston returned to .500 at 42-42. Red Sox right-hander Kutter Crawford (3-4) pitched 5 2/3 innings to win for the second time in three starts.

Matt Chapman hit a two-run home run, and Springer and Bichette had solo homers.

Mariners 8, Rays 3

In Seattle, Jarrod Kelenic hit a tiebreaking single off Tyler Glasnow in the sixth inning. Teoscar Hernández added a two-run double in a three-run seventh and Seattle beat Tampa Bay to halt a three-game skid.

George Kirby (7-7) allowed two runs and two hits in seven innings with seven strikeouts, and the Mariners backed him with 13 hits. Paul Sewald earned his 15th save in 18 chances.

Yandy Díaz doubled in the sixth for the Rays' first hit and Luke Raley homered.

Glasnow (2-2) struck out 11 and allowed seven hits and three runs with a walk.

Rangers 5, Astros 2

In Arlington, Nathan Eovaldi

pitched seven scoreless innings to become the American League's second 10-game winner and AL West-leading Texas beat second-place Houston.

Eovaldi (10-3) struck out five and limited the Astros to two singles, but also had a season-high four walks.

Marcus Semien, Corey Seager and Josh Jung each drove in a run for Texas. Switch-hitting catcher Jonah Heim had three hits and scored a run.

Rangers reliever Joe Barlow gave up Kyle Tucker's two-run homer with two outs in the ninth. Will Smith then came on to get the final out for his 15th save in 16 chances.

Twins 1, Orioles 0

In Baltimore, Bailey Ober allowed two hits over seven innings, Joey Gallo homered and Minnesota extended Baltimore's losing streak to a season-high four games.

Ober (5-4) gave up a second-inning single to Gunnar Henderson, hit Ryan O'Hearn with a pitch in the fourth and yielded a single to Anthony Santander in the seventh. Those were the only runners to reach base, as the right-hander struck out eight and did not allow a runner past first.

Griffin Jax worked the eighth and Jhoan Duran got three outs to complete the three-hitter and earn his 12th save in 14 chances.

Royals 6, Dodgers 4

In Kansas City, Kansas City rudyly welcomed Dodgers pitcher Julio Urias back from the injured list by scoring five times in the first inning and holding on for a rain-delayed win over Los Angeles.

Daniel Lynch (2-3) nearly gave all his support back when he allowed three runs in the second. But the left-hander settled down, eventually throwing 108 pitches to get through five innings. He allowed five hits and three walks with four strikeouts, helping the Royals beat the Dodgers for just the second time in their last 10 meetings.

The Dodgers left the bases loaded

in the eighth when Yonny Hernandez struck out and Freddie Freeman grounded out, and Scott Barlow got the final four outs for his 10th save while capping four innings of one-run ball by the Kansas City bullpen.

Urias (5-5) scuffled through his first game since hurting his hamstring on May 18. He lasted three innings and allowed six hits and two walks.

Tigers 4, Rockies 2, 10 innings

In Denver, Zach McKinstry hit a tiebreaking, three-run homer in the 10th inning, lifting Detroit past Colorado.

With Jonathan Schoop at second as the automatic runner, Eric Haase singled off Pierce Johnson (1-4) to put runners at the corners. McKinstry followed with his sixth homer, a 400-foot drive over the right-center fence and into the Rockies bullpen.

Kris Bryant hit a two-out RBI single in the bottom half off Alex Lange (5-2), as Detroit sealed its 21st come-from-behind win this year.

Six Tigers combined on a six-hit-ter as both teams went with bullpen games.

Colorado's Ezequiel Tovar hit a two-out RBI single in the sixth to extend his career-best hitting streak to 14 games.

Diamondbacks 3, Angels 1

In Anaheim, Ryne Nelson worked 7 1/3 strong innings and Dominic Fletcher and Jake McCarthy had RBIs as Arizona beat Los Angeles.

The Diamondback scored all their runs against the Angels' bullpen and clinched first series win since taking two of three against Cleveland in mid-June.

Nelson (5-4) was catalyst for Arizona, giving up one run, three hits and one walk while striking out six.

On Sunday, the Diamondbacks will go for their first series sweep since taking three games from Detroit on June 9-11.

Anthony Rendon hit his second home run of the season for Los Angeles, which has lost four in a row. Shohei Ohtani was hitless in four at-bats and Mike Trout went 0 for 3.

Guardians 6, Cubs 0

In Chicago, rookie Tanner Bibee and three relievers combined on a five-hitter, and Cleveland blanked Chicago.

Bibee (5-2) tossed three-hit ball into the sixth while outpitching Marcus Stroman, and the Guardians came out on top in a game delayed 2 hours, 45 minutes at the start because of rain.

Amed Rosario lined a two-run single in the third. Andrés Giménez chased Stroman (9-6) with an RBI single in a four-run sixth, and the Guardians bounced back after getting pounded 10-1 the previous night. The Cubs had matched a season high with their five straight losses after winning 11 of 13.

Bibee went 5 2/3 innings and matched a season high with nine strikeouts while walking two. Sam Hentges, Nick Sandlin and Eli Morgan combined to finish Cleveland's seventh shutout.

Stroman lasted 5 2/3 innings, allowing five runs and five hits.

Aces dominate Sun

Lynx beat Mercury for third consecutive win

PHOENIX, July 2, (AP): Diamond Miller battled foul trouble but finished with 25 points and five steals - both career highs - and Napheesa Collier add-

ed 16 points and nine rebounds to help Minnesota beat the Phoenix Mercury 86-76 Saturday night for the Lynx's third win in a row.

Rachel Banham scored a season-high 13 points in just 15 minutes for Minnesota.

Six different Lynx players scored in a 13-2 run that gave the Lynx a 76-63 lead with five minutes to play and Phoenix trailed by at least eight points the rest of the way.

Brittney Griner led Phoenix with 23 points, 15 in the first half, and Moriah Jefferson scored 14 with a season-high seven assists. Michaela Onyenwere, who fouled out early in the fourth quarter, and Sug Sutton added 10 points apiece and Brianna Turner grabbed a season-high 13 rebounds.

Minnesota (7-9) - which started the season with six consecutive losses - was coming off back-to-back wins over the Seattle Storm, the latter of which came when Collier made a short fadeaway jumper that gave the Lynx a 99-97 lead with 1.8 seconds left in overtime.

Miller, the No. 2 overall selection in April's draft out of Maryland, picked up her third personal when she fouled Moriah Jefferson, who hit the short jumper and made the and-1 free throw that trimmed the Mercury's deficit to 34-31 with 3:43 left in the first half.

Tiffany Mitchell (wrist), Jessica Shepard (non-COVID illness) and Aerial Powers (ankle) did not play

BASKETBALL

for the Lynx. Shepard leads the team in field-goal percentage (53.2%), rebounds (9.2 per game) and assists (4.4). Powers and Shepard each missed their seventh consecutive game, Mitchell sat out her third in a row.

Phoenix, which went into the game averaging a league-high 17.5 turnovers per game (no other team averages more than 16.0) committed 14 - which led to 15 Lynx points - in the first half and went into the break trailing 46-37. The Mercury finished with a season-high 22 turnovers, including 13 Minnesota steals.

Aces 102, Sun 84

In Las Vegas, Kelsey Plum scored 25 points and A'ja Wilson added 23 points and 12 rebounds to help the Las Vegas Aces rout the Connecticut Sun 102-84 in a matchup of the top teams in the WNBA.

It was the eighth straight victory for the Aces (15-1), who avenged their only loss of the season. Connecticut (12-5) was able to win that game because of a career-high and franchise-record 41 points by DeWanna Bonner. Las Vegas hasn't lost since thanks in big part to the play of Wilson, the league's reigning MVP.

She had another strong game one day after signing a two-year contract extension.

Just as they did against New York two days earlier, the Aces blew open the game at the start of the third quarter. Las Vegas scored the first 17 points of the period to turn a 11-point advantage to 76-48.

The Sun finally ended the run with Dijonai Carrington's 3-pointer with 4:31 left in the third quarter. Things got worse for Connecticut a minute later when Tiffany Hayes was ejected by official Clare Aubry when the Sun guard made money signs after she was called for a foul.

"They said something about doing a money sign or something. I don't know," Connecticut coach Stephanie White said. "We were not told that anything like this was an automatic ejection."

MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, July 2, (AP): Results and standings from the MLB games on Saturday.

St. Louis	11	NY Yankees	1st	6
Boston	7	Toronto		6
Minnesota	1	Baltimore		0
Texas	5	Houston		2
Oakland	7	Chic. W. Sox	10	Inns 6
Seattle	8	Tampa Bay		3
Kansas City	6	LA Dodgers		4
Cleveland	6	Chicago Cubs		0
NY Yankees	6	St. Louis	2nd	2
Detroit	4	Colorado	10	Inns 2
Arizona	3	LA Angels		1
San Diego	12	Cincinnati		5
NY Mets	4	San Francisco		1
Atlanta	7	Miami		0
Philadelphia	19	Washington		4
Milwaukee	11	Pittsburgh		8
Kansas City	6	LA Dodgers		4

American League				
East Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Tampa Bay	57	29	.663	—
Baltimore	48	33	.593	6-1/2
New York	46	37	.554	9-1/2
Toronto	45	39	.536	11
Boston	42	42	.500	14
Central Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Minnesota	42	42	.500	—
Cleveland	40	42	.488	1
Detroit	36	46	.439	5
Chicago	36	49	.424	6-1/2
Kansas City	24	59	.289	17-1/2
West Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Texas	50	33	.602	—
Houston	45	38	.542	2
Los Angeles	44	41	.516	7
Seattle	39	42	.481	10
Oakland	23	62	.271	28

National League				
East Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Atlanta	55	27	.671	—
Miami	48	36	.571	8
Philadelphia	44	38	.537	11
New York	37	46	.446	18-1/2
Washington	33	49	.402	22
West Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Cincinnati	44	39	.530	—
Milwaukee	44	39	.530	—
Pittsburgh	39	43	.476	4-1/2
Chicago	38	43	.469	5
St. Louis	34	48	.415	9-1/2
West Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Arizona	50	34	.595	—
Los Angeles	46	36	.561	3
San Francisco	46	37	.554	3-1/2
San Diego	38	45	.458	11-1/2
Colorado	33	52	.388	17-1/2



Detroit Tigers pinch runner Jake Marisnick scores on a double hit by Jonathan Schoop off Colorado Rockies relief pitcher Jake Bird in the seventh inning of a baseball game in Denver. (AP)



France's Victor Lafay crosses the finish line to win the second stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 209 kilometers (130 miles) with start in Vitoria Gasteiz and finish in San Sebastian, Spain. (AP)

Sports

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China celebrate with their trophy after defeating Japan in the Asia Cup women's basketball final in Sydney, Australia. (AP)

Xu finishes with match-defining 26 points and 10 rebounds

China end Japan's long reign to win women's basketball Asia Cup title

Kuwait, India advance to SAFF final

Blues pip Bangladesh

NEW DELHI, July 2, (KUNA): India beat Lebanon 4-2 in gripping shootout to set up a South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Championship final showdown against Kuwait, following a goalless draw in both regulation and extra time at Sree Kan-

teerava Stadium in Bangalore city in south India.

Earlier Kuwait defeated Bangladesh 1-0.

Abdullah Ammar scored the only goal of the match in second minute of the extra-time, helping Kuwait reach the final.

In earlier group matches, Kuwait defeated Nepal 3-1 and Pakistan 4-0, and drew with India 1-1 to lead Group A.

Boos on spicy last day at Lord's

Australia survive capt Stokes assault to win 2nd Ashes Test

LONDON, July 2, (AP): Australia outlasted another epic solo assault by England captain Ben Stokes to win the second Ashes test by 43 runs with a session to spare on a salty last day Sunday.

Stokes seemed to be pulling a stunning victory out of impending defeat for England with an astonishing 155 that echoed another unforgettable century in a thrilling fourth-innings chase to win the Ashes test at Headingley in 2019.

England's chances of retaking the urn were bleak. Only one team has ever come back from 2-0 down in the Ashes, and it had Don Bradman, in 1937.

The match wasn't as epic as last week's opening test at Edgbaston, which was a thriller for all five days, but the last day at Lord's will live long in Ashes infamy as Stokes embellished his legend and the Australians were booed mercilessly and accused in crowd chants of cheating.

The Marylebone Cricket Club even apologized to the visitors for some of their members handling and verbally abusing the Australians in the sacred Long Room at lunch. A chase that was moving at a serene pace erupted when Jonny Bairstow got himself stumped half an hour before lunch.

Bairstow ducked a bouncer from Cameron Green and he neither checked the fate of the ball nor stood his ground. Instead, he left his crease to talk with Stokes and wicketkeeper Alex Carey simply underarm the ball into his stumps and the Australians celebrated. Bairstow was confused and the umpires asked for a ruling from the third umpire, who didn't hesitate to say he was stumped for 10 at 193-6. England's tail was exposed, still needing 178 more runs.

CRICKET

Again, he turned hope into expectation for a sold-out crowd and helped to reduce a never-reached 371 target at Lord's to 70. Then he was gone, top-edging a short ball from Josh Hazlewood behind to wicketkeeper Alex Carey. A febrile Lord's sunk into silence until the crowd rose to send Stokes off to a sustained standing ovation.

He was the seventh man out, and the tail wagged for another hour. England was all out for 327 and congratulated Australia on the pavilion steps after the visitors were booted off the field.

Australia leads the series 2-0 and the holder can clinch a first Ashes series win in England since 2001 at Headingley in the third test starting on Thursday.



Australia's Mitchell Starc, (left), bowls a delivery past England's captain Ben Stokes, (center), during the fifth day of the second Ashes Test match between England and Australia, at Lord's cricket ground in London. (AP)

F1's governing body rejects McLaren's appeal

Max continues relentless march toward third straight world title

SPIELBERG, Austria, July 2, (AP): Reigning Formula One champion Max Verstappen continued his relentless march toward a third straight world title with a dominating win at the Austrian Grand Prix on Sunday.

Verstappen started from pole position for the fourth straight race and notched his fifth straight win and seventh in nine races so far this season. He increased his championship lead to 81 points over his Red Bull teammate Sergio Perez.

He even got his way to come in two laps from the end for a shot at the fastest lap, despite his team's reluctance to take the risk. Typically, he got the bonus point for it on the final lap to complete a perfect weekend after his victory from pole in Saturday's sprint race.

MOTOR RACING

It also took the 25-year-old Dutchman onto 42 F1 wins overall, one ahead of the late Ayrton Senna and alone in fifth place on F1's all-time list of winners.

Charles Leclerc - last year's winner here - finished 5.2 seconds behind Verstappen in second place with Red Bull's Sergio Perez placing third, 17.2 behind.

But Verstappen's winning margin was shortened by his late pit stop, and it was another comfortable victory on his team's home track in Spielberg.

Making a clean start from pole, he held off Leclerc on Turns 2 and 3 and easily regained the lead from him following a pit stop at the half-way point of the 71-lap race at the Red Bull Ring.

Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton, Ferrari's Carlos Sainz Jr. and several other drivers received five-second time penalties for going off track limits.

Perez started 15th and passed Sainz with 10 laps left to collect his first podium since his second place at the Miami GP two months ago. Sainz was fourth ahead of McLaren's Lando Norris and Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso in sixth, Hamilton in seventh and his teammate George Russell in eighth.

Red Bull has won all nine races, all 11 when including the two sprint races with Verstappen's victory in Saturday's sprint following Perez's success in Azerbaijan.

Drivers lined up on the grid for a minute's silence in memory of 18-year-old Dutch driver Dilano van



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands (center), leads Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc of Monaco, (center right), at the start of the Austrian Formula One Grand Prix, at the Red Bull Ring racetrack, in Spielberg, Austria. (AP)

't Hoff, who died on Saturday after a crash at the Formula Regional European Championship at the Spa-Francorchamps track in Belgium.

F1 holds a race in Belgium on July 30.

Formula One announced Sunday that it has signed a three-year contract extension to keep the Austrian Grand Prix on the calendar until 2030.

The decision comes only months after the circuit signed a four-year deal until 2027, underlining how it is one of the most popular venues in F1.

Tens of thousands of orange-clad Dutch fans come every year, packing the grandstands to watch their nation's star driver Max Verstappen on his Red Bull team's home track in Spielberg against the backdrop of the Styrian mountains.

"The race in Austria is a big favorite for the drivers and all our fans," F1 president Stefano Domenicali said. "We are looking forward to many years of excitement and action that are ahead of us."

Formula One's governing body has rejected McLaren's right of review request for the time penalty given to Lando Norris at the Canadian Grand Prix, where he dropped down from ninth to 13th place for driving deliberately slowly.

Following a review hearing on Sunday, which was held ahead of the Austrian GP and attended by two McLaren team representatives, the petition was rejected on the grounds that there was no new relevant element of information available to McLaren that wasn't at the time.

SYDNEY, July 2, (AP): China rallied to claim its first women's basketball Asia Cup title since 2012 as they beat five-time defending champion Japan 73-71 in an epic final on Sunday.

Trailing at halftime it appeared China may fall for a third consecutive time in a title game as reigning champions Japan scored the last 14 points of the first half to lead by nine points.

Led by player of the tournament center Xu Han, China seized the momentum early in the third quarter and took what proved a match-winning lead late in the game to end their 12-year wait for a gold medal in front of a large crowd in Sydney.

Xu finished with a match-defining 26 points and 10 rebounds to complete the feat of recording a double-double in every game of the tournament. Siyu Wang scored 17 points.

Maki Takada led Japan with 17 points and four rebounds, with Saki Hayashi scoring 12 points for Japan.

BASKETBALL

China's title follows its silver medal at the women's basketball World Cup, also held in Sydney, late last year.

Japan and China met in the 2019 and 2021 title games with the Japanese prevailing in both to claim their fourth and fifth titles.

Earlier Saturday, host nation Australia claimed its third consecutive bronze medal as they cruised past New Zealand 81-59 to repeat its result from Bengaluru, India in 2019 and Amman, Jordan in 2021.

Alice Kuneik contributed a team high 19 points and Anneli Maley completed a double-double of 11 points and 11 rebounds, while Tess Madgen scored 14 points with five rebounds and three steals for the Opals.

Cofidis earn 1st Tour stage win in 15 years

SAN SEBASTIAN, Spain, July 2, (AP): French rider Victor Lafay made a late move to break away from the pack and give Cofidis its first Tour de France stage win in 15 years on Sunday, with Adam Yates keeping the overall lead after the opening two stages in northern Spain.

Lafay took the lead within the final kilometer (0.6 miles) and held on for victory in what was the Tour's longest stage this year. French team Cofidis hadn't won in the Tour since Sylvain Chavanel triumphed in the 19th stage of the 2008 edition.

The 27-year-old Lafay had won one other stage victory at a Grand Tour race, in the 2021 Giro d'Italia.

Wout van Aert of Jumbo-Visma was second and Tadej Pogacar third at the finish line in the Basque Country city of San Sebastian after a hilly stage of more than 200 kilometers (124 miles).

Yates, the winner of the opening stage on Saturday, finished close behind to retain the overall leader's yellow jersey. He was six seconds ahead of race-favorite Pogacar and his twin brother Simon Yates, who was second on Saturday.

Defending champion Jonas Vingegaard recovered after being involved in a minor crash in the peloton earlier in the stage. He dropped to sixth overall.

American Neilson Powless of team EF Education-EasyPost retained the red polka dot jersey for best climber.



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands smiles on the podium after winning the Formula One Austrian Grand Prix auto race, at the Red Bull Ring racetrack, in Spielberg, Austria. (AP)