



Page 14 **baseball**



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tennis

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 3, 2023 / SHAWWAL 13, 1444 AH

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16 PAGES

150 FILS

Sudanese flood port, Egypt borders

Rival generals continue battles



A house north of the town of Aleppo, Syria where Islamic State leader, code-named Abu Hussein al-Qurayshi, had been killed by the Turkish intelligence agency, MIT, is seen on May 1, 2023. A member of the Turkish-backed Syrian opposition forces said that the MIT clashed with IS militants on a farm in the village of Miska in Aleppo province late Friday night. As the fighting intensified, Al-Qurayshi, who was hiding in a building on the farm, blew himself up. (AP)

CAIRO, May 2, (AP): Sudanese fleeing the fighting between rival generals in their capital flooded an already overwhelmed city on the Red Sea and Sudan's northern borders with Egypt, as explosions and gunfire echoed Tuesday in Khartoum.

Many exhausted Sudanese and foreigners arrived in Port Sudan, the country's main seaport, joining thousands who have waited for days to be evacuated out of the chaos-stricken nation. Others

have been driven in packed buses and trucks, seeking shelter in Egypt, Sudan's northern neighbor.

"Much of the capital has become empty," said Abdalla al-Fatih, a Khartoum resident, "all (residents of) our street fled the war."

The fighting, now in its third week, has turned Khartoum and its neighboring city of Omdurman into a battlefield. Fierce clashes taking place inside residential neighborhoods that have become "ghost areas," residents say.

The conflict, which capped months of worsening tensions, pits the military, led by Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, against a rival paramilitary group called the Rapid Support Forces, commanded by Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo.

Al-Fatih's family managed to get out of Khartoum over the weekend after they spent the past two weeks trapped in their home in Khartoum's neighborhood of Kafouri, a major flashpoint since the fighting broke out on April 15.

They arrived in Port Sudan late Monday, after an exhausting 20-hour trip, he said. There, they found thousands, including many women and children, camping outside the port area. Many had been there for more than a week, with no food and other services, he said.

Port Sudan has become a hub for foreign governments to evacuate their citizens by air and sea.

Evacuated

Tariq Abdel-Hameed was one of around 2,000 Syrians camping in Port Sudan waiting to be evacuated by ferries that transport foreigners to Saudi Arabia's coastal city of Jeddah.

Most of them favored staying at an open area at the port, while others camped in mosques or rented hostels in the city, he said. Only some 200 Syrians have been evacuated since the crisis began, including 35 Friday on a Jeddah-bound vessel, he added.

The Syrian embassy in Sudan announced the start of air evacuation of Syrian citizens from Port Sudan. The first Damascus-bound flight, carrying dozens of patients and elders, is scheduled to take off later Tuesday, he said.

At the congested crossing points with Egypt, thousands of families have waited for days inside buses or sought temporary shelter in the border city of Wadi Halfa to finalize their paperwork to be allowed into Egypt.

Yusuf Abdel-Rahman is a Sudanese university student who crossed into Egypt along his family, through the Ashkit crossing point late Monday. They spent their night at a community hostel in Egypt's southern city of Aswan, and plan to board a train to Cairo later Tuesday, he said.

Abdel-Rahman's family went first to the Arqin crossing point over the weekend. It was overcrowded and they couldn't reach the customs area. They then decided to move to the Ashkit crossing after they heard from people there that the crossing would be easier, he said.

"It's a chaotic situation (in Arqin)," he said over the phone. "Women, children and patients are stranded in the desert with no food, no water."

Abdel-Rahman reported widespread destruction and looting particularly in upscale neighborhood in the capital. He said a neighbor told them by phone said armed men in RSF uniform stormed their home in Khartoum's Amarat neighborhood on Friday, a day after they fled the capital. Many Sudanese have taken to social media to complain that their homes were stormed and looted by armed men.

"We are lucky" that they didn't at home at the time of storming," he said. "We could be ended up dead bodies."

Displaced

The fighting has displaced at least 334,000 people inside Sudan, and sent tens of thousands more to neighboring countries, including Egypt, Chad, South Sudan, Central African Republic and Ethiopia, according to U.N. agencies.

"Now we're seeing some extremely fast-moving situations along the borders," said Paul Dillon, spokesman for the International Organization for Migration, told a news briefing Tuesday in Geneva.

At the Sudanese borders with Ethiopia, he said, between 900 and 1,000 arrive daily at the border with Ethiopia where "there's a desperate lack of wash services, food, shelter, water, medical assistance."

At least 20,000 people crossed into Chad, which borders the Darfur city of Genena where clashes last week killed dozens and wounded hundreds.

Aleksandra Roulet-Cimpric, Chad Country Director with the International Rescue Committee, described dire conditions for the arrivals, many of whom - mainly women and children - have taken shelter under trees in an "extremely hot" weather.

"This leaves them particularly at risk of exploitation and abuse," she warned.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi warned that the number of people fleeing the conflict to neighboring countries could surpass 800,000. "We hope it doesn't come to that, but if violence doesn't stop we will see more people forced to flee Sudan seeking safety," he wrote on Twitter Monday.

Opinion

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf... Khosrau's messenger to Omar: 'You justly ruled, felt safe and slept well'

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

PEOPLE who are corrupt always work to secure their future even in prison. This is due to the fact that the farsighted ones expect their fate.

In this regard, there is a story about the prime minister of a country who was taking a tour of some state institutions, including a kindergarten, where he asked his finance minister, "How much is the monthly food budget of a child?"

The minister responded, "USD 400." The prime minister replied, "This is a lot. It should be reduced to USD 200!"

The next day, the prime minister visited the prison and asked the finance minister, "How much is the monthly food budget of a prisoner?"

The minister replied, "USD 400." The prime minister told his minister, "That is less. Increase it to USD 800!"

The minister then asked him, "Boss, why did you reduce the food budget for kindergarten children, and raise the food budget for prisoners?"

The prime minister replied, "Do you think that we will go to kindergarten after leaving the ministry?"

The corrupt know that they will either go to jail or they will leave their country in order to escape accountability. This is why they turn a blind eye to major violations in the state so that everyone feels corruption is a general social norm.

This is the rule that these people adopted, which is countered with strict accountability rules, one of which is that the ruler himself does not deviate from the right path.

It was narrated that the third rightly guided caliph of Muslims Omar Ibn Al-Khattab had said, "If a lost sheep dies on the banks of Euphrates River, I would be certain that Almighty Allah would ask me about it on the Day of Resurrection."

That is why when Khosrau's messenger came to the just Caliph Omar and asked about him, he was told, "He is sleeping under that tree."

He found him without security guards, and he said his famous saying, "You ruled justly, felt safe and slept well."

If the rightly guided caliph deviated from justice in administration and took into account the cronies, close associates, and loved ones, the collapse of the state would have been swift and at an early age, but he set the limits on those close to them before the general public.

Your Highness the Prime Minister, when the law becomes a point of view, and not a limit that the official does not exceed before the citizen, the rights become clear, but rather the rule "what is ours and what is yours is ours and yours" becomes the standard. From here, the chaos created by the administration's corruption prevails.

I remember it was in 2008 I think that the Vice President of the UAE Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid received information about two officials who embezzled some money and took advantage of their positions.

Sheikh Mohammed immediately ordered them to be imprisoned and demanded the return of the embezzled money. He issued a series of decisions by which he cut off the path for the corrupt. Since then until today, no embezzler or corrupt person has been exposed, as everyone works with integrity in serving their country.

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Gaza fires rockets

Hunger striker dies in custody

JERUSALEM, May 2, (AP): A high-profile Palestinian prisoner died in Israeli custody on Tuesday after a hunger strike of nearly three months, Israel's prison service announced. His death set off a rocket barrage from the Gaza Strip and raised fears of a further escalation.



Adnan

Khaled Adnan, a leader of the militant Islamic Jihad group, helped introduce the practice of protracted hunger strikes by individual prisoners as a form of protest against Israel's mass detention of Palestinians without charge. On Tuesday, the 45-year-old became the first long-term hunger striker to die in Israeli custody.

In response to his death, Palestinian militants in Gaza fired 22 rockets toward populated areas in southern Israel, seriously wounding a 25-year-old man and moderately wounding two others at a construction site in the city of Sderot, Israel's rescue service said, identifying all three as foreigners. Their nationalities were not immediately clear.

Air raid sirens sounded and Israeli municipal councils opened public bomb shelters. The reverberations and shrapnel punched a hole into the street and charred cars, footage showed. Four rockets were intercepted by Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system, authorities said.

"This is an initial response to this heinous crime that will trigger reactions from our people," a coalition of Gaza-based Palestinian militant groups, led by the enclave's Hamas rulers, said.

Day by Day

THE Gulf thief was deluding his victims by making an impression that he is the agent handling the money of the sister of an Arab king.

That he is also the agent handling money of Bushra al-Assad, who lives in the Emirates. He also deluded the victims in various other ways to be assured of the money.

When the cute thief was produced in court, he claimed he had done nothing wrong, but rather demanded money which in fact he stole in broad daylight.

The Gulf thief is currently being pursued by those whose money he transferred in his personal account, the account of his mother and his family members.

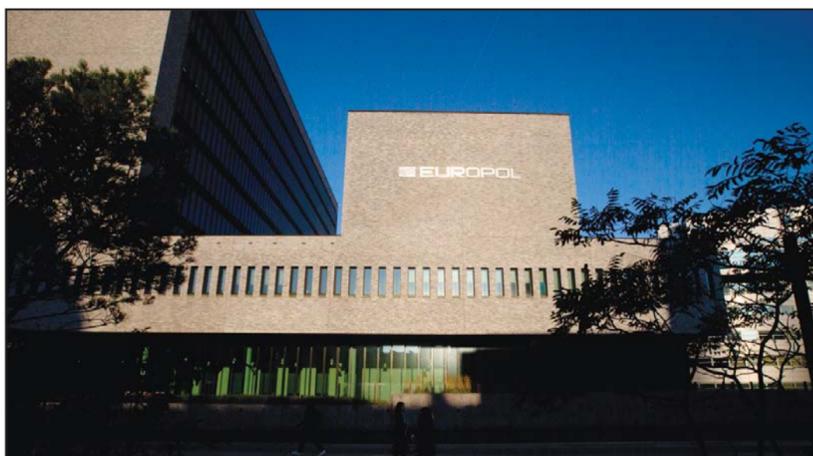
Now the spotlight is on the thief who stole the money under the cover of darkness.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



People walk under hanging colourful umbrellas in Balat neighborhood, Istanbul, Turkey, May 1, 2023. (AP)



This Wednesday, Oct. 10, 2018 file photo, shows the sun bouncing off the Europol headquarters in The Hague, Netherlands. European Union law enforcement agency Europol says police around the world have seized an online marketplace and arrested nearly 300 people allegedly involved in buying and selling drugs on the dark web. (AP)

300 held in global operation

Dark web drug marketplace taken down

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait Army announced Tuesday that the Kuwait Naval Force and the Coast Guard General Administration would conduct a shooting sea drill using live ammunition tomorrow, Wednesday, from 10:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m.

It said in a statement that the marine shooting exercise is at a distance of 16.5 nautical miles east of Ras Al-Julaia, stretching to Qaruh Island, and a distance of six nautical miles east of Ras Al-Zour, extending to Umm Al-Maradim Island. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Sabah received on Tuesday a phone call from Saudi counterpart Faisal Farahan Al-Saud and discussed the tightly-knit relations between the two nations.

The two also touched on the results of Amman consultative meeting held between Foreign Ministers of Jordan, Egypt, Iraq and Saudi on the Syrian matter, with the participation of Syrian top diplomat. (KUNA)

WASHINGTON: US Special Envoy for Yemen Tim Lenderking traveled to Oman and Saudi Arabia Monday to advance ongoing efforts to secure a new agreement and launch a comprehensive peace process, the Department of State announced.

On his tour, Lenderking will meet with Yemeni, Omani, Saudi and international partners "to discuss their coordinated efforts to further ongoing talks", the Department of State said in a statement. (KUNA)

THE HAGUE, May 2, (AP): Law enforcement agencies around the world seized an online marketplace and arrested nearly 300 people allegedly involved in buying and selling drugs, European Union law enforcement agency Europol said Tuesday.

The worldwide operation targeting the "Monopoly Market," coordinated by Europol, is the latest major takedown of sales platforms for drugs and other illicit goods on the so-called dark web, a part of the internet hosted within an encrypted network and accessible only through specialized anonymity-providing tools.

"Our coalition of law enforcement authorities across three continents proves that we all do better when we work together," Europol's Executive Director, Catherine De Bolle, said in a statement. "This operation sends a strong message to criminals on the dark web: International law enforcement has the means and the ability to identify and hold you accountable for your illegal activities, even on the dark web."

Europol said that 288 suspects were arrested and more than 50.8 mln euros (\$53.4 mln) in cash and virtual currencies, 850 kg of drugs, and 117 firearms were seized in a series of raids in several countries.



OPINION OTHER VOICES



In this handout image provided by the UK Ministry of Defence, on Thursday, April 27, 2023, British nationals board an RAF aircraft for evacuation of civilians to Larnaca International Airport in Cyprus, at Wadi Seidra military airport, 22 kilometres (14 miles) north of Khartoum, Sudan. The UK government assisted by the British Military has evacuated British citizens from Sudan. (AP)

Geopolitical implications near and far

Everyone wants a piece of Sudan

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

By Christopher Tounsel
University of Washington

The sight of diplomats fleeing Sudan amid chaotic scenes reflects the gravity of the situation, but also the extent of international interest in the strife-torn nation.

Days into fighting that has left hundreds dead, governments from across the Middle East, Europe, Asia and the Americas evacuated nationals - teachers, students and workers, as well as embassy staff - from the capital, Khartoum.

Of course, expat employees are to be found in all countries. But as a scholar of Sudanese history, it is difficult to ignore the fact that, in the words of one analyst, everyone wants "a chunk of Sudan." While a 2019 coup ended the brutal dictatorship of Omar al-Bashir, the years since have not given way to democracy. Rather, it has led to a period in which various overseas governments have sought to capitalize on the transition of power and Sudan's strategic importance and mineral wealth.

And while a descent into all-out civil war would be devastating for Sudan, it would also create ripples that would be felt throughout the geopolitical world.

The evacuation of foreign nations followed the eruption of violence between the Sudanese military, led by the country's leader, Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, led by Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, generally known by the name Hemedti.

The two men jointly ran the government but now find themselves deadlocked in a power struggle. On April 25, 2023, Saudi Arabia and the U.S. brokered a three-day ceasefire. Despite sporadic fighting, that ceasefire was later extended.

Efforts of international governments to broker peace may hint not only at a desire to halt the bloodshed, but also a desire to limit the fallout that the situation will have for world politics.

Sudan is located at a critical nexus, geographically. It borders Egypt and Libya in North Africa, Ethiopia and Eritrea in the Horn of Africa, the East African nation of South Sudan, and Central Africa's Chad and the Central African Republic.

Sudan is the site where the White and Blue Nile Rivers merge to form the main Nile and is home to more than 60% of the Nile River Basin. Safe management of the Nile's water is crucial for stability of the region. Northern neighbor Egypt is 90% dependent on the river for its water supply, while Ethiopia to the east is looking to double the country's electricity generation through the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

The project has been a source of contention, though - Ethiopia began filling the dam in 2020-2021 without an agreement with Egypt, and last year Egypt protested Ethiopia's planned third filling of the dam to the U.N. Security Council. The United Nations has called on the three nations to negotiate a "mutually beneficial" agreement over the Nile's management - something that will be difficult should Sudan fall into a prolonged period of instability.

Sudan also has a strategic location on the Red Sea, a body of water that approximately 10% of global trade passes through, with the Suez Canal connecting Asian and European markets.

And then there are Sudan's immense mineral resources. The nation is Africa's third-largest producer of gold, has major oil reserves and produces over 80% of the world's gum arabic - a component of food additives, paint and cosmetics.

As a result of this strategic and economic importance, Sudan has attracted willing international partners. Gulf oil states Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, for example, saw Bashir's ouster as a chance to stabilize the region and invest in everything from agricultural projects to Red Sea ports.

Sudan's leaders have seemingly been none too picky about who they partner with. While much of the international community shunned and sanctioned Russia after the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Sudan provided Moscow with an economic lifeline through its gold reserves.

'Killed for nothing'

US doctor slain in Sudan

Bound to Sudan by ailing parents and his devotion to treating the poor there, American doctor Bushra Ibrauf Sulieman kept working as long as he could after fighting engulfed Sudan's capital.

For days after battles between two rival Sudanese commanders erupted in Khartoum on April 15, the 49-year-old Sulieman treated the city's wounded. He and other doctors ventured out as explosions shook the walls of homes where Khartoum's people covered inside. Gunfire between the two factions battling for control resounded in the streets.

"Say, 'Nothing will happen to us except what God has decreed for us,'" Sulieman, a U.S.-born gastroenterologist who divided his time and work between Iowa City, Iowa, and Khartoum, said in one of his last messages to worried friends on Facebook last week, as fighting persisted. "And in God let the believers put their trust."

The morning that Sulieman decided he had to risk the dangerous escape from Sudan's capital with his parents, American wife and his two American children was the morning that the war found Sulieman, friends say.

In the wholesale looting that has accompanied fighting in the capital, Khartoum, a city of 5 million, a roving band of strangers surrounded him in his yard Tuesday, stabbing him to death in front of his family. Friends suspect robbery was the motive. He became one of two Americans confirmed killed in Sudan in the



This image provided by Dr. Mohamed Eisa shows Dr. Bushra Ibrauf Sulieman, a Sudan-born American citizen, (left), posing for a photo with Dr. Mohamed Eisa. Sulieman was the second American killed in Sudan after battles between two rival Sudanese commanders erupted in Khartoum and turned the capital city into a war zone. (AP)

fighting, both dual nationals.

Authorities say the other, with ties to Denver, was caught in a crossfire. They have not released that American's name.

Mohamed Eisa, a Sudanese doctor who practices in the Pittsburgh area, was a close colleague of Sulieman. Over the years, "some-

times I asked him, 'Bushra, what are you doing here? What are you doing in Sudan?'" Eisa recalled.

"He always says to me, 'Mohamed, listen - yes, I love living in the United States ... but the United States health care system is very strong,' and one doctor more or less won't make a difference.

Eisa said Sulieman would tell him: "In Sudan, everything I do has so much impact on so many lives, so many students and so many medical professionals."

The sudden illness and death of Eisa's father in Khartoum meant Eisa was in Sudan when fighting broke out. Now trying to get back to his American wife and children in the U.S., Eisa spoke late last week from Port Sudan, a city on the Red Sea now crowded with Sudanese and foreigners who made the dangerous 500-mile (800-kilometer) drive from the capital in hopes of securing spots on ships leaving Sudan.

Eisa described a journey through checkpoints manned by armed men, past bodies lying in the streets, and past vehicles carrying other families killed attempting the escape route.

After evacuating all U.S. diplomats and other U.S. government personnel April 22, the U.S. conducted its first evacuation of private American citizens Saturday. It used armed

Continued on Page 3

Russia's interest in Sudan's gold dates back to 2017, when after a meeting between Bashir and Russian President Vladimir Putin, the two countries established the Meroc Gold corporation - a subsidiary of the Wagner Group network of mercenaries.

Since the 2019 coup, Moscow has increasingly aligned itself with Hemedti, as the RSF leader sought to control more and more of the country's richest gold mines. In July 2022, Sudanese sources told CNN that at least 16 Russian gold smuggling flights had embarked from Sudan over the previous year and a half.

The Wagner Group's involvement in Sudanese gold extraction and its role in supplying fighters in Ukraine have prompted many observers to suggest that Sudanese gold is being used to finance Moscow's war.

In return, Russia has provided political and military assistance to Sudan's paramilitary leadership. According to U.S. officials, the Wagner Group has offered weaponry, including surface-to-air missiles, to the RSF. Hemedti is not alone in currying Russian support. Theodore Murphy, Africa director at the European Council of Foreign Relations, has suggested that the RSF leader's now-rival, Burhan, would also be open to working with Moscow.

China also has considerable interests in Sudan as part of its "Belt and Road" global infrastructure initiative. From 2011 to 2018, Beijing

granted Sudan an estimated US\$143 million in loans and has invested in projects such as the construction of Sudanese oil pipelines, Nile bridges, textile mills and railway lines.

Indeed, China was one of the main investors to Sudan during the rule of Bashir and one of the few countries to supply the regime with weapons.

China relies on Africa's mineral resources to meet its own expanding industrial needs. China-Sudan mining cooperation dates back to the 1970s, and over 20 Chinese enterprises have operated in Sudanese mining with a total investment of over \$100 million.

However, this relationship is not entirely one-way. Sudan exported \$780 million worth of products to China in 2021 and in the previous quarter-century increased its exports to China at an annual rate of 10.6%. Indeed, China is Sudan's second-largest trading partner after the UAE, and the African nation's biggest supplier of goods.

Although the U.S. revoked long-standing sanctions against Sudan in 2017, allowing for American companies to pursue business interests in Sudan, Washington is still playing catch-up with China.

The United States' strategic interest in the Sudanese crisis can be considered through the lens of its opposition to Russia's war in Ukraine and concern over regional contagion - that is, the spread of instability.

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editor's choice



Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:40 Asr 15:21
 Sunrise .. 05:06 Maghrib .. 18:25
 Zohr 11:45 Isha 19:46

Local

CIVIL ID STATUS INQUIRY: <https://e.gov.kw/sites/kgoenlsh/Pages/eServices/PACI/CivilIDStatus.aspx>

Weather

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

By Day: Rather hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind with speeds ranging from 12-42 km/h with a chance for rising dust over open areas.

By Night: Mild with light to moderate freshening over coastal areas northwesterly wind with speeds of 12-40 km/h.

Station **Max Exp** **Min Rec**
 Kuwait City 36 23

Kuwait Airport	36	23
Abdaly	36	19
Jahra	37	23
Salmiyah	33	24
Ahmadi	33	25
Nuwaisib	36	23
Wafra	37	21

Everyone wants

Continued from Page 2

Sudan's potential to prop up Moscow's war effort would make Western leaders wary of the RSF gaining an upper hand in the current fighting; the paramilitary group could reward Russia's friendship with Sudanese gold. But with an apparent willingness of both sides of the current fighting to exploit the country's gold mines in return for Moscow's military assistance, a better outcome for the West - and indeed the Sudanese people - would be a transition away from military rule altogether.

Of perhaps more concern to Washington is the impact of an unstable Sudan on the region. In recent years, the U.S. has benefited from a warming relationship with Sudan's leaders, especially through counterterrorism cooperation. The Biden administration will surely be fearful of Sudan's instability providing the kind of conditions in which terrorist groups, such as al-Shabaab, may thrive, or that the situation could trigger a refugee crisis on Sudan's borders, especially in Ethiopia and South Sudan - countries that are already struggling to keep fragile peace deals in place.

While the people of Sudan have the most to lose should the current fighting descend into civil war, the geopolitical significance of the country means millions in the surrounding regions - and indeed around the world - also stand to be impacted. (AP)

US doctor

Continued from Page 2

drones to escort buses carrying between 200 and 300 U.S. citizens, permanent residents and others to Port Sudan.

Sudanese in their country and in the U.S. spoke of Sulieman's killing as a special loss.

He was a well-respected colleague at the Gastroenterology Clinic and Mercy Hospital in Iowa City, hospital president Tom Clancy said. Sulieman's older children live in Iowa.

He traveled back to Sudan several times a year with medical supplies he had collected for that country, colleagues said.

A nurse at the Iowa City clinic who declined to be identified because the nurse was not authorized to speak called him one of the best. "His love for his patients was over the top," the nurse said. Colleagues considered him a powerhouse doctor and humanitarian, an upbeat man with an infectious laugh who populated his texts with smiley faces and cats wearing sunglasses.

In Sudan, Sulieman directed the medical faculty at the University of Khartoum and was a founder and director of a doctors' humanitarian group, the Sudanese American Medical Association.

He would help organize and drive medicine and supplies to Sudan's countryside, arrange rural training for midwives and help bring in cardiologists to perform surgeries for free.

His efforts continued after two Sudanese commanders who earlier had joined forces to derail Sudan's moves toward democracy suddenly launched an all-out battle for power.

Two weeks of fighting have killed more than 500 people, according to the Sudanese Health Ministry. Doctors say fighters have abducted at least five physicians, taking them away to treat combatants.

Sulieman was one of many doctors who kept showing up at hospitals, regardless, said Dr. Yasir Elamin, a Sudanese-American doctor in Houston.

Sulieman and other doctors in Khartoum treated the wounded, delivered babies and provided other urgent care until it became too dangerous for him to leave his home.

Concern about taking his father away from needed dialysis had kept Sulieman from leaving Khartoum, colleagues said.

On Tuesday, he decided he would take his father for dialysis, then try to flee Khartoum with his family, he told friends.

The band of men surrounded him before he could leave. They plunged a knife into his chest. Fellow doctors at Khartoum's Soba Hospital, where he had worked, were unable to save him.

In Washington, National Security Council spokesman John Kirby extended "deepest sympathies" to Sulieman's family.

"For nothing. For nothing," Eisa, his colleague in Sudan, said of Sulieman's killing, before finally finding passage over the weekend on a ship out of Sudan.

"You know who you killed?" another Sudanese colleague, Hisham Omar, posted among Facebook tributes from the country's medical workers, in a message aimed at the attackers who killed Sulieman.

"You killed thousands of patients," that colleague wrote, speaking of the impact that Sulieman - one doctor - knew he had in Sudan, and all the Sudanese he would have aided in the years ahead. "You killed thousands of needy people. You killed thousands of his students." (AP)



The dead fish and other items litter the beach.

Photo by Samer Shaqir

Dead fish found from Al-Salaam to Al-Doha beach

Various kinds of fish were found dead on the Al-Salaam beach extending to Al-Doha beach. All kinds of polluting items, including tin cans, fish nets, plastic bottles and bags were also found

washed on the seashore. No proper reason was given by the authorities upon questioning. Meanwhile, investigation is underway to find the actual cause of the huge number of dead fish.

Ghanim, Sa'adoun plan to contest new election

Ex-MPs to run; 'no tents'



KUNA photo

Poster of the donation campaign for the Sudanese people relief.

KRCS launches Sudan campaign

Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced on Tuesday, a donation campaign to provide relief to Sudanese people suffering from the difficult conditions the country was going through.

KRCS Board of Directors Chairman Dr. Hilal Al-Sayer stated to KUNA, that (Save Sudan) campaign came in solidarity with the difficult conditions in Sudan, stressing that their volunteering

cadre were working hard on the success of this campaign.

KRCS also called on everyone to donate through their website or direct donations at their headquarters via K-Net. Al-Sayer expressed his appreciation to everyone sending relief and medical aid to Sudan, noting that Kuwait is always proactive in providing assistance to those affected by natural or man-made disasters. (KUNA)

Bid to educate graduates

Huge turnout as KU holds 9th annual admission fair

KUWAIT CITY, May 2, (KUNA): Kuwait University, represented by the Deanship of Admission and Registration, organized today, Tuesday, the ninth annual admission fair, entitled 'Your Choice Builds a Nation' in cooperation with the General Secretariat, Faculties, the Department of Public Relations and Media at the University and the National Union of Students, at the Cultural Center in Sabah Al-Salem.

The exhibition, which will last until May 4, aims to educate high school graduates from public and private schools in all educational regions about the importance of choosing their educational future in line with their aspirations.

In this regard, the Acting Director of Kuwait University, Dr. Fahd Al-Rashidi, confirmed in a statement to reporters the university's keenness to hold this exhibition in cooperation with all educational institutions in the State of Kuwait.

The exhibition witnessed the participation of 11 institutions of higher education in the private sector and government institutions of

higher education such as Kuwait University and Abdullah Al-Salem Governmental University for the first time, in addition to four institutions supporting science and youth, namely the Office of Social Development, the Public Authority for Anti-Corruption, LOYAC and the Civil Service Bureau.

The various institutions of higher education in the private sector were involved in terms of activating partnership and social responsibility and the role of higher education institutions to organize joint cooperation, support and stimulate the educational sector in its various institutions.

Al-Rashidi added that the exhibition comes to meet the needs of high school students and provide an opportunity to get acquainted with all higher education institutions in the private or government sectors, such as Abdullah Al-Salem University, the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training and Kuwait University.

In her turn, Acting Dean of Admissions and Registration, Dr. Rawaa Al-Jarallah, said in a similar statement that the exhibition came to provide all options for twelfth students from public and private universities, internal and external missions, as well as the National Guard, the Ministry of Interior, the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, and Abdullah Al-Salem University.

Other Voices

Talal, collapse of US economy

By Ahmad alsarraf

Most Americans agree that their economy is not sound, and some had previously placed their hopes in the former president Donald Trump, to restore America's glory, and this is what President Joe Biden tried to do, as his administration spent two trillion dollars to revive the economy, but that led to increased anxiety of Americans, with the national debt reaching a terrifying 32 trillion dollars.

And it shows no signs of receding but continues to rise, as the government prints and spends more money than it receives in terms of taxes and revenues.

Also, the tax policy is complex, and includes several exemptions that reduce its effectiveness, in addition to the cost of fighting recession and financing wars. Borrowing costs for companies and individuals.

Experts believe that a certain level of national debt is necessary to finance important government programs and investments.

Others believe that there is concern about the long-term sustainability of the US national debt, and its continued escalation, and this may eventually lead to a financial crisis or a loss of confidence in the US economy, with the inability of successive administrations to address the deficit, increase taxes, and reform entitlement programs, but there is always political opposition.

It is difficult to predict how long the United States can sustain a high level of national debt. With all this, we see that the majority of major economies and investors are still willing to continue buying US government bonds, as long as the economy continues to grow, and the government is able to service debt payments.



alsarraf

And the fact that the US economy is the largest in the world, the world views it as a safe haven for investors looking for a reliable place to deposit their money, especially since the US administration has the ability to print its own currency, and this gives it a degree of flexibility in debt management.

However, this can also lead to inflation and other economic challenges if not managed carefully.

In conclusion, all this concern about the US economy, expressed by novices and experts alike, including commentators and auditors, such as Talal Abu-Ghazaleh and others, hides in fact, an amazing, semi-permanent, yet underappreciated success story.

The US economy is still the largest, richest, most productive, and most important of the most innovative in the world, by an impressive number of measures, its competitors are panting far behind it, and the best evidence of its wonderful role during the Corona pandemic, and what may affect the world from future epidemics, as America is the only one that will be at the forefront, capable of disbursing billions, without hesitation or financial difficulty.

In Western proverbs it is said that size matters. America is fortunate to have a large consumer market that can easily absorb research and development costs.

It is also a deep "capital" market, through which any financing necessary for any project can be collected.

Perhaps China in the future, and perhaps India, will be able to boast one day of the purchasing power of its societies, which gives it an advantage that the rest of the major economies lack.

All those who warn of the collapse of the dollar and the impotence of the US economy, like Talal and others, and keep most of their money, if not all, in dollars, are similar to those who demonstrate at night in front of the US embassy and burn American flags, and line up in front of it in the morning in front of their embassy looking for migration.

□ □ □
 e-mail: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

Draft bill for car shades rejected

KUWAIT CITY, May 2, (KUNA): The Municipal Council, in its main session Monday, headed by Abdullah Al-Mahri, rejected a draft regulation for car shades because it contained the imposition of financial fees on private housing estimated at 500 fils per square meter.

During the session, the members affirmed their refusal to approve that draft because Article 7 of it contains the imposition of financial fees on citizens, as the Council previously used Article 25 to reject the minister, and it was sent to the Council of Ministers to decide on it.

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A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'PM moving to put country back on right track'

"I ANNOUNCE to you that things are good, the boat has begun to move, and matters at the level of the government structure have begun to unravel," columnist **Ghonaim Al-Zuabi** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"The decrees on the appointment and confirmation of leadership positions in the ministries have started to turn. Within a short period, the ministries will have an undersecretary and assistant undersecretaries, God willing. This is in addition to filling up major military positions in the Army.



Al-Zuabi

"With this, all the arms of the government are complete and ready to launch and perform their work after the stalemate, during which most of the positions were mandated and deputized.

"His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah is moving in a calm and sober manner, drawing on all experiences towards putting the country back to the right track, and for the renaissance workshop to resume.

"The first decision that gives us an indication of the next stage is direct contracting with international companies to perform service tasks in the country. An example of this is the meeting of the public works minister with the embassies of a number of superpowers, including South Korea and Japan, asking them to nominate several major companies from their countries to carry out asphaltting and

maintenance of Kuwait's roads. "The importance of fortifying the dissolution decree lay in the necessity of ensuring the stability of political life, not subjecting it to new shocks. God willing, this will happen."

Also:

"Undoubtedly, the State bears the biggest responsibility in the housing issue, which always make the sincere people in this country raise their voices due to the need for a radical solution," columnist **Dr Essa Al-Omairi** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"According to published reports and statistics over the past decades – and we even say from the reality of the citizens' situation, we find a clear imbalance in this issue. The housing issue has been rich in chaos and indifference on the part of all concerned parties in the past periods. They have had no achievements in this regard, apart from modest projects here or there – very short segments are covered.

"Definitely, the only one affected by the continuation of this issue is the Kuwaiti citizen who has been waiting for years and decades to obtain a house, which often does not conform to the modern vision and social life that changes every day. It does not keep up with the requirements due to the long waiting period that reaches more than 20 years.

"Today, more than ever, the State must take action. It should come up with housing solutions based on actual, transparent and serious studies. This issue has always troubled the miserable Kuwaiti citizen due to what he has been facing in his social life.

"A package of government decisions has become an urgent necessity in order to reduce

the waiting period for obtaining a house. The most important step is that the solutions should not become burdens for the State. Solutions should not entail additional costs for the State and its budget. Before, we always heard about proposals that do not cost the State. Remember the budget and solve the housing issue."



"Wars and fires will keep raging in the region as long as the prevailing ideology of countries and peoples herein is extremist that rejects peace under the pretext of adherence to the teachings of Islam, as interpreted by the sheikhs of bloodshed. It also rejects understanding between the people of the same country and between countries and their neighbors," columnist **Sami Al-Nisf** wrote for **Annahar** daily.

"Observers note that the common denominator among the burning Arab countries is the presence of ideological religious movements with various names – starting with Somalia and ending in Sudan, passing through Iraq, Syria, Libya, Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen... and the next is even greater!

"Therefore, the only solution to all the problems of these countries and peoples is utter rejection of destructive ideological movements, parties and militias.

"Throughout the centuries of wars, European countries paid a heavy price for religious, ethnic and ideological wars until they reached a final solution to their problems, which stopped their wars and made them jump to the forefront of countries around the world."

— Compiled by **Ahmed Al-Shazli**



Top and above: some photos from the 5th Foreign Office Consultations.

India & Kuwait hold 5th round of Foreign Office Consultations

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: India and Kuwait held the Fifth round of Foreign Office Consultations today in New Delhi.

Both sides reviewed various aspects of bilateral relations comprehensively and agreed to further strengthen and diversify these ties.

The Indian delegation was led by Shri

Vipul, Joint Secretary (Gulf), Ministry of External Affairs. HE Ambassador Sameeh Essa Johar Hayat, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asia Affairs of Kuwait (AFM), headed the Kuwaiti delegation.

Ambassadors from both countries as well as officials from other ministries also participated in the FOC.

CSC starts receiving list of manpower needs

PACI adds population and labor force indicators on its website

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) has announced the inclusion of the population and labor force indicators on its statistical services website, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

In a press statement, the authority revealed that one of the indicators show the population growth rates in

various years; while the other shows the number of non-Kuwaitis over the years, with the possibility of finding the number per nationality. The authority also updated the statistical data on the website as at Dec 31, 2022.



Manpower needs: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) started re-

ceiving the list of manpower needs from public institutions after canceling circular number 5 of 2023 issued on April 13 to suspend such procedure, reports **Al-Rai** daily quoting sources.

Sources revealed the CSC had earlier rejected more than 500 manpower requests due to the suspension.

Sources clarified the ministries of Education, Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy; as well as the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, are not covered by the decision due to the large number of existing staff. Sources added the CSC advised applicants to check later if there are vacancies in these institutions.

65 violators of labor, residency laws held

Customs seizes 6 tons of tobacco

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: The Tripartite Committee, in two separate incidents has arrested 65 residence and labor law violators, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

The Public Relations and Security Media Department of the Ministry of Interior stated that within the framework of the continued security campaigns organized by the General Department of Residence Affairs Investigation comprising members from three government institutions 16 violators were arrested from Ardiya Industrial Area.

The sources added, "43 violators of different nationalities were caught in Ishbiliya and Abdullah Mubarak regions including 10 picked up from fake service offices and from Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh 6 violators of the residence and labor laws.

They have been handed over to the competent authorities to take legal measures against them.



Tobacco seized: The Shuwaikh port customs authorities under the supervision of Saleh Musleh Al-Harbi, Director of the Northern Ports Customs Department and the Southern Ports Customs Director on assignment foiled an attempt to smuggle six tons of tobacco into the country, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

The smuggled quantity was discovered after it arrived at the Shuwaikh port and after thorough inspection the contraband (20 packets) were found neatly stashed in the ceiling



Al-Rai photo
The seized packets of tobacco.

weighing approximately 5850 kilograms. For his part, Director General of the General Administration of Customs Suleiman Abdulaziz Al-Fahd thanked the workers at Shuwaikh Port for their efforts and vigilance.



Basements shut: Public Relations and Media Department of the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD) 11 said the fire prevention sector department has closed 11 basements in residential building in the Hawalli Governorate that were being used to store goods, in violation of safety and fire prevention requirements, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

These measures come in accordance with the prevention sector plan to apply preventive requirements to facilities, as successive campaigns have been organized by the prevention sector in the DGFD to enhance the application of these requirements that protect lives and facilities from the dangers of fire.

Sheikh Ahmad

Continued from Page 1

Also, if King Salman bin Abdulaziz had waited for the law and had not issued directives to Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to start a campaign against corruption, the Saudi budget would still suffer from a large deficit to this day.

However, the decision was made that the Ritz Hotel would be the residence of the corrupt who have been looting for nearly thirty years to a point of being able to control ten percent of the state budget. They spread corruption in institutions. When they were held accountable, the state's finances returned to abundance.

Your Highness Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf, reform is not possible in light of nepotism, favoritism and the absence of accountability. It is pointless waiting for the law in which there are loopholes that make the looters of public money escape punishment or flee abroad to enjoy the looted public money.

Hence, remember the saying of Khosrau's messenger to Omar ibn al-Khattab (May Allah be pleased with him) and look at those who suffer in prisons as a result of a simple loan that has trapped them in the nets of users and the deep state.

Also remember the words of Allah the Almighty - "Indeed, Allah commands you to return that which had been entrusted to you to the rightful owners. Be just when passing judgment among people. Allah's advice is the most noble. He sees and hears everything."

This is because justice is the core of dominion.

Partnership ironclad

Continued from Page 1

"We are facing new challenges and I couldn't think of a better partner to have than you." Biden told Marcos at the start of their Oval Office meeting. "The United States also

remains ironclad in our commitment to the defense of the Philippines, including in the South China Sea, and we will continue to support the Philippines military modernization."

Marcos said the relationship was essential as Philippines and the Pacific finds itself in "possibly the most complicated geopolitical situation in the world right now."

Monday's Oval Office meeting is the latest high-level diplomacy with Pacific leaders by Biden as his administration contends with increased military and economic assertiveness by China and worries about North Korea's nuclear program. Marcos' official visit to Washington is the first by a Philippine president in more than 10 years.

The U.S. president last week hosted South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol for a state visit during which the two leaders introduced new steps aimed at deterring North Korea from launching an attack on its neighbors. Biden is scheduled to travel to Japan and Australia in May.

The two sides are expected to discuss the security situation and come out with new economic, education, climate and other initiatives as part of Marcos' four-day visit to Washington, according to two senior Biden administration officials.

The officials, who briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity to preview the leaders' meeting, said the White House will use the visit to announce the transfer of three C-130 aircraft and coastal patrol vessels to the Philippines, a new U.S. trade mission focused on increasing American investment in the Philippines' innovation economy, new educational programming and more.

Increased Chinese harassment of vessels in the South China Sea has added another dimension to the visit. On April 23, journalists from The Associated Press and other outlets were aboard the Philippine coast guard's BRP Malapascua near Second Thomas Shoal when a Chinese coast guard ship blocked the Philippine patrol vessel steaming into the disputed shoal. The Philippines has filed more than 200 diplomatic protests against China since last year, at least 77 since Marcos took office in June.



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LOCAL

TGS presents Batoul Al Sayegh

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: This Thursday, The Guest Show (TGS) on Radio Kuwait presents the ever smiling and down to earth Batoul Al Sayegh, President of Kuwait Textile ARTS Association (KTAA).

As a journalist, I have been closely associated with KTAA, a non-profit organization made up of textile artists from around the world. No where else have I seen this kind of talent, commitment and sisterhood formed by art.

Every year, KTAA holds its annual exhibition and this year's is no exception. On May 3 & 4, members of public can visit the Al Funoon Hall at Dahiya Abdullah Salem to see some exquisite works of art from 9 am to 1 pm and 4 pm to 9 pm.

In this episode of TGS, Chaitali B Roy speaks to Batoul Al Sayegh about her journey with textiles and the KTAA.



The Guest Show poster

'Building code' on agenda

Authority tackles issues of 'disabled'

KUWAIT CITY, May 2, (KUNA): The Public Authority for Persons with Disabilities held on Monday its first monthly symposium on discussing issues of the disabled, in cooperation with the competent authorities.

The symposium, which came under the title 'Facilitating Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities', was held in cooperation with the Kuwaiti Association for Parents of the Disabled, and in the presence of representatives of official bodies and a number of those interested in related issues, at the Marafi House in Dasma.

Director General of the Authority, Dr. Bibi Al-Amiri, told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that these seminars are a study to identify the shortcomings in the service provided to people with disabilities to ease of access and work to solve them.

Al-Amiri stressed that the success of the first meeting is possible with all the competent authorities, listening to the most important aspects, and discussing how to find ways to unite with the aim of harnessing the energies and capabilities to serve the cause of the disabled, which is a societal responsibility that requires cooperation.

Symposium

For her part, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwaiti Association for Parents of the Disabled, Rehab Bouresli, confirmed in a similar statement to KUNA that today's symposium aimed to find radical solutions to the issues of the disabled and ways to overcome the difficulties facing them.

Bouresli added that the symposium witnessed a discussion of the 'building code' that was approved by the Authority and discussed ways to implement it with the competent state authorities in order to join efforts to achieve a decent life for people with disabilities.

She pointed to the association's endeavor, in cooperation with official authorities, public benefit associations, and families of persons with disabilities, to hold future seminars to solve other outstanding problems, including digital, electronic, and others, that stand in the way of their achievement.

For his part, member of the Municipal Council, Eng. Hassan Kamal, told KUNA that the Council is currently amending the building regulations to oblige the concerned authorities to implement them to meet the needs of people with disabilities in society.

Kamal added that the work on this file aims to integrate the group with their healthy peers and enjoy public services and what the state provides for them, indicating that the 'building code' aims to provide requirements that must be implemented in government buildings and facilities in coordination with the competent authorities.

He stated that the 'building code' means that the engineering and technical requirements for the design and implementation of any building and facility should suit the life of people with disabilities, explaining that it is suitable for every case with varying disabilities.

For her part, a member of the Municipal Council, Farah Al-Roumi, confirmed to KUNA that participation in the symposium aims to design a supportive and qualified engineering environment for people with various disabilities, in cooperation with the relevant authorities.

Al-Roumi said that the Council's role is to approve regulations, including those related to the 'building code' for people with disabilities in order to facilitate their lives in society, noting the need to listen to the opinions and suggestions of people with disabilities and cooperate with various parties.

'Airport will witness entry of new airlines'

6 mn people expected to crisscross Kuwait Airport in summer – Al-Rajhi

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Abdullah Al-Rajhi, Director of the Air Transport Department at the Directorate-General of Civil Aviation, expects the number of passengers to and from Kuwait International Airport during the next summer season to reach about 6 million -- 3.1 million departures and 2.9 million arrivals, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Al-Rajhi told the daily the expected numbers of passenger traffic include from this May to next September, noting that the most prominent new destinations for the summer season are Mykonos, Athens, Budapest, Al-Jouf, Moscow, Larnaca, Belgrade, Tirana, Dushanbe, Aleppo and Taif.

Al-Rajhi, affirmed the readiness of the DGCA to deal with the movement of passengers to and from Kuwait International Airport during this period, pointing to the granting of approvals for airlines to operate in the season according to the volume of movement and its flow in the passenger terminals T1, T2 and T3 as all the authorities operating at the airport are prepared for the travel and pilgrimage season.

Plans

He said the most prominent plans for the summer flight schedule will focus on not exceeding the seat capacities of the three terminals, to ensure smooth movement and the opening of new airports.

Regarding the expansion of the operational network of Kuwait Airport and linking it to the largest number of airports in the world, he said: This will be done by operating new sectors for Kuwait Airways, such as Mykonos, Athens, Budapest and Taif, and operating "Jazeera Airways" for the Al-Jaof, Moscow, Larnaca, Belgrade, Tirana and Dushanbe sectors, in addition to the signing of "Kuwait Airways" Codeshare agreement with international airlines, which contributes to the diversification and expansion of the operational network.

He went on to say the airport will witness the entry of new airlines to the market, in addition to the 53 companies currently operating from Kuwait.

Regarding the "civil aviation" controls to stop fraud in selling tickets through applications and websites, he said: "There are circulars in this regard, and we periodically disclose these procedures, and travelers must verify the sites authorized by

Systra tasked with studying railway link between Saudi Arabia & Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: The Saudi Railways Company and the Saudi General Transportation Authority disclosed that they have appointed the French company, Systra to conduct the feasibility study for a high-speed railway link between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, reports Al-Qabas daily.

According to the MEED magazine this appointment comes after a series of other initiatives aimed at linking Saudi Arabia with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, as part of the Gulf railway network.

Last July, Systra was selected to conduct a feasibility study on the proposed high-speed railway linking Riyadh to Doha. The line between Riyadh and Doha could be about 550 kilometers long and could use maglev technology.

MEED reported that plans for the Gulf railway network are progressing in Kuwait, after the Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport floated a public tender for the study and detailed design work for the first phase of the planned railway network in the country, and set the deadline for submission of tender documents May 30.

The value of the tender for the first phase of the project is one million dinars (\$3.25 million).

The proposed single-track line will be used by both passenger and freight trains. It extends over a distance of 111 kilometers from the southern border of Kuwait with Saudi Arabia (Nuwaiseeb point) to the urban area of Shaddadiyah.

The scope of consultancy services is divided into three phases, and includes study, critical review and updating of conceptual designs for the Kuwait Railway Pro-

ject, and completion of detailed engineering design, studies and technical documents required for bid submission.

This includes the passenger terminal and cargo yard, as well as the border facility with Saudi Arabia.

It also includes all documents required for the purchase of rolling stock, providing estimates of construction cost, operating and maintenance costs, industry readiness and technical risks.

Kuwait is the northern terminus of the GCC railways, and its 111 km section represents approximately five percent of the total GCC network.

In 2008, the Gulf States, through the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council, conducted a feasibility study for Gulf Railways to develop a railway network across the Gulf States.

But planned railway projects were halted in Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates due to the global financial crisis of 2009, the Arab uprisings of 2011, and the collapse of oil prices in 2014.

Rail plans in the Gulf states have been derailed by factors including a lack of common standards, low oil prices, and a failure to create attractive public-private business partnership models.

The most important stumbling block was the lack of political will. Even before the Gulf crisis, the cooperation required to deliver a large multinational project was missing.

The Al-Ula declaration, signed in January 2021 by all six GCC countries and Egypt, put the GCC railway project back on track.

without a license is imprisonment for no more than three months and a fine not exceeding 500 dinars, or one of the two penalties.

Al-Rajhi reaffirmed that the capacity of the airport buildings will return to what it was before the Corona pandemic, and added in 2019, the number of passengers reached 15.5 million. As for 2022, their number reached 11.2 million, which indicates that the increase in numbers will return to its usual pre-pandemic situation.

He stressed that the penalty for selling or marketing travel tickets

KSE sees noticeable decline in level of liquidity in circulation, drops by 32 pct

Volume of trades slips by 50%

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: In light of a number of external and local indicators and influences, the Kuwait Stock Exchange also known as Boursa Kuwait witnessed a noticeable decline in the level of liquidity in circulation, dropping by 32% to 41.4 million dinars since the beginning of this year, compared to 61.7 million last year, which is the lowest average liquidity during the last four years, during the many crises, on top of which was the Corona crisis, reports Al-Qabas daily.

This sharp decline in the average daily traded liquidity was accompanied by a 50% decrease in terms of the volume of trades, which fell from 264 million shares last year to 134 million since the beginning of 2023, while the number of deals decreased by 30% from 12.4 to 8.6 thousand deals.

Statistics

The statistics and numbers show a state of weak trading in the market and the leading stocks, most of which have abandoned price peaks downwards, despite achieving good growth rates in profits in 2022 and the first quarter of 2023, as well as the approval of generous distributions by their general assemblies. The following are the reasons for this decline:

Successive global crises -- the successive crises caused a state of uncertainty in the markets, the latest of which was the successive collapse of the third US bank in two months (First Republic Bank), and renewed fears that a credit crisis is taking shape, and the crisis facing central banks, which occurred between inflation bonds and fears of falling in the clutches of recession, which makes its continuation of increasing interest rates dangerous and not increasing them more dangerous, and therefore the Kuwaiti Central Bank and the Kuwait Stock Exchange are not isolated from the repercussions of those crushing economic conditions.

An increase in interest rates -- in light of concerns about the repercussions of increasing the discount rate by the Central Bank of Kuwait to the level of 4%, compared to 1.5% at the beginning of the Corona crisis, the credit growth rate was subjected to a significant decline with the end of the era of cheap loans, and the wheel of zero loans stopped, as the credit growth rate declined to 0.5% in the first two months of 2023, compared to 1.1% in the same period last year.

In light of the fears and uncertainty, large and small investors resorted to hedging, and searched for guaranteed investment channels until the picture became clearer, which was provided by bank deposits, especially in Ku-



KUNA photo

Trading in progress at Boursa Kuwait

wait, where interest is high and deposits are guaranteed by the government.

Absence of other tools and non-activation -- despite the success of Boursa Kuwait, in cooperation with the Capital Markets Authority, in approving many investment products and tools, including income-generating real estate funds, priority rights, selling on the market maker, shorting (lending and borrowing shares), swap deals, and transfer of ownership, in addition to agreed upon deals, investment funds, margins, and netting service, the market still lacks more tools, while many tools remained inactive or are used on a limited scale by investment companies, either for reasons belonging to investment companies.

Investment

The investment itself or for regulatory reasons makes the use of these tools by companies not economically feasible, which requires more efforts to make these tools more feasible.

Withdrawing and delisting companies -- over the past years, the Kuwait Stock Exchange witnessed the withdrawal of companies and the delisting and cancellation of many companies, the number of which exceeded 60, and while the decision to withdraw is purely for its owners and shareholders, the search for the reasons for withdrawal and an attempt to avoid them is a duty.

Its repercussions may be great for the holders of those shares and the market itself, especially since these shares have long been described as popular and cheap, which will fall on small traders and speculators.

Double qualitative new listings -- despite the strenuous efforts made by Boursa Kuwait to attract family and oil companies to be listed on the stock exchange, which entails huge gains for the national economy, market and citizens,

these efforts still collide with government stagnation on the one hand, and the political environment on the other hand, while more listings remain.

Family businesses depend on providing the appropriate regulatory environment in the market, the local economic conditions, and the price value of the shares, which guarantees a fair evaluation of them on the other hand.

Ownership of government institutions -- the ownership of institutions and government agencies on the Kuwait Stock Exchange has doubled during the last 5 years, to reach 6.75 billion dinars by the end of 2022, in conjunction with the significant rises in the prices of shares listed on the stock exchange, but in light of the crises and the state of uncertainty experienced by economies and global markets, it has become more beneficial for these institutions increasing its investments in Boursa Kuwait in selected stocks with guaranteed returns.

Investment environment -- with the opening of investment prospects in the stock exchange for foreign investors to own Kuwaiti stocks, including banks, and the inclusion of the market in global indices, the ownership of foreigners in banks increased to about 5.4 billion dinars, but this does not negate that the political and economic atmosphere in Kuwait is no longer very attractive to the local investor before foreign.

Traders are conservative -- in light of the murky atmosphere of the markets, the institutional investor is often reserved and the small ones refrain from taking risks, including investing in stocks, which appears in the form of a decline in 16,000 active accounts on the Kuwait Stock Exchange, compared to about 401,000 passive accounts.

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Library staff and French Embassy representatives



Campus France booth

Event showcases library resources, services and technologies

AUK library organizes Open House in collaboration with French Embassy

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: The library at the American University of Kuwait (AUK) organized an Open House for members of the campus community. The event showcased library resources, services, and technologies to students and faculty. Part of the Open House activities included hosting Campus France in collaboration with the French Embassy in Kuwait to join the international celebration of the Francophonie month.

AUK instructor of French language, Ms. Loyal Jaber participated in the exhibitions along with several students who were enrolled in French courses. Visitors had the chance to learn more about the French language, culture, and about studying in France.

Also in the Open House were academic resource vendors and publishers such as Naseej and Virtus who provided



Sigma Tau Delta students.

live demos on certain resources and showcase the latest in terms of research databases and products. Students from

the AUK chapter of the International English Honor Society—Sigma Tau Delta were also present to talk to stu-



General photo from the event.

dents and test their knowledge on various literature. The event also showcased a social

robot named Furhat, which had human-like expressions and advanced conversational artificial intelligence

(AI) capabilities. Students interacted with the robot and asked general and specific questions to experience a new form of communication with AI.

Attendees participated in educational games and activities developed by librarians and learned about academic resources, information literacy and research skills that they can apply to their research.

The American University of Kuwait (AUK) is an independent, private, equal opportunity, and co-educational liberal arts institution of higher education. The educational, cultural and administrative structure, methods and standards of AUK are based on the American model of higher learning. The language of instruction is English. More information on the American University of Kuwait can be found at www.auk.edu.kw



Dean of the College, Dr. Ali Al-Hajraf (center) honors Ahmed Qartal (right).



College of Nursing students pose with their awards.



Ahmed Qartal



Hussein Al-Sharnoubi (right), Ahmed Qartal (left) and Haitham Tariq.



Dean of the College, Dr. Ali Al-Hajraf (right) seated in the audience

Faculty of Nursing at the Applied College celebrates its outstanding students

The College of Nursing celebrated a group of outstanding students from the Bachelor and Diploma programs in Nursing, by honoring them in the presence of the Dean of the College, Dr. Ali Al-Hajraf and his assistant for academic affairs Alaa al-Khalifa and his assistant for student affairs Mahdi Hussein.

At the beginning of the ceremony, Dr. Al-Hajraf delivered a speech in which he welcomed the honorable attendees, expressing his happiness and pride in the excellence of his sons, male and female students, and their obtaining a degree. He expressed his hope that they will continue at this level throughout

their academic career in college, which will undoubtedly reflect on their performance in the labor market, which will contribute to strengthening the nursing profession and raising its level. He thanked everyone who worked to organize this ceremony.



A photo from the event.

Leadership enhancement program

Saradhi Kuwait organizes 'leaders meet'

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Saradhi Kuwait held "Leaders Meet", the leadership enhancement program on April 28, with its elected members for the year 2023-24. The program was inaugurated by the President, Sri K. R. Aji, and was led by Saradhi's Educational Wing SCFE (Educational and Charitable Trust of Saradhi Kuwait) along with central office bearers. During the day-long event, newly elected Central Vanitha Vedhi members and unit management committee members took the oath. Various subjects were discussed, including the glorious past of Saradhi

Kuwait, emphasizing the importance of being a proud Saradheeyan, Account operating procedures, social media usage, team building, and Vision 2030 discussions from unit officials. Discussions at the Saradhi Kuwait leaders meet were elaborate and covered a range of important topics related to the organization's past, present, and future. Veteran Leaders Suresh K, Rajesh Sagar, Vinish Viswambharan, Jayakumar NS and Sajeev Narayanan were involved in conducting the leaders meet. Their contributions were valuable and informative. A very inter-

active speaker who has written in many international journals, Mr. Roopesh Ravi delivered a good motivational session for participants. Trust Secretary Githindas coordinated the entire event with the support of Binu M K, Murugadas, Biju Gangadharan, Rinu Gopi, Arun Sathyan, Biju MP, Aji Kuttapan, Manu Mohanan, Suresh Babu, Saneesh Sreedharan, Sanesh Sivan, Aneesh Madhavan, Shibu Sukumaran, Kamal Krishna, Preethi Prasanth, Shyini Renjith, Nayana Aneesh, Anila Sudhin, Mini Sujith, Shani Ajith, Asha Anil, Suneesh Vand Prasanth K.

BP posts \$5 bln quarterly profit on strong oil, gas trading

British energy giant BP posted a strong quarterly profit on Tuesday even as oil and natural gas prices soared after Russia's war in Ukraine last year have eased off.

London-based BP said it earned \$5 billion in underlying replacement cost profit in the first three months of the year, up from \$4.8 billion in the previous quarter. The figure excludes one-time items and fluctuations

in the value of inventories.

The company said the earnings report "reflects an exceptional gas marketing and trading result" and a "very strong oil trading result."

"This has been a quarter of strong performance and strategic delivery," CEO Bernard Looney said in a statement.

Oil companies around the world have been reporting bumper earnings in the wake of

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, which sent energy prices soaring and curtailed some of Moscow's supplies to the world.

The fat profits and resulting hefty pay for energy company bosses have spurred demands that the companies do more to protect consumers squeezed by surging energy bills that have sent inflation skyrocketing. (AP)

DP World appoints VP of Engineering

A leading provider of worldwide smart end-to-end supply chain logistics, DP World has onboarded Ex-Amazon Techie, Sangam Reddy as the Vice President of Engineering; Purple Quarter closed the leadership mandate.

Pradeep Desai, CTO, DP World, commented, "We are delighted to welcome Sangam to the team. As Global VP of Engineering, Sangam will be responsible for Market Access, E-Commerce and Data

chain solutions. I am confident that with his expertise, he will help align our tech and business goals. Thank you Purple Quarter for the consolidated efforts throughout the process."

Dubai headquartered, DP World is a leading global port operator. With a vision to 'disrupt world trade and create the smartest, most efficient and innovative solutions while ensuring a positive and sustainable impact on economies, so-

cieties, and the planet,' DP World sought a leader for its tech team. It was imperative to have someone join with detailed knowledge and technical know-how. Sangam comes with over 25 years of industry experience.

"Thanks to the Purple Quarter for presenting with this opportunity. I am excited to leverage my experience and contribute to the high-value supply chain industry." (AP)

Market Movements

02-05-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
UAE - DFM	+1.06	3,575.56	SAUDI - Tadawul	-0.59	11,218.61
JAPAN - Nikkei	+0.12	29,157.95	EGYPT - EGX 30	-0.06	17,300.56
PAKISTAN - KSE 100	+0.83	41,927.64			
PHILIPPINES - PSEi	+0.72	6,672.69			

Business

The Conversation

With stagflation, there is no good news

Why stagflation is an economic nightmare – and may already be here

By Veronika Dolar
SUNY Old Westbury

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

The economy is cooling while inflation remains elevated. And that is raising alarm bells among economists who worry it means "stagflation" is on the way.

But what is stagflation exactly? We asked Veronika Dolar, an economist at SUNY Old Westbury and a visiting professor at Stony Brook University, to explain what it is, what causes it and why economists and policymakers hate the phenomenon.

Economists typically focus on the three big macroeconomic variables: gross domestic product, unemployment and inflation.

Each measure tells its own important story about how the economy is doing. GDP - or the total output of all goods and services produced - shows us what the broader economy is doing, unemployment tells us about the job situation and inflation measures the movement of prices.

But their stories also overlap. And unfortunately, they usually don't all tell us good news at the same time.

Under normal circumstances, there are trade-offs. You usually can't have a strong pace of GDP growth and low unemployment without suffering the pains of higher inflation. And if you're able to keep inflation low, that usually comes at the expense of subdued GDP growth and possibly more people unemployed.

So, normally there is some good news and some bad news. But with stagflation, there is no good news.

Stagflation happens when the economy is experiencing both economic stagnation - stalling or falling output - and high inflation. Additionally, a struggling

economy will drive up unemployment.

In other words, all three macroeconomic indicators are going in the wrong direction.

The last time this happened in the U.S. was in the 1970s, a period when energy prices were skyrocketing.

As a result of an embargo led by OPEC, a cartel of oil-producing countries, the price of crude doubled from 1973 to 1975.

Countries like the U.S. that imported a lot of oil experienced both high inflation and recession. The consumer price index exceeded 10% for the first time since the 1940s, the unemployment rate jumped from 4.6% in 1973 to 9% in 1975, and GDP plunged.

The same events - OPEC pushing up prices, inflation soaring, economies sinking into recession - repeated just a few years later. Over this period, rising unemployment and reduced business activity meant everyone had less money, yet surging inflation meant every dollar was worth a little bit less every day.

Moreover, this experience with stagflation fundamentally altered Americans' way of life and ushered in an era of fuel conservation and rationing not seen since World War II.

The causes of stagflation are still hotly debated by economists. Before the 1970s, they generally didn't believe it was possible to have both high inflation and high unemployment in a stagnating economy. Economists had thought that unemployment and inflation were inversely related.

There are a few different theories on how both high inflation and a stagnating economy can coexist, however.

The most common is that stagflation happens when there is a so-called negative supply shock. That is, when something that is crucial to an entire economy, such as energy or labor, is suddenly in short supply or becomes more expensive.

One obvious example is crude oil.

Oil is a key input into the production of many goods and services. When some event, like the Russian invasion of Ukraine, reduces the supply, the price of oil rises. Businesses in the U.S. and elsewhere that produce gasoline, tires and many other products requiring petroleum experience rising transportation costs, which makes it less profitable to sell stuff to consumers or other companies no matter the price.

As a result, a great number of producers decrease their production, which decreases aggregate supply. This decrease leads to falling national output and an increased unemployment rate together with higher overall prices.

For policymakers, there's almost nothing worse than the specter of stagflation.

The problem is that the ways to fight either one of those two problems - high inflation, low growth - usually end up making the other one even worse.

The Federal Reserve, for example, could keep raising interest rates, as it's been doing since March 2022. But inflation remains high, at about 5%, well over double the Fed's target of 2%. But that also hurts economic activity and overall growth, because it puts the brakes on borrowing and investment.

Policymakers could try to spur more economic growth - whether through government stimulus or lowering interest rates - but that would likely end up fueling more inflation.

Put another way, you're damned if you do, damned if you don't. And that means solving the problem may simply depend on circumstances out of U.S. policymakers' control, such as an end to the crisis in Ukraine or finding ways to immediately increase oil supply - which is tricky.

In other words, stagflation is a nightmare you never want to live through. (AP)

Bank catered to wealthy clients

Why First Republic failed – Are other banks to follow?

First Republic Bank has become the second large regional bank with assets over \$200 billion to fail in just a few weeks. Like Silicon Valley Bank, which was seized by the government on March 10, First Republic catered to a wealthy clientele, which helped it grow deposits rapidly but may have also contributed to its undoing. The bank's business model left it susceptible to a sudden rise in interest rates.

Since the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank - and Signature Bank the same weekend - investors have wondered who's next. First Republic quickly rose to the top of that list, but investors and analysts worried about banks such as Comerica and KeyCorp, which also had large numbers of accounts with deposits above the federally-insured level of \$250,000.

Here are some things to know about the collapse of First Republic Bank.

Why did First Republic fail?

First Republic grew rapidly through deposits from wealthy individuals and companies. It used those deposits to make large loans, including jumbo mortgages, when interest rates were at historically low levels in hopes of then convincing customers to expand into more profitable products like wealth management.

Many of the bank's accounts had deposits well north of the federally-insured \$250,000. Once Silicon Valley Bank went under, clients pulled their money, fearful their deposits were in

danger. First Republic said last week that depositors had withdrawn more than \$100 billion, most of it during a few days in mid-March.

"Too many (First Republic) customers showed their true loyalties were to their own fears," wrote Timothy Coffey, an analyst with Janney Montgomery Scott, in a note to investors.

What's more, the large loans on First Republic's books dropped in value as the Federal Reserve rapidly raised interest rates last year. So, if the bank tried to sell the loans to raise capital, it would do so at a loss. Similar circumstances had doomed Silicon Valley Bank.

First Republic planned to sell off unprofitable assets, including low interest mortgages that it provided to wealthy clients. It also announced plans to lay off up to a quarter of its workforce, which totaled about 7,200 employees in late 2022. But those plans were seen as too little, too late, by analysts.

By the middle of last week, it became clear government intervention in First Republic was necessary. Treasury officials asked banks to submit bids for First Republic, and bankers and regulators worked through the weekend to find a way forward.

What bank or banks are next?

For now, analysts expect the banking system will be spared any more large bank failures, saying the problems at Silicon Valley, Signature Bank and First Republic were unique to those companies.

Europe's inflation 'inches up' ahead of interest rate decision

FRANKFURT, Germany, May 2, (AP) - Europe's painful inflation inched higher last month, extending the squeeze on households and keeping pressure on the European Central Bank to unleash another large interest rate increase.

Consumer prices in the 20 countries using the euro currency jumped 7% in April from a year earlier, just down from the annual rate of 6.9% in March, the European Union statistics agency Eurostat said Tuesday.

Food prices eased a little, falling to an annual 13.6% from March's 15.5%, while energy prices rose a more modest 2.5%.

Core inflation, which excludes volatile food and fuel, slowed slightly but was still high at 5.6%, underlining the expectation that the ECB will press ahead with its campaign to beat inflation into submission with rate hikes. The question is: How quickly will the bank go?

Analysts say the ECB's meeting Thursday in Frankfurt could end in an increase of a quarter- or a half-percentage point. A quarter-point hike would be a moderation in the bank's series of rapid increases, while a half-point would underline concern that inflation is still not heading back toward the bank's goal of 2% considered best for the economy.

While the slight fall in food inflation is good news, economists say those are partly statistical quirks, due

to the fact that lower figures from before the current outbreak of inflation have aged out of the annual comparison, a so-called base effect.

Of more concern is core inflation, considered a better measure of price pressures in the economy from demand for goods and higher wages.

This bout of inflation was initially spurred by high energy prices tied to Russia's invasion of Ukraine: Moscow cut off most of its natural gas supplies to Europe, and there were fears the war would take large amounts of oil off the market.

Rebounding demand after the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic and problems with supplies of parts and raw materials also played a role. But since then, the factors driving inflation have spread from energy to food and workers have begun demanding higher wages to compensate for their diminished spending power.

Economists at UniCredit and Deutsche Bank said a quarter-point hike by the ECB was more likely.

Rate increases are central banks' chief tool against inflation. Higher rates increase the cost of credit for consumer spending or business investment, and thus cool off the demand for goods.

But the rapid course of monetary tightening by both the ECB and the U.S. Federal Reserve have raised concerns about the impact on economic growth.

US could hit 'debt ceiling' as soon as June 1, says Treasury Secretary

Plenty of attacks on the debt cap, but no signs of settling

WASHINGTON, May 2, (AP) - Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen notified Congress on Monday that the U.S. is projected to reach its debt limit as early as June 1, if the body does not raise or suspend the debt limit before then.

In a letter to House and Senate leaders, Yellen urged Congress "to protect the full faith and credit of the United States by acting as soon as possible" to address the \$31.4 trillion limit on its legal borrowing authority.

"We have learned from past debt limit impasses that waiting until the last minute to suspend or increase the debt limit can cause serious harm to business and consumer confidence, raise short-term borrowing costs for taxpayers, and negatively impact the credit rating of the United States," she said in the letter.

The Treasury said Monday it plans to increase its borrowing during the April to June quarter of this year, even as the federal government is close to breaching the debt limit.

The U.S. plans to borrow \$726 billion during the quarter. That's \$49 billion more than projected in January, due to a lower beginning-of-quarter cash balance and projections of lower-than-expected income tax receipts and higher spending.

While Russia's invasion of Ukraine remains a burden on U.S. economic growth, Treasury officials say the debate over the debt ceiling poses the greatest risk to the U.S. financial position.

Eric Van Nostrand, acting assistant secretary for economy policy, said in a statement that "even if Congress ultimately raises the debt limit before a default occurs, the ensuing uncertainty could raise borrowing costs and induce other financial stress that would weaken our labor market and our standing in the world."

In January, Yellen sent a letter to congressional leaders, stating that her department had begun resorting to "ex-

traordinary measures" to avoid a federal government default. She said it's "critical that Congress act in a timely manner" to raise or suspend the debt limit.

Democrats and the White House are pushing for Congress to increase the federal debt limit. President Joe Biden wants the cap raised without negotiation. The House Republican majority has most recently passed a bill to secure spending cuts in exchange for a

NEW YORK, May 2, (AP) - Stocks are falling Tuesday as shares of beleaguered banks tumble again and worries about the economy worsen.

Rising fear has yields sinking in the bond market, while Wall Street waits for the Federal Reserve's latest move on interest rates and Washington edges closer to what would be a catastrophic default on U.S. government debt.

The S&P 500 was 1.5% lower and on pace for its worst day in nearly two months. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 481 points, or 1.4%, at 33,569, as of 1:02 p.m. Eastern time, while the Nasdaq composite was 1.2% lower.

Some of the sharpest drops came from smaller- and mid-sized banks, which have been under heavy scrutiny as the banking system shows cracks under the weight of much higher interest rates. PacWest Bancorp dropped 25%, Western Alliance Bancorp fell 19% and Zions Bancorp. dropped 12.4%.

Three of the four largest U.S. bank failures in history have come since March, and investors have been on the hunt for what could be next to topple or suffer a debilitating exodus by customers.

Regulators seized First Republic Bank at the start of this week and sold most of it to JPMorgan Chase, which had raised hopes that the turmoil could ease.

Also pressuring stocks was a report that showed U.S. employers advertised less than 9.6 million job openings in March. That's the low-

Global stocks mixed after bank failure

Dow drops 500 as banks tumble again

est number in nearly two years and worse than economists expected. The job market has been one of the main pillars supporting a slowing economy, and a drop-off there would likely mean a recession.

Global

Global shares were trading mixed Tuesday with some markets closed or anticipating holidays and investors showing muted reaction to the latest U.S. banking failure.

France's CAC 40 lost 0.4% in early trading to 7,459.14. Germany's DAX fell nearly 0.4% to 15,866.12. Britain's FTSE 100 inched down nearly 0.1% to 7,864.44. U.S. shares were set to drift lower with Dow futures slipping 0.2% to 34,090.00. S&P 500 futures dipped 0.2% to 4,179.50.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 dipped 0.9% to 7,267.40, after the Reserve Bank of Australia raised interest rates by a quarter-percentage point, an unexpected move that signaled further tightening might be ahead.

"We think that the RBA has done more than enough and we have reached the peak in rates. Continuing to raise rates from here adds to the rising risk of plunging the economy into a recession," said Shane Oliver, chief economist at AMP in Sydney.

South Korea's Kospi gained 0.9% to 2,524.39. Hong Kong's Hang Seng gained 0.2% to 19,933.81.

debt limit increase.

Yellen said last week, at the Cap-to-Cap policy conference in Washington that "Congress must vote to raise or suspend the debt limit, and it should do so without conditions and it should not wait until the last minute. I believe that is a basic responsibility of our nation's leaders to get this done."

President Joe Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy are finding it's easy to publicly shame each other

Japan's Nikkei 225 edged up 0.1% to close at 29,157.95. Trading in Tokyo will be closed for Golden Week holidays the rest of the week. Trading was closed in Shanghai for Labor Day.

Economic and inflation reports are expected in Europe ahead of the central bank meeting later in the week. Markets are also bracing for what is hoped to be the last interest rate hike by the U.S. Federal Reserve for some time. Oil prices fell, while currencies were little changed.

Recent China's manufacturing data showed a contraction, reflecting how the weakening export market is starting to hurt the domestic economy, according to analysts.

"We believe that the government will resume subsidies on electric vehicles, which would benefit both the manufacturing and services sector. The government might also push infrastructure construction faster," said Robert Carnell and other analysts at ING in their report.

Oil

In energy trading, benchmark U.S. crude fell 25 cents to \$75.41 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, fell 17 cents to \$79.14 a barrel.

Currencies

In currency trading, the U.S. dollar inched up to 137.46 Japanese yen from 137.47 yen. The euro stood at \$1.0973, down slightly from \$1.0978.

over the debt limit.

Getting along well enough to resolve a paralyzing threat to the U.S. economy? That's not happening yet.

McCarthy, R-Calif., shepherded a proposal for \$4.8 trillion worth of deficit reduction over a decade through the House last week - figuring it could pressure Biden into an Oval Office sit-down to work toward a deal. Even some Democratic lawmakers say negotiations should start.

FDIC recommends raising insured deposit limit for businesses

NEW YORK, May 2, (AP) - U.S. businesses might be able to secure bank deposit insurance for accounts holding more than \$250,000 if Congress agrees with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.'s new proposal to ease the industry turmoil that has sparked three bank failures in the past two months.

The FDIC recommended the change Monday, rethinking the decades-old limit and seeking more flexibility to cover higher deposits on a "targeted" basis. Raising the insurance limit for business accounts that pay for company operations such as payroll would shore up ac-

counts that pose the most risk to financial stability, the FDIC said.

The proposed change appears to openly acknowledge that the FDIC is looking for ways to calm both depositors and markets as the agency contends with the third bank run this year. First Republic Bank became the second largest failure in history Monday when regulators seized it and JP Morgan Chase stepped up as a buyer.

"The recent failures of Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank, and the decision to approve Systemic Risk Exceptions to protect the uninsured

depositors at those institutions, raised fundamental questions about the role of deposit insurance in the United States banking system," FDIC Chairman Martin J. Gruenberg said in a statement accompanying the regulator's recommendations.

The FDIC is a government agency formed during the Great Depression to restore faith in U.S. banking institutions.

As of December, more than 99% of U.S. deposit accounts held less than \$250,000, and so were automatically covered by existing FDIC insurance,

Gruenberg said.

However, the system remains subject to the sort of bank runs that brought down First Republic, despite a consortium of big lenders having pooled \$30 billion in cash to stabilize the bank as recently as March.

Last Monday, First Republic reported its first-quarter results, shocking investors when it revealed that depositors had withdrawn \$100 billion, most in mid-March immediately after Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank failed. First Republic's stock plunged more than 50% the day after the report.

INJAZ Kuwait honors Gulf Bank for preparing new generation of young entrepreneurs

Maysoon Al-Attar: It is important to prepare our current youth for the real world as they are our future leaders. INJAZ Kuwait recently honored Gulf Bank, among a number of institutions and companies sponsoring its activities, for supporting and training young people and providing them with the skills required by the labor market. Additionally, the Bank is constantly making efforts in preparing a new generation of young entrepreneurs. Gulf Bank has renewed its 17-year

strategic partnership with INJAZ Kuwait, to embark on yet another year of supporting Kuwaiti youth in 2023. This is part of the Bank's continuous efforts to support Kuwaiti youth, who represent one of the main pillars of the Gulf Bank's 2025 strategy, and Kuwait Vision 2035. On this occasion, Assistant Manager of Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank, Maysoon Al-Attar, expressed her pride in the successful partnership with INJAZ Kuwait for the last 17 years, as

they work together to support the next generation of young entrepreneurs and leaders, amidst the rapid developments in various economic sectors. Al-Attar emphasized that Gulf Bank is keen to fulfill its social responsibility towards youth, especially those at high school and university levels, including recent graduates. The bank provides youth with basic concepts related to business, exploring professional interests and opportunities; in addition to developing job skills and field training.

She further indicated that Gulf Bank's strategic partnership with INJAZ Kuwait has led to a variety of successes in 2022 – including training 8,830 high school and university students through more than 14 international training programs. Furthermore, 50 volunteers from Gulf Bank participated and assisted in various training activities offered by INJAZ Kuwait, of which include: Innovation Camp, Personal Finance, Career Success, Head Start, Job Shadow Day, and the Company Program.



Maysoon Al-Attar

The Conversation

Generative AI is 'compelling' people to rethink what it means to be authentic

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

By Victor R. Lee
Stanford University

It turns out that pop stars Drake and The Weeknd didn't suddenly drop a new track that went viral on TikTok and YouTube in April 2023. The photograph that won an international photography competition that same month wasn't a real photograph. And the image of Pope Francis sporting a Balenciaga jacket that appeared in March 2023? That was also a fake.

All were made with the help of generative AI, the new technology that can generate humanlike text, audio and images on demand through programs such as ChatGPT, Midjourney and Bard, among others.

There's certainly something unsettling about the ease with which people can be duped by these fakes, and I see it as a harbinger of an authenticity crisis that raises some difficult questions.

How will voters know whether a video of a political candidate saying something offensive was real or generated by AI? Will people be willing to pay artists for their work when AI can create something visually stunning? Why follow certain authors when stories in their writing style will be freely circulating on the internet?

I've been seeing the anxiety play out all around me at Stanford University, where I'm a professor and also lead a large generative AI and education initiative. With text, image, audio and video all becoming easier for anyone to produce

through new generative AI tools, I believe people are going to need to reexamine and recalibrate how authenticity is judged in the first place.

Fortunately, social science offers some guidance. Long before generative AI and ChatGPT rose to the fore, people had been probing what makes something feel authentic.

When a real estate agent is gushing over a property they are trying to sell you, are they being authentic or just trying to close the deal? Is that stylish acquaintance wearing authentic designer fashion or a mass-produced knock-off? As you mature, how do you discover your authentic self?

These are not just philosophical exercises. Neuroscience research has shown that believing a piece of art is authentic will activate the brain's reward centers in ways that viewing something you've been told is a forgery won't.

Authenticity also matters because it is a social glue that reinforces trust. Take the social media misinformation crisis, in which fake news has been inadvertently spread and authentic news decreed fake.

In short, authenticity matters, for both individuals and society as a whole. But what actually makes something feel authentic?

Psychologist George Newman has explored this question in a series of studies. He found that there are three major dimensions of authenticity.

One of those is historical authenticity, or whether an object is truly from the time, place and person someone claims it to be. An actual painting made by Rembrandt would have historical authenticity; a modern forgery would not.

A second dimension of authenticity is the kind that plays out when, say, a restaurant in Japan offers exceptional and authentic Neapolitan pizza. Their pizza was not made in Naples or imported from Italy. The chef who prepared it may

not have a drop of Italian blood in their veins. But the ingredients, appearance and taste may match really well with what tourists would expect to find at a great restaurant in Naples. Newman calls that categorical authenticity.

And finally, there is the authenticity that comes from our values and beliefs. This is the kind that many voters find wanting in politicians and elected leaders who say one thing but do another. It is what admissions officers look for in college essays.

In my own research, I've also seen that authenticity can relate to our expectations about what tools and activities are involved in creating things.

For example, when you see a piece of custom furniture that claims to be handmade, you probably assume that it wasn't literally made by hand - that all sorts of modern tools were nonetheless used to cut, shape and attach each piece. Similarly, if an architect uses computer software to help draw up building plans, you still probably think of the product as legitimate and original. This is because there's a general understanding that those tools are part of what it takes to make those products.

In most of your quick judgments of authenticity, you don't think much about these dimensions. But with generative AI, you will need to.

That's because back when it took a lot of time to produce original new content, there was a general assumption that it required skill to create - that it only could have been made by skilled individuals putting in a lot of effort and acting with the best of intentions.

These are not safe assumptions anymore. Generative AI thrives on exploiting people's reliance on categorical authenticity by producing material that looks like "the real thing." (AP)

Among C-suite leaders, AI is 'top' digital priority in path to operational resilience

Accenture releases findings of study

NEW YORK, May 2, (AP): Nearly three-fourths (73%) of companies are prioritizing AI over all other digital investments and with the immediate focus on improving operational resilience in an unprecedented environment, according to a study by Accenture (NYSE:ACN).

Nearly three-fourths (73%) of companies are prioritizing AI over all other digital investments and with the immediate focus on improving operational resilience in an unprecedented environment, according to a study by Accenture. (Graphic: Business Wire)

The report, Reinventing Enterprise Operations, found 90% of business leaders are applying AI to tackle aspects of operational resilience, which spans data-driven capabilities, such as finance (89%) and suppliers (88%), to experimentation with generative AI.

The findings assessed organizations across six measures of operational maturity: AI, data, processes, talent, collaboration and stakeholder experiences. While only a few (9%) companies achieved maturity on all fronts, those that did averaged 1.4X higher operating margins over peers, while driving 42% faster innovation, 34% better sustainability and 30% higher satisfaction scores.

"All CEOs are under pressure to digitize faster, put more resilience in the business, and find new pathways to growth," said Yusuf Tayob, group chief executive of Accenture Operations. "The right investments in technology while advancing talent, data and processes is what drives a new performance frontier."

With a talent strategy that mirrors data and digital maturity, enterprises averaged nearly three-times (11%) higher productivity when prioritizing training and specialized skills to address talent needs. This was further echoed by investments being made in new ways of working (cited by 94%) and the 90% of (COO, CIO, CHRO) respondents who plan to increase specialized and technical talent over the next three years.

To fully capture the opportunity, leaders should take these five actions to evolve operations and achieve a new performance frontier:

About the Research
For the report, "Reinventing Enterprise Operations," Accenture surveyed 1,700 executives, 72% of whom were C-suite, across 12 countries and 15 industries. The latest research assessed the progression of business operations maturity - each level underpinned by more advanced ways of working with AI, data and cloud - and (where relevant) compared with 2021 findings. The study then combines survey responses with externally validated data across multiple dimensions of value - from financial to experience, sustainability to talent and inclusion and diversity to innovation and agility.

This research can also be explored in Accenture Foresight, Accenture's new thought leadership app, which provides a personalized feed of all our latest reports, case studies, blogs, interactive data charts, podcasts and more. Visit <http://www.accenture.com/foresight>.

By Liz Weston
NerdWallet

Credit card rewards help our family save money on groceries, gas and other necessities. We also use rewards for airline tickets, hotel rooms and airport lounge access.

We're in good company. Most Americans have at least one rewards card, and nearly half of rewards cardholders are using their perks to help offset rising inflation, according to a 2022 Wells Fargo survey.

But a recent review of our cards revealed that some are no longer worth their annual fees or have been eclipsed by better offerings.

Credit card fees, reward rates and benefits change all the time. So do the ways we spend our money, which means a card that used to be a good fit may no longer work as well. Given all that, it's not surprising that fewer than one-third of credit card users feel that they're making the most of their rewards cards, according to J.D. Power's 2022 U.S. Credit Card Satisfaction Study.

An annual review of our credit cards helps ensure we're getting properly rewarded.

Create A Rewards Tracker
First, a few caveats. Rewards credit cards make sense for our family because we pay balances in full every month. If we didn't, the cost of interest would more than offset the value of any rewards. Also, you don't need to be as obsessed with rewards as we are to benefit. A simple cash-back rewards card can save you money without a lot of hassle.

Once we had a few cards, though, I found it helpful to start using a spreadsheet to keep track of each card's annual fee, renewal date, "earn rate" (such as 6% cash back on groceries, or 3 points per dollar spent on flights) and other relevant benefits. Every year or so, I update this spreadsheet with the value of rewards we've earned and redeemed as well as current information about annual fees and benefits.

If I've used points to book a flight or cashed in a free hotel night certificate, for example, I'll include the value of the travel. With cash back cards, I type in the dollar value redeemed during the year. Some cards provide a helpful year-end summary; otherwise, I can check rewards activity month by month by logging into the account online.

Investigate Card Benefits
Investigating all of a card's perks may require logging into your account

with a web browser rather than a mobile app, since account information is often more detailed using a browser. There's typically a tab or link that leads you to a rewards dashboard that summarizes your earn rate and highlights any additional benefits, such as complimentary food delivery subscriptions or credits that cover airline fees or offset the cost of streaming service. I add the dollar totals for benefits I've used to the spreadsheet and make a note on my calendar to use up any remaining credits before the perk resets. (Many credits must be used within a calendar year, but some reset on the card's anniversary date.)

I also note other benefits that don't necessarily have a price tag but still have significant value, such as travel insurance, elite status perks at a hotel chain or airline, or extended warranties on purchases. If I'm considering closing an account that has, for example, primary rental car insurance - the kind where you don't have to alert your auto insurer if you're in an accident - I'll be sure to replace it with a card that has similar benefits.



This Nov. 18, 2009, file photo, shows credit and bank cards with electronic chips in Gelsenkirchen, Germany. Are you getting the most out of your credit cards? It's easy to keep using the same plastic, but fees and benefits change all the time. (AP)

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Decide Each Card's Fate By this point I can see which cards are more than offsetting their annual fees and which aren't. For example, one of our premium cards jacked up its annual fee, again, and I discovered we weren't using enough of its benefits to justify the cost.

Closing accounts can hurt your credit scores, unfortunately. That

shouldn't keep you from ditching a card that's not serving you, but consider asking for a "product change" to one of the issuer's other cards that might be a better fit. This usually avoids a hit to your credit scores. Some product changes allow you to keep your rewards, but many don't, so have a plan for using up any points or miles before you switch.

Then again, product changes generally don't allow you to get one of the biggest rewards card perks: sign-up bonuses. To get these bonuses, you generally need to apply for a new account. In return, you can get a big wad of points if you spend a certain amount within a certain period, say 80,000 points if you spend \$4,000 within three months of the account's opening. Often this is the best way to add the most rewards in the shortest period, but applications can temporarily ding credit scores, so I generally limit applications to once or twice a year. I use credit card comparison tools and read reviews of new card offerings to see what's available. (AP)

Once I decide whether to close a card or ask for a product change, I put a note on my calendar to contact the issuer two weeks before the annual fee renews.

The last thing I do before closing my laptop is make a date with myself a year from now to do this review all over again. Change is constant in the credit card world, and I want to make sure we continue to get the most out of our plastic. (AP)

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The Conversation

3 keys to putting it in practice

Respectful persuasion is a relay race, not a solo sprint

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

By Colin Marshall,
University of Washington

The 2024 presidential election is still a year and a half away, but it can feel much closer: President Joe Biden has made his reelection bid official, presumed candidates are giving out-of-state speeches, pundits are already weighing in on nomination hopefuls, and social media is, as ever, a mess of people trying to persuade strangers to back their favorite. All for good reason: Even a little political persuasion in the next year could change the course of history.

I'm a philosopher who studies and teaches the ethics of persuasion. My students are eager to find ways to persuade their friends, family and neighbors about political issues such as climate change and abortion. Moreover, many of them want to persuade with integrity: They want to engage the people they're talking with respectfully, instead of using the manipulative tricks they regularly see in politics and marketing. But what is respectful persuasion, and what distinguishes it from disrespectful manipulation?

There's no simple formula for respectful persuasion. However, some philosophers see crucial hints in the work of 18th-century philosopher Immanuel Kant, whose theory of respect has guided many ethicists and policymakers for the past two centuries.

Drawing on Kant's work, and that of other philosophers inspired by him, I think we can isolate three key components of respectful persuasion. This isn't just an academic exercise. My students and I have found that these factors increase the chances of deep, meaningful conversation.

Broadly speaking, reasons are considerations that rationally support some belief or action, including both empirical evidence and abstract arguments. For example, astronauts' pictures of a round Earth rationally support the belief that the Earth is round. When we sincerely give someone reasons, we show respect for their rationality: their ability to recognize good reasons.

By contrast, a hallmark of manipulation is bypassing rationality, such as repeatedly exposing people to false statements to make them appear true - something that psychologists call the "illusory truth effect."

Manipulation can be effective, but psychologists have found that persuasion using reasons is more durable than nonrational persuasion such as repetition-based tricks. For example, someone who comes to believe in climate change based on the scientific evidence probably will not be as easily swayed later on by repeated exposure to climate skepticism. The rational support that good reasons provide for a belief can make that belief more stable.

Giving reasons is not difficult by itself. The second component of respectful persuasion, however, is much more challenging: being open to receiving the other side's reasons - a form of intellectual hu-

mility. This is especially hard for persuaders, since they have to give up some of the time they would have used to make their case.

Kant expressed this core idea nicely. Even someone encountering a person whose opinion seems obviously wrong, Kant wrote, has "a duty ... to suppose that his judgment must yet contain some truth and to seek this out." This isn't merely a suggestion to listen to people one wants to persuade. Instead, respect demands actively seeking out truth in what the other person says.

In fact, some studies suggest that intellectual humility makes people better able to evaluate the strength of arguments. This means that intellectually humble people may be more likely to recognize that a persuader's arguments are actually better than their own, and have to reconsider their views - which can pose a real risk to someone's self-esteem.

But being open to other people's reasons also increases the chance of their being open to yours - a form of reciprocity in which you take turns learning from each other. Decades of psychological research have shown that, especially in two-person exchanges, people value reciprocity in communication and see it as a way of treating each other fairly.

In other words, if you show openness to learning from someone else, rather than just lecturing, it may seem fair to them to be open to you too.

That is why faking this kind of respect can be a powerful manipulative tool. A psychologically savvy canvasser, for instance, can manipulate swing voters by pretending to be open to learning about their own opinions. But this carries its own risk, since people who discover they have been manipulated may resent it.

Kant's central principle of respect is that one should "not degrade any other as a mere means" to one's ends. This requires people to rein in their own self-love out of consideration for others. In popular culture, this might be summed up in the idea of "live and let live": Other things being equal, we shouldn't interfere in other people's lives.

Overlooking this principle can make persuasion disrespectful in a variety of ways, even when the persuader has good intentions. The philosopher George Tsai argues that this happens in cases of unsolicited advice: Imagine, he writes, that while your date goes to the restroom, an eavesdropping stranger tells you that she thinks you could do better. Even if the stranger is right, it's simply none of her business.

Another example of how interference can make persuasion disrespectful is that changing someone's mind can harm their dignity and disrupt their connection to their community. For example, say that you persuade a relative who lives in a small ranching community to become vegan. That change might lead to their being ostracized by people they rely on.

Because persuasion can affect other people's lives in many ways, this third component of respect is the most difficult to adhere to. Sometimes, people may be justified in interfering in other people's lives, such as if lives are at stake or in particularly close relationships - but those are special circumstances. (AP)

'We remain committed to our progressive strategy'

Boursa Kuwait records net profit of KD 4.31m for Q1 2023

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Boursa Kuwait recorded a net profit of KD 4.31 million in the first quarter of 2023, a decrease of 17.8% from its recorded profit in the first quarter of 2022, which was due to the decrease in operating revenue stemming mainly from lower trading activity.

In the first quarter of 2023, most capital markets in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and around the world witnessed a wave of turbulence and uncertainty because of the slowdown in the global economy, which was impacted by high inflation rates and the subsequent intervention of central banks to raise interest rates. Additionally, the fluctuation of oil prices and a fear that the turmoil of global banks would be transmitted to the region's markets led to the gradual decline of many of these markets' indices as well as a decrease in trading volume. Furthermore, while GCC equity markets outperformed their global peers during 2022 in terms of index performance, most exchanges experienced a gradual drop in average daily traded value from the second half of 2022, a trend that continued during the first quarter of 2023.

Despite the challenging economic landscape in the region and around the world, Boursa Kuwait was resilient in

withstanding its conditions and limiting their adverse impact on the Kuwaiti capital market. The company's Board of Directors and Executive Management remained committed to adopting the best standards and practices of global financial markets and continued working closely with the Kuwaiti capital market apparatus to enhance the attractiveness of the market to investors, enhancing its efficacy and efficiency as well as facilitating access to it, in addition to raising its level of transparency and improving corporate governance.

Subsidiary

In addition, the Kuwait Clearing Company (KCC), a subsidiary of Boursa Kuwait, ran a series of stress tests for the Central Counterparty Clearing (CCP) system, to ensure that financial brokerage firms can fulfill its requirements and be eligible for membership. KCC also ran tests with the Central Bank of Kuwait and local banks, as a prerequisite to launching several products like exchange traded funds (ETFs) and a platform for bonds and sukuk.

Boursa Kuwait Chairman Mr. Hamad Mishari Al-Humaidhi commented on the quarterly results, saying: "Boursa Kuwait has shown remarkable resilience in adapting to the fluctuations of the vola-

tile financial markets and the challenging global economic landscape. The company remains committed to upholding the best-in-class standards and practices of the capital markets industry and works diligently to enhance the market's efficiency and efficacy and improve access to it as well as strengthening the corporate governance of all its listed companies."

"As we navigate through the rest of the year, we remain committed to our progressive strategy, and we will continue working on achieving the goals of our various stakeholders for the betterment of the Kuwaiti capital market and all its participants," he added.

Boursa Kuwait has been consistently promoting the Kuwaiti capital market and its participants through its series of Roadshows and Corporate Days, which gives listed companies the opportunity to meet with some of the world's biggest and most well-known asset management firms and investment companies, highlighting their financial health, business outlook, and business strategies going forward. This gives prospective institutional investors from all over the world a deeper understanding of the Kuwaiti capital market and the investment opportunities that reside within it. The company has worked



Hamad Al-Humaidhi, Boursa Kuwait Chairman

diligently on enhancing the market in an effort to attract international investors to it.

"The Kuwaiti capital market witnessed an increase in GCC and foreign trading year by year, as international investors accounted for approximately 19% of the total number of trades in



Mohammad Saud Al-Osaimi, Boursa Kuwait CEO

the first quarter of 2023, compared to around 14% during the corresponding period in 2022," said Boursa Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer Mr. Mohammad Saud Al-Osaimi. "This is a reflection of investor confidence in the Kuwaiti capital market and an indication of its stability relative to its counter-

parts internationally," he added.

Financial Highlights of the First Quarter of 2023:

- Net profit was recorded at KD 4.31 million
- Earnings per share were recorded at 21.48 fils
- Total operating revenue came in at KD 7.66 million
- Operating profit came in at KD 5.08 million
- Total assets were recorded at KD 123.30 million
- Shareholder Equity (Attributable to equity holders of the Parent Company) was recorded at KD 52.74 million

Since its inception, Boursa Kuwait, a self-listed company and one of the first government entities to successfully undergo privatization, has worked diligently to create a thriving capital market that attracts local and foreign investors through a broad spectrum of new products and services, infrastructure upgrades, and market reform initiatives, as part of its multi-phase market development plans. The company has implemented many steps in accordance with international practices and standards to enhance the position of the exchange regionally and globally, as well as transform Kuwait into a regional and global investment destination.

S&P GCC composite index up by 4.9% in April: Markaz

GCC and global markets positive in anticipation of Fed rate hikes pause

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" recently released its Monthly Market Review report for the month of April 2023. Kuwait's All Share Index witnessed an increase in April, posting a monthly gain of 1.3%. Among Boursa Kuwait's sectoral indices, Insurance sector gained the most at 10.7%, while the Technology sector lost 8.5% for the month. Among Premier Market stocks, Gulf Cables and Electrical Industries Co. and Alimtia Investment Group gained the most for the month, rising by 16.0% and 14.9% respectively. Ali Al-Ghanim Sons Automotive Co. fell the most for the month at 4.1%.

Kuwait consumer price inflation (CPI) rose by 3.7% y-o-y and 0.7% m-o-m in March primarily driven by Food & Beverage prices, which jumped by 7.5% y-o-y and 0.7% m-o-m. Kuwait's real GDP growth is anticipated to rise by 0.9% in 2023 according to the IMF World Economic Outlook update for April 2023, much lower than the previous estimate of 2.6% in October 2022. Average inflation is forecasted at 3.3% in 2023, higher than the previous estimate of 2.4%. In terms of per capita GDP in terms of purchasing power, Kuwait has fallen in the rankings of the richest nations in the world, falling to 36th place out of 193 nations from 31st place in the previous year.

Regionally, GCC Markets have been positive, with S&P GCC composite index up 4.9% for the month. All equity indices, except Qatar and Oman ended positive for the month. Saudi markets rose by 6.8% for the month supported by the rating upgrade by Fitch. Fitch raised Saudi Arabia's rating from "A" to "A+", citing the nation's solid fiscal and external balance sheets, which include a favorable debt-to-GDP ratio and robust sovereign net foreign assets. Saudi Aramco and Saudi Telecom rose 12.4% and 10.9% respectively for the month. The respective moves were triggered by the upgrade of Saudi Aramco's credit rating by Fitch to 'A+' and Saudi Telecom's selling of its entire 49% stake in Contact Centre Co. Oman equity index decreased the most, losing 3.0% while Qatar equity index fell by 0.3% over the month.

Growth

The World Bank has updated its forecast for economic growth in the GCC for 2023 to 3.2% in April which is down from the earlier forecast of 3.7%. The real GDP of UAE is expected to increase by 3.9% in 2023 and 4.3% in 2024 according to the projections by the Central Bank of UAE. Even the IMF recently forecasted that the UAE economy will expand at a faster pace in 2024 at 3.9% as compared to 3.5% this year while downgrading the 2023 forecast by 70 bps from 4.2% in October 2022 to 3.5%. According to the World Trade Organization, the UAE's merchandise trade reached USD 1 trillion (AED3.67 trillion) in 2022 as exports and imports increased due to increase in economic activity. The S&P Global Saudi Arabia Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) was 58.7 in March, falling from an eight-year record high of 59.8 in February. Saudi Arabia's inflation slowed down to 2.7% y/y in March from 3% y/y in February, driven mainly by an increase in housing rents. Qatar is anticipated to produce a budget surplus of 6.5% in 2023 and 5.3% in 2024, according to the most recent World Bank estimate. Further, Qatar's real GDP will increase by 3.3 percent this year, and the current account balance would be 15.9%



Photo of KFH program participants.

Bank develops its human assets

KFH celebrates its graduates from Harvard Business School Program

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) celebrated the graduation of a cohort of its executive leaders after successfully completing Harvard Business School program. The program was tailored to support and develop leaders in the financial and banking sector under the title (Strategic Leadership in a Transforming World).

The executive program is part of (Kafa'a) initiative that was launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) under the supervision of Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies (IBS) and in cooperation with local banks.

On this occasion, KFH Executive Manager Talent Management, Mohammed Al-Musalam stated that KFH is working constantly to develop and train its employees and its leaders according to the best standards adopted worldwide to ensure KFH's leadership and excellence of its performance and achieve highest return on investment in training, as well as develop human assets as the basis of any success at KFH.

He hoped that the program would be an actual added value to all the leaders who passed it and contribute to improving their performance at all levels in terms of KFH's aspirations and the ambitions of its customers.

Al-Musalam thanked the Central

Bank of Kuwait and the Institute of Banking Studies for proposing and sponsoring the distinguished training program. He also expressed his sincere thanks to Harvard Business School which offers a substantial training material.

He added that KFH is witnessing a new phase paving the way for an unprecedented breakthrough in various markets, products, activities, and businesses which requires human capabilities that are skillful and experienced amidst a rapidly changing financial scene and comprehensive developments in the banking industry.

Plans

He went on to say that these changes require the focus on quality of performance and aligning business outputs with the implementation efforts of approved plans and strategies, in addition to positioning these plans and strategies for measurement, assessment and modification according to the updates and priorities of each working environment in terms of time, sector and geography. He pointed out that the Harvard Business School program is a key part of KFH's training policies.

He also stressed the need for the efforts of training and trainees and their results to strengthen KFH's strategic focus on digitalization and leading the

innovation in Fintech, in addition to benefiting from the markets in which the Bank operates as well as facing the challenges within the framework of thoughtful and optimal utilization of resources and capabilities to achieve the best indicators in terms of performance and profit rates and develop the system of services and products.

It is worth noting that the program examined two main aspects: Financial Markets Strategy and Leadership. Participants were introduced to the necessary tools and concepts of a successful leadership by highlighting the key role of leadership and management in formulating and executing leading financial and technical strategies to face challenges. The program also underlined what digital transformation requires in terms of different leadership and administrative skills and techniques to keep abreast of the rapid changes in the field.

The program is part of CBK's initiative (Kafa'a) which it launched in collaboration with Kuwaiti banks and the Institute of Banking Studies. It contains up to 8 training programs, which vary according to fields and targeted segments and aim to build highly qualified national cadres and prepare them to be an important asset in the development of the banking and financial sectors in the State of Kuwait.

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Looking ahead, the U.S. FOMC meeting scheduled on the first week of May is likely to set the context for global market performance in the near term. With US inflation showing signs of cooling down and borrowing rates being at their highest point in a decade, there are strong indications that the US Fed could deliver its last 25 bps rate hike of the current cycle before hitting the pause button.

More than the magnitude of the hike, Fed's minutes for the upcoming meeting is likely to be eagerly awaited as it could provide indications whether we could see a pause in rate hikes. Indications of a pause could very well trigger a mild rally in equities. The production cuts from OPEC+ from May has led to several investment banks revising their oil price forecasts for 2023 upwards. Although this could provide momentum for GCC markets, slowdown in global oil demand could yet remain an overhang for oil prices with recession concerns still lingering.

Oil prices marked a monthly decline of 0.3% closing at USD 79.5/bbl. due to concerns over U.S. demand as the U.S. GDP fell by 1.4% y-o-y in Q1 2023 and uncertainty on further interest rate hikes despite the production cuts announced by OPEC+ earlier in the month of April. From May 2023 onwards, Oil producers have decided to cut the output by 2 million barrels a day which is equivalent to 2% of global oil demand. The International Energy Agency (IEA) has projected that the jump in oil consumption in China would increase world oil demand by 2 million barrels per day (bpd) to a record 101.9 million bpd in 2023. The direction of oil price will likely be determined by the result of Fed Open Market Committee (FOMC) as they are expected to meet in the first week of May. Even the Bank of England and the European Central Bank are expected to raise rates in upcoming meet-

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stc ISO certificate

Firm passes compliance audit

stc acquires ISO 31000:2018 'risk' management certificate

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced that it has successfully passed the compliance audit for the ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management standard. The exercise was performed by Bureau Veritas, a leading provider of testing, inspection, and certification services. stc received the certification following a rigorous evaluation process, which assessed the Company's risk management practices against the ISO 31000 standard.



Al Ali

stc indicated in a statement that receiving the certification reflects the standard that the Company aims to maintain and continuously evolve when it comes to Risk Management Compliance Audit. The ISO 31000:2018 certification is an internationally recognized standard for risk management, and it provides a framework for organizations to identify, assess, and manage risks effectively. By obtaining this certification, stc demonstrated its commitment to implementing best practices in risk management and ensuring the highest

level of service for its customers. Furthermore, the ISO 31000:2018 certification will enable stc to further improve its risk management capabilities and enhance its reputation as a reliable and trustworthy service provider in the industry.

Commenting on the achievement, engineer Fahad Al Ali, CTO of stc, said, "We are delighted to have passed the ISO compliance Certification 31000:2018 Risk Management Compliance Audit, which reflects our ongoing commitment to enhance the quality and breadth of services we offer to our valued customers. This certification is a testament to our dedication to providing our customers with the highest level of service and ensuring that we manage risks effectively. We believe that effective risk management is critical to the success of any organization, and we are proud to have achieved this significant milestone."

Al Ali added, "In line with its continuous journey of providing the best solutions and services, stc strives to meet and exceed international standards in all areas of its business. We have been pursuing exceptional standards that not only enhance our reputation as a reliable and trustworthy service provider, but also strengthen our ability to identify, assess, and manage risks effectively. At stc, we will continue to prioritize risk management as a critical aspect of our operations and uphold the highest standards in the various segments that we operate in."

Next gen of entrepreneurs

INJAZ Kuwait honors Gulf Bank for supporting, training youth

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: INJAZ Kuwait recently honored Gulf Bank, among a number of institutions and companies sponsoring its activities, for supporting and training young people and providing them with the skills required by the labor market. Additionally, the Bank is constantly making efforts in preparing a new generation of young entrepreneurs.

Gulf Bank has renewed its 17-year strategic partnership with INJAZ Kuwait, to embark on yet another year of supporting Kuwaiti youth in 2023. This is part of the Bank's continuous efforts to support Kuwaiti youth, who represent one of the main pillars of the Gulf Bank's 2025 strategy, and Kuwait Vision 2035.

On this occasion, Assistant Manager of Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank, Maysoun Al-Attar, expressed her pride in the successful partnership with INJAZ Kuwait for the last 17 years, as they work together to support the next generation of young entrepreneurs and leaders, amidst the rapid developments in various economic sectors.

Al-Attar emphasized that Gulf Bank is keen to fulfill its social responsibility towards youth, especially those at high school and university levels, including recent graduates. The bank provides youth with basic concepts related to business, exploring professional interests and opportunities; in addition to developing job skills and field training.

She further indicated that Gulf Bank's strategic partnership with INJAZ Kuwait has led to a variety of

successes in 2022 - including training 8,830 high school and university students through more than 14 international training programs. Furthermore, 50 volunteers from Gulf Bank participated and assisted in various training activities offered by INJAZ Kuwait, of which include: Innovation Camp, Personal Finance, Career Success, Head Start, Job Shadow Day, and the Company Program.

It is worth noting that INJAZ Kuwait is part of the global network of Junior Achievement organization (NGO) driven by Kuwait's private sector. Through strategic partnerships with Kuwait's business and education sectors, and with the help of qualified and dedicated volunteers, INJAZ delivers both Arabic and English language educational programs on entrepreneurial and leadership skills, to build successful careers.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large.



Al-Attar

Pfizer tops Q1 forecasts; vaccine sales slide

Pfizer topped Wall Street expectations Tuesday even as sales of its top-selling COVID-19 vaccine crumbled in the first quarter. Revenue from Pfizer's Comirnaty vaccine fell 77% to \$3 billion in the first three months of the year, compared with more than \$13 billion during the same stretch last year. The drop was widely expected because the drug-maker is moving this year from supplying governments through big contracts to selling the vaccine on the commercial market. Pfizer expects sales from Comirnaty to drop 64% this year and revenue from its market-leading COVID-19 treatment Pax-

lovid to slide 58% due to this shift. Sales of Paxlovid actually jumped past \$4 billion in the first quarter, largely due to the timing of a final delivery for Pfizer's U.S. government contract. Pfizer expects commercial sales for both to kick in later this year, after leftover government inventory is absorbed. Both the vaccine and treatment have generated billions in revenue for Pfizer over the last several quarters. But the drugmaker also produces cancer treatments and other vaccines. Revenue grew 4% to \$1.6 billion in the first quarter from Pfizer's Pevnar vaccines for preventing pneumonia and related bacterial diseases. (AP)

Merck has strong first quarter

Merck beat first-quarter expectations and hiked its 2023 forecast even as sales plunged for its COVID-19 treatment and a strong dollar hurt revenue. Soaring sales of the drugmaker's top seller, the cancer treatment Keytruda, helped counter those hits, a drop expected by analysts. Merck said Thursday that sales of the COVID-19 treatment Lagevrio sank 88% in the quarter to \$392 million. Lagevrio and Pfizer's Paxlovid debuted well over a year ago, as COVID-19 cases were surging and patients were eager to try the first pill treatments for the virus. Sales of Lagevrio have since cooled in both the U.S. and United Kingdom.

Merck's drug inserts tiny errors into the coronavirus' genetic code to slow its reproduction. U.S. regulators have said it should be used cautiously. In February, a European medical committee recommended rejection of the drug. Merck still expects about \$1 billion in sales from Lagevrio this year. The drugmaker's total revenue fell 9% to \$14.49 billion in the quarter. That beat analyst expectations for \$13.79 billion, according to the data firm FactSet. Not counting Lagevrio and the impact of foreign exchange rates, sales climbed 18%, Merck said. (AP)

NerdWallet

'You can put assets in a trust'

Trusts can aid those with mental illness or disorder

By Elizabeth Ayoola
NerdWallet

More than 50% of Americans will be diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder during their lifetime, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Chances are, some of these individuals will be inheriting wealth at some point. If a family member's mental health issues may interfere with their ability to manage finances, answering these questions could help them create long-term financial stability.

Set up a trust

Setting up a trust is one way to transfer wealth to a loved one and create financial stability for them. A trust enables you to leave specific instructions for trustees about how to care for your loved one and distribute assets.

Trusts can be especially helpful for transferring assets to loved ones who have a mental illness but are still able to function independently. While these loved ones are often independent, they may still have difficulty managing assets on their own, says Lillie Nkenchor, an attorney who does estate planning in New York. One example includes someone with depression.

"You can put assets in a trust," Nkenchor says. "It can simply be a trust that says, 'This money is to be used to take care of my sister who is high functioning, but is not great with money.'"

Likewise, you can request money be allocated to health care expenses and anything else that helps them live a healthy and functional life. Having a trust in place can also help beneficiaries avoid probate, a court process for handling estates that could be stressful for someone who has a mental illness.

Government assistance

Another important question to ask is whether the person receives government assistance or may need to in the future. While a basic trust may suffice for a loved one who has a mental illness but mostly functions independently, it could negatively impact one who doesn't and receives government assistance.

"We want to make sure that if we are caring for someone who's receiving that type of benefit, we don't accidentally leave them something that disqualifies them from that benefit," Nkenchor says.

People who receive government assistance may have limits on how much they can have in assets. For instance, to be eligible for Supplemental Security Income through Social Security, they generally can't have resources of more than \$2,000 as an individual or \$3,000 as a couple. That is, unless you put those assets into a special needs trust. It's an estate planning tool for individuals with disabilities or functional needs.

"The special needs trust is meant to supplement government benefits that person is receiving. It doesn't replace it, it's meant to supplement it," Nken-

chor says.

Nkenchor adds that a standard special needs trust isn't effective until the person who establishes the trust dies. So, if you plan to financially support your loved one while you're alive while they receive benefits, consider setting up a stand-alone special needs trust. Since setting up an SNT can be complicated, it's advisable you speak to a professional who specializes in this area. The Special Needs Alliance website has a directory that can point you toward attorneys for special needs planning to help you get started.

Right trustees

The estate managers you name will be responsible for distributing assets to your loved one when you die or if you're incapacitated. Talisa Utsey, an independent estate planning attorney licensed in Maryland and New York, says a mistake some people make is not appointing the right trustee. She adds that people sometimes take advantage of older adults, young people and those with mental illnesses.

You have two options: someone you know or a corporate fiduciary. Utsey says if you opt for the former, choose someone who has a good relationship with the beneficiary. You also want to be sure they have some knowledge of estates or can get advice from someone who does.

"If they are not familiar with estate administration, if they're not familiar with the documents that give them the authority, they're not familiar with their actual authority, then that can be harmful," Utsey says.

Alternatively, you may choose to appoint a corporate trustee since they're usually experienced and have no emotional investment. For example, you could use a financial institution like a bank. Just know that corporate fiduciaries often charge heavy fees.

Utsey also advises appointing at least one successor trustee - a person who takes over trustee duties if the initial trustee can't serve. And don't forget to consult with prospective trustees first, Utsey says: "Make sure that the primary and the successor are both interested in taking on that type of responsibility."

Estate plan

To protect your loved one from financial abuse and prevent mishandled funds, you want your plan to be clear and streamlined, Utsey says. This means ensuring all your accounts and assets are addressed to the trust, none are in your loved one's name, and there are clear directions about how money is spent. All assets should flow through the trust if possible.

"When there's a plan, there's less likelihood of manipulation and funds being wasted because it's clear, it's a process and it's written down in plain English, and black and white," Utsey says. "And to some extent, it's legally enforceable when it's done the right way."

Being clear will also help the trustee execute your plan with ease. (AP)

New tool to provide a precise, expansive analysis

Twist and Aster partner to launch next gen oncology panel for cancer research

Streamline data acquisition at point of care

Flatiron collaborates with Sanofi to make 'clinical trials' more efficient

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. & TAMPA, Fla., May 2: Twist Bioscience Corporation (NASDAQ: TWST), a company enabling customers to succeed through its offering of high-quality synthetic DNA using its silicon platform, and Aster Insights, a bioinformatics company with the most advanced, direct-patient, lifetime-consented clinico-genomics data to accelerate oncology discovery research, have announced the availability of the AsterExome panel, which can simultaneously enable whole exome sequencing (WES) with additional coverage for target regions known to contain 620 genes associated with cancer. By integrating the panel into Aster Insights' Avatar @ sequencing program, AsterExome can provide comprehensive analysis in the discovery research market for solid tumor and heme malignancy samples.

"This new panel, built with Twist's design expertise and custom NGS tools, delivers critical innovation in oncology research, creating greater efficiency and markedly increasing coverage of cancer genes, including those associated with solid tumors, to help expedite discovery," said Dan Elgort, Chief Data and Analytics Officer of Aster Insights. "With this new tool in our arsenal, we expect to provide a precise, expansive analysis for patient care."

Accuracy

"We were able to blend targets from Aster Insights with Twist's Exome 2.0 design to create a custom panel with high accuracy, efficiently designed to enable cancer research," said Emily M. Leproust, CEO and co-founder of Twist Bioscience. "This custom panel provides balanced coverage of cancer-associated genes that are easily detected, as well as those that often go undetected."

The AsterExome panel's unique design helps facilitate identification of copy number variations that are often undetected by standard next-generation sequencing (NGS) panels, which can be helpful in identifying cancers driven by gene amplifications. The panel also maintains somatic mutation detection accuracy, sensitivity, and precision for the discovery of a wide range of somatic alterations.

The AsterExome panel will be integrated into Aster Insights' Avatar program, which can enable informatics-based analysis of paired tumor and germline DNA and RNA sequencing

NEW YORK, May 2: Flatiron Health has announced a new collaboration with Sanofi in their pursuit to redesign the clinical trial experience for sponsors, sites, and patients in the therapeutic area of oncology.

The multi-study collaboration between Sanofi and Flatiron will focus on improving clinical trial data acquisition, delivery, and quality through site-facing technology that digitally transfers data captured in the electronic health record (EHR) directly into the electronic data capture (EDC) system through Flatiron Health's EHR-to-EDC product, Flatiron Clinical Pipe™. Clinical trial sites will be able to reduce time spent on both manual, high-volume data entry and downstream data resolution issues, so that they have more time to spend with patients.

By focusing on the area of oncology, this collaboration intends to accelerate development of new treatments and help more people with cancer. The collaboration will make it easier for sites to participate in oncology tri-

als by reducing redundant, manual and often error-prone data entry processes, including taxing local lab management. This novel approach will be used across a portfolio of trials and a broad network of research sites - including both Academic and Community cancer centers.

The initial Sanofi trial using Flatiron's technology had its first automated data push earlier this year, successfully transferring over 50% of study data from the EHR to the EDC. Sanofi and Flatiron will collaborate on data standards and mapping to expand the volume and types of data eligible for automated transfer. Additionally, as a result of deploying Flatiron Clinical Pipe™, Flatiron expects the number of queries to decrease by roughly 50%, adding to efficiency gains for both sites and Sanofi study teams.

"Flatiron's expansion into the clinical research space is a natural progression for us. With the FDA's guidance 3 on interoperable technology that allows electronic transmission of relevant EHR data to the EDC system,

we knew we had an opportunity with Flatiron Clinical Pipe to unlock the potential of data captured in the EHR, reduce the burden of clinical trials and accelerate research timelines," says Alex Deyle, General Manager, Clinical Research, Flatiron Health. "We're incredibly excited to collaborate and partner with forward-thinkers like Sanofi, who share our aspiration to leverage data and technology to transform clinical research. We look forward to working with the industry to solve a variety of challenges in the clinical research space-for the benefit of sponsors, CROs, sites and ultimately, the patients."

Flatiron Health is a healthtech company expanding the possibilities for point of care solutions in oncology and using data for good to power smarter care for every person with cancer. Through machine learning and AI, real-world evidence, and breakthroughs in clinical trials, we continue to transform patients' real-life experiences into knowledge and create a more modern, connected oncology ecosystem.

data from patients consented via the Total Cancer Care ® (TCC) protocol. Aster Insight's real-world Avatar data set comes from its Oncology Research Information Exchange Network ® (ORIEN) partners, an alliance of 18 of the nation's top cancer centers across more than a dozen US states. Orien focuses on collaborative research to accelerate the development and discovery of treatments for advanced stage cancers and improve clinical outcomes for cancer patients worldwide. To date, more than 360,000 patients across Orien member sites have provided lifetime consent using the TCC protocol.

Aster Insights is a leading oncology-focused bioinformatics solutions company advancing precision medicine and transforming cancer care through clinical and molecular data and ana-

lytics tools. The company's innovative dataset accelerates the discovery, development, and delivery of personalized therapies. Aster Insights is the only bioinformatics company that has lifetime, patient-consented longitudinal clinical data, coupled with whole exome (WES) and whole transcriptome (WTS) sequencing, for both tumor and germline data. Aster Insight's Oncology Research Information Exchange Network ® (Orien), an alliance of NCI-Designated cancer centers that gather de-identified and lifetime-consented clinical and genomic patient data for research purposes, enables a collaborative approach to medical product discovery.

Twist Bioscience is a leading and rapidly growing synthetic biology and genomics company that has developed

a disruptive DNA synthesis platform to industrialize the engineering of biology. The core of the platform is a proprietary technology that pioneers a new method of manufacturing synthetic DNA by "writing" DNA on a silicon chip. Twist is leveraging its unique technology to manufacture a broad range of synthetic DNA-based products, including synthetic genes, tools for next-generation sequencing (NGS) preparation, and antibody libraries for drug discovery and development. Twist is also pursuing longer-term opportunities in digital data storage in DNA and biologics drug discovery. Twist makes products for use across many industries including healthcare, industrial chemicals, agriculture and academic research.

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Writers facing an 'existential crisis'

Hollywood writers, slamming 'gig economy,' go on strike

NEW YORK, May 2, (AP): Television and movie writers declared late Monday that they will launch a strike for the first time in 15 years, as Hollywood girded for a walkout with potentially widespread ramifications in a fight over fair pay in the streaming era.

The Writers Guild of America said that its 11,500 unionized screenwriters will head to the picket lines on Tuesday. Negotiations between studios and the writers, which began in March, failed to reach a new contract before the writers' current deal expired just after midnight, at 12:01 a.m. PDT Tuesday. All script writing is to immediately cease, the guild informed its members.

The board of directors for the WGA, which includes both a West and an East branch, voted unanimously to call for a strike, effective at the stroke of midnight. Writers, they said, are facing an "existential crisis."

"The companies' behavior has created a gig economy inside a union workforce, and their immovable stance in this negotiation has betrayed a commitment to further devaluing the profession of writing," the WGA said in a statement. "From their refusal to guarantee any level of weekly employment in episodic television, to the creation of a 'day rate' in comedy variety, to their stonewalling on free work for screenwriters and on AI for all writers, they have closed the door on their labor force and opened the door to writing as an entirely freelance profession. No such deal could ever be contemplated by this membership."

The Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, the trade association that bargains on behalf of studios and production companies, signaled late Monday that negotiations fell short of an agreement before the current contract expired. The AMPTP said it presented an

offer with "generous increases in compensation for writers as well as improvements in streaming residuals."

In a statement, the AMPTP said that it was prepared to improve its offer "but was unwilling to do so because of the magnitude of other proposals still on the table that the guild continues to insist upon."

The labor dispute could have a cascading effect on TV and film productions depending on how long the strike persists. But a shutdown has been widely forecast for months due to the scope of the discord. The writers last month voted overwhelmingly to authorize a strike, with 98% of membership in support.

At issue is how writers are compensated in an industry where streaming has changed the rules of Hollywood economics. Writers say they aren't being paid enough, TV writer rooms have shrunk too much and the old calculus for how residuals are paid out needs to be redrawn.

"The survival of our profession is at stake," the guild has said.

Conditions

Streaming has exploded the number of series and films that are annually made, meaning more jobs for writers. But WGA members say they're making much less money and working under more strained conditions. Showrunners on streaming series receive just 46% of the pay that showrunners on broadcast series receive, the WGA claims. Content is booming, but pay is down.

The guild is seeking more compensation on the front-end of deals. Many of the back-end payments writers have historically profited by - like syndication and international licensing - have been largely phased

out by the onset of streaming. More writers - roughly half - are being paid minimum rates, an increase of 16% over the last decade. The use of so-called mini-writers rooms has soared.

The AMPTP said Monday that the primary sticking points to a deal revolved around those mini-rooms - the guild is seeking a minimum number of scribes per writer room - and duration of employment restrictions. The guild has said more flexibility for writers is needed when they're contracted for series that have tended to be more limited and short-lived than the once-standard 20-plus episode broadcast season.

At the same time, studios are under increased pressure from Wall Street to turn a profit with their streaming services. Many studios and production companies are slashing spending. The Walt Disney Co. is eliminating 7,000 jobs. Warner Bros. Discovery is cutting costs to lessen its debt. Netflix has pumped the breaks on spending growth.

When Hollywood writers have gone on strike, it's often been lengthy. In 1988, a WGA strike lasted 153 days. The last WGA strike went for 100 days, beginning in 2007 and ending in 2008.

The most immediate effect of the strike viewers are likely to notice will be on late-night shows and "Saturday Night Live." All are expected to immediately go dark. During the 2007 strike, late-night hosts eventually returned to the air and improvised material. Jay Leno wrote his own monologues, a move that angered union leadership.

On Friday's episode of "Late Night," Seth Meyers, a WGA member who said he supported the union's demands, prepared viewers for reruns while lamenting the hardship a strike entails.

Variety



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Lily Sullivan in a scene from 'Evil Dead Rise.' (AP)

Film

Michelle Yeoh seeks new challenges

Women monsters, heroes in 'Evil Dead Rise'

LOS ANGELES, May 2, (AP): When director Lee Cronin set out to make the latest installment of the "Evil Dead" franchise, he knew he wanted to bring a fresh angle to his version of the iconic horror series while still giving winks and nods throughout to his source material.

"I didn't want to reboot a reboot or reboot something from before. So, I needed to find a new world, new characters," he said.

After meeting with Sam Raimi, who created the original 1981 "Evil Dead," Cronin walked away with two stipulations for his new movie, "Evil Dead Rise," which hit theaters recently.

He wanted to take the "Evil Dead" lore to an urban environment, unlike the traditional rural cabin setting, and he wanted the story to center around a family.

"The cogs started turning in my mind and I knew family and city and a kind of a world that maybe people could identify with," he recalled. "I started to look at the construct of that family and then to look at some of the people in my own life."

Those people included "powerful women figures," which inspired the director to make the first "Evil Dead" installment with a cast primarily comprising women.

"Evil Dead Rise" follows two sisters, Ellie (Alyssa Sutherland) and Beth (Lily Sullivan). After her children discover a strange book hidden beneath their Los Angeles apartment building, Ellie becomes possessed by a demon hellbent on destroying everything in its path, leaving Aunt Beth with the seemingly futile task of trying to escape with the kids.

That backdrop, Cronin said, was ripe for probing the psychological terrors that can stem from familial relationships and that would be compounded by the existential threat of a blood-lusting demon.

"That works quite well in horror storytelling

because every single human carries baggage with them every day," he said. "It just lent itself to this exploration of maternal affairs and what it might mean if you're a mother or what it might mean if your mother was to turn on you."

And although Cronin thought through his heady inquiry of maternal relationships and attachment theory, "Evil Dead Rise" is, like the other films in its franchise, at its core a terrifying and bloody 100 minutes of entertainment.

While the film asked a lot physically of both Sutherland and Sullivan, they said it was ultimately an enjoyable and cathartic project.

"To see a really horrific woman and play a horrific woman on screen, that was wonderful," Sutherland said.

"I would love to say that it was like a real struggle to get to that place but I recognized that I am a little bit of a former people pleaser, and I had a lot of unexpressed rage and I just tapped into that," she added, musing that a lot of women can probably relate.

And although Sullivan recalled some of the physical demands put on her, including being completely submerged in fake blood, as being a "form of torture," she and Sutherland said their days were ameliorated by the fact that their contracts included a "self-care fund" — which they both spent on frequent massages.

Also:

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia: Michelle Yeoh says she is looking for new challenges including as a producer, as she credited perseverance, hard work and passion for her historic Oscar win last month.

The 60-year-old became the first Asian to win the Academy Award for best actress for her performance as a laundromat owner in "Everything Everywhere All at Once." The movie won a total of seven awards, including best picture.

Returning to her native Malaysia to celebrate her mother's birthday, Yeoh said she felt a sense of relief after clinching the award.

"It was a roller coaster ride that started last year when the movie first came out. It was a whole year of not knowing, wanting, hoping, wishing," she told a news conference.

"During the journey, everyone was asking, 'Do you want the Oscar?' I said, hell, yes, of course I want the Oscar. Who doesn't? I am not going to beat around the bush and say no because it represents so much to so many of us."

Yeoh reiterated that her Oscar victory was a "beacon of hope" for Asian women.

"It shows us it can be done and all of you can do it," she said.

Yeoh, who started her career in Hong Kong before becoming a Hollywood star, said she was blessed to have been able to work on diverse movies and with "forward thinking filmmakers to fight for what I truly believe in — representation, diversity, especially empowerment of women." She said she refuses to be boxed in stereotypical roles but believes in pushing the envelope in her career.

While she has no interest in directing, she said she may branch out again as a producer.

"Directors have no life. I love my life too much," she said in jest. "I love producing. I have produced before and now I can start to do so again ... now I am able to branch out more because people have started to listen, and appreciate what you can bring forward. As an actor, I love what I can do. I am so lucky to be able to say it's not a job, it's really a passion."

"I am always looking for a challenge," she said. "I believe there is so much to do in our part of the world. All of us collectively. Don't isolate yourself. Don't feel that I must always tell my story. We are collaborators, we are storytellers. Let's work together and do great things."

LOS ANGELES: Six months after she was immortalized with a US quarter, Asian American Hollywood trailblazer **Anna May Wong** has received another accolade affirming her icon status - her own Barbie.

Mattel announced Monday the release of an Anna May Wong doll for Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

The figure has her trademark bangs, eyebrows and well-manicured nails. The doll is dressed in a red gown with a shiny golden dragon design and cape, inspired by her appearance in the 1934 movie "Limehouse Blues."

Wong's niece, Anna Wong, gave her blessing and worked closely with the brand to develop the Barbie's look.

"I did not hesitate at all. It was such an honor and so exciting," Wong told The Associated Press in an email. "I wanted to make sure they got her facial features and clothing correct. And they did!"

As a child, Anna Wong owned a Barbie and Skipper doll (Barbie's little sister) and a Barbie dream house and car. She loves the idea that Asian children will now have a doll who looks like them.

The doll is part of the Barbie "Inspiring Women" series, which features dolls in the likeness of pioneering women. Past inspirations include aviator **Amelia Earhart** and artist **Frida Kahlo**.

"As the first Asian American actor to lead a US television show, whose perseverance broke down barriers for her gender and AAPI community in film and TV, Anna May Wong is the perfect fit for our Barbie Inspiring Women Series," **Lisa McKnight**, an executive vice president at Mattel, said in a statement.

Born in Los Angeles, the Chinese American actor is considered the first major Asian American movie star. (AP)

NEW ORLEANS: He is a senior at 16. His grade point average is 4.98. Even before graduating from high school, he has earned 27 college credits and, perhaps the most impressive numbers of all, he has scholarship offers from around 130 colleges and universities that, as of Thursday, totaled more than \$9 million.

Dennis Maliq Barnes' achievements at the International High School of New Orleans are a source of pride for school administrators who are looking into whether Barnes has set a record for scholarship offers. But it wasn't a record he was looking for as he piled up around 200 applications to colleges around the nation.



Wong



Barnes

It was about making sure he had plenty of options. "I just kept going forward, kept applying, kept applying to different schools that I thought would even remotely interest me," he said in an interview — occasionally interrupted by the rumble of streetcars rolling by outside as he sat in the urban charter school's

computer room. His plan is to major in computer science as an undergraduate. But he also said he has done work as an intern at the **Louisiana State Bar Association** — the offices are a short walk from the high school campus — and that has him thinking about law school. He credits a strong religious

faith as part of his success. He also gives a lot of credit to **Denise James**, the school's college admissions counselor. James and Head of School Adierah Berger both describe Barnes as a leader and an example to other students — including the school's English language learners. (AP)

People & Places

Fashion

Met's loving tribute

Lagerfeld's 'show' focuses on works

NEW YORK, May 2, (AP): Seven words from **Karl Lagerfeld** adorn a doorway at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's sumptuous new exhibit honoring the late, legendary designer: "Fashion does not belong in a museum."

Andrew Bolton, who masterminds the New York museum's blockbuster Costume Institute shows each year, chuckled as he led a visitor through that doorway this weekend, a few days before opening, with crews nearby bustling to prepare for Monday's splashy Met Gala.

"That's what Karl said to me when I met him," the star curator said. "He believed fashion was not art - it belonged on the street. So, I really don't know what he would think of all this! I'm not sure he would come."

"All this" is a lavish, loving tribute to the hugely prolific career of German-born Lagerfeld, who died in 2019 at 85 after more than a half-century of designing that left a deep mark on luxury fashion, especially at Chanel, but also at Fendi, at his own eponymous label, and elsewhere.

Set in 14 galleries, the show's very walls have been constructed to embody the essential contradiction, or duality, in Lagerfeld's style and persona - a series of curved and straight lines. The show, titled "Karl Lagerfeld: A Line of Beauty," is large in scope but intricately detailed, and clear in its message: Lagerfeld's creative tentacles spread far beyond fashion into culture, and constantly adapted with the times.

What the exhibit does not do, purposely, is focus on Lagerfeld's words - despite that quote on the doorway.

Many of Lagerfeld's best-known quotes have shocked people over the years as he opined on subjects from #MeToo (skeptically), curvy bodies (dismissively), and political issues like immigration (offensively, to many). What was more interesting to Bolton, he says, was to focus on the work, and that was daunting enough. He examined 10,000 items before slowly winnowing the show down to about 200.

Legacy

"He was Karl," the curator said, noting that Lagerfeld himself referred to not always meaning what he said. "There could be 10, 20 different shows on Karl. To me, I thought the way to get to know him better, and understand his contradictions, was through his work." And at end of the day, he says, "that's his legacy - the body of work you see here."

Bolton's shows, which have brought many thousands of visitors to the museum, have mostly centered on concepts and not individuals. But it's hard not to sense that this show, dedicated to one man, is more personal for him, as he walks through the galleries and stops before a relatively simple tweed suit with a tight ribcage, narrow waist and exaggerated hips that he calls his favorite item.

Each gallery combines contradictory moods: romantic and military, historical and futuristic, feminine and masculine, floral and geometric. Filmy tulle coexists with shiny black plastic. It's striking to think the same mind conjured up the pastel pink gown with cascading roses, and a jaunty design with huge block alphabet letters, which Lagerfeld loved because, Bolton says, "L comes after K in the alphabet. So, KL."

One showstopping number is a glittery, golden embroidered dress, at its time said to be the most expensive ever made, Bolton said, because of its ingredients: literally, it's spun with gold. In contrast, another item is simply "plastic on plastic."

What stands out is the variety, making it impossible to describe one Lagerfeld style, even though his personal uniform became so recognizable that he called himself a caricature: the gray ponytail, the starchy white collars, the black fingerless gloves, leather pants, dark Chanel shades - a morphing of Mozart and maybe Keith Richards.

But that in itself, the show argues, is what defines the designer and explains his longevity: that he was always changing, in a determined - perhaps even obsessive - bid to stay relevant.

"He was a chameleon," said Bolton, "able to change with the times so quickly. I think the reason he designed for so many years is that he wanted to remain relevant. Everything he did was about being in tune with the zeitgeist."

Lagerfeld was also a man with many interests: Literature, film, photography, music - and business, too, making him an early example of designer-as-impresario. Carla Bruni, the singer, former first lady of France and longtime associate of Lagerfeld, spoke of these interests in remarks Monday at an unveiling of the show, which opens Friday to the public.

"He was constantly working, sketching and photographing," Bruni said. "He was interested in everything, in everyone. Everything interested him - except mediocrity."

To illustrate this, Bolton has created an item sure to draw eyeballs: a faithful recreation of Lagerfeld's chaotic desk.

It is piled with books, magazines, favored sketching pencils from Caran D'Ache, and a glass of Diet Coke (actually resin, here).

"He drank it all day long," Bolton said. "I never saw him without his glass of Coke."

Collection

To create the tableau, Bolton spent three days in Paris photographing Lagerfeld's library. Not wanting to disturb the actual collection, he sourced books from Amazon. The cultural artifacts range from highbrow to lowbrow.

"He wasn't a snob," Bolton says, then catching himself: "Well, he WAS a snob. But he was a democratic snob."

There's also a sketchpad: open, and blank: "We wanted it to look as if he was about to sketch."

It was also sketching that provided the inspiration for the show. Bolton was at Lagerfeld's memorial at the majestic Grand Palais in Paris - "much hoopla, as you can imagine" - and was touched by footage of the designer sketching, "lost in his imagination, oblivious to everybody." He started dreaming up a show. (Lagerfeld was also a close friend of Anna Wintour, the influential Vogue editor who masterminds the gala and is one of this year's hosts. Chanel is the show's main sponsor.)

The exhibit centers first and foremost on the dichotomy of the curved "S" line (think romantic, decorative) and the straight line (modern, minimalist), with one curved wall and one straight wall in each gallery, and designs that express each aesthetic.



Tom Hamilton, (from left), Steven Tyler, Joe Perry, John Douglas and Brad Whitford of Aerosmith, perform on Sept. 8, 2022, at Fenway Park in Boston. Aerosmith will be touring a city near you for the last time to celebrate their 50-plus years of being together. The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame band announced Monday, May 1, the dates for their farewell tour called "Peace Out" starting Sept. 2 in Philadelphia. (AP)

Music

'Peace Out' tour celebrates the 50 years

Aerosmith announces farewell tour

LOS ANGELES, May 2, (AP): Aerosmith will be touring a city near you for the last time to celebrate the rock band's 50-plus years together.

The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame band announced Monday the dates for their farewell tour called "Peace Out" starting Sept. 2 in Philadelphia. The 40-date run of shows, which includes a stop in the band's hometown of Boston on New Year's Eve, will end Jan. 26 in Montreal.

"I think it's about time," guitarist Joe Perry said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Perry said the group, with frontman Steven Tyler, bassist Tom Hamilton, drummer Joey Kramer and guitarist Brad Whitford, learned from the staging and production from their recent Las Vegas residency shows.

Perry believes the time to say goodbye is now, especially with every founding band member over the age of 70. Tyler, 75, is the oldest in the group.

"It's kind of a chance to celebrate the 50 years we've been out here," Perry said. "You never know how much longer everybody's going to be healthy to do this. ... It's been a while since we've actually done a real tour. We did that run in Vegas, which was great. It was fun, but (we're) kind of anxious to get back on the road."

Tyler and Perry said the band is looking forward to digging into their lengthy catalog of the group's rock classics including "Crazy," "Janie's Got a Gun" and "Livin' on the Edge."

Over the years, Aerosmith, which formed in 1970, has collected four Grammys. The band broke boundaries intersecting rock and hip-hop with their epic collaboration with Run-DMC for "Walk This Way."

Aerosmith performed the Super Bowl halftime show in 2001 and

even had their own theme park attraction in 1999 at Disney World in Florida and later in Paris with the launch of the "Rock 'n' Roller Coaster Starring Aerosmith" ride.

"We're opening up Pandora's Box one last time to present our fans with the Peace Out tour," Tyler said in a statement to the AP. His "Pandora's Box" reference calls out Aerosmith's 1991 three-disc compilation album that covered the band's output from the 1970s to the early 1980s.

"Be there or beware as we bring all the toys out of the attic. Get ready," Tyler added.

The band said Kramer decided to not take part in the current dates on the upcoming tour. He's still a part of the group, but the drummer has been on leave to "focus his attention on his family and health" since their Vegas residency last year. Drummer John Douglas will continue to play in his place.

Perry called Kramer their brother. The band said his "legendary presence behind the drum kit will be sorely missed."

Before the 40-date tour wraps, Perry said other cities domestically and internationally could be added. "It's the final farewell tour, but I have a feeling it will go on for a while," he said. "But I don't know how many times we'll be coming back to the same cities. It could very possibly be the last time."

Also:

NEW YORK: Foo Fighters have announced a new album is in the works, the first since the death of the band's drummer, Taylor Hawkins.

The rockers said in a statement that the upcoming 10-track "But Here We Are" will be "a brutally honest and emotionally raw response to everything Foo Fighters endured over the last year."

The lead, driving single is "Res-

cued," with the lyrics "I'm just waiting to be rescued/Bring me back to life/Kings and queens and in-betweens/We all deserve the right."

The new album will be released June 2 and is produced by Greg Kurstin and Foo Fighters. Other titles include "Hearing Voices," "Show Me How," "Nothing At All" and "Rest," the ending song.

Hawkins died March 25, 2022, during a South American tour with the rock band. He was 50.



NASHVILLE, Tennessee: Country superstar and newly minted Rock & Roll Hall of Famer Dolly Parton will give fans a glimpse of her upcoming rock album during the 58th Academy of Country Music Awards.

Parton, who was voted into the Hall of Fame last year, will close out the awards show with her performance of "World On Fire," from her record "Rock Star." The ACMs will be held on May 11 in Frisco, Texas and available to watch on Prime Video and the Amazon Music channel on Twitch.

Parton told The Associated Press that her new album will have 30 songs and is packed with so many featured artists that it's more like an event.

"I've never done a rock album, for sure I'll never do another one," said Parton. "But I got enough stuff on there that will last for a lifetime and another one."

In addition to Parton, the ACMs announced on Thursday more performers for the awards show, including Jason Aldean, Kane Brown, Luke Combs, Cody Johnson, Miranda Lambert, Jo Dee Messina, Ashley McBryde, Jelly Roll, Cole Swindell, Keith Urban, Morgan Wallen, The War and Treaty, Lainey Wilson and Bailey Zimmerman.



Rihanna, (left), and A\$AP Rocky at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute benefit gala celebrating the opening of the 'Karl Lagerfeld: A Line of Beauty' exhibition on Monday, May 1, in New York. (AP)



Thomas



Lightfoot

Variety

TORONTO: Gordon Lightfoot, the legendary folk singer-songwriter known for "If You Could Read My Mind" and "Sundown" and for songs that told tales of Canadian identity, died Monday. He was 84.

Representative Victoria Lord said the musician died at a Toronto hospital. His cause of death was not immediately available.

Considered one of the most renowned voices to emerge from Toronto's Yorkville folk club scene in the 1960s, Lightfoot recorded 20 studio albums and penned hundreds of songs, including "Carefree Highway," "Early Morning Rain" and "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald."

In the 1970s, Lightfoot garnered five Grammy nominations, three platinum records and nine gold records for albums and singles. He performed in well over 1,500 concerts and recorded 500 songs.

He toured late into his life. Just last month he canceled upcoming US and Canadian shows, citing health issues.

"We have lost one of our greatest singer-songwriters," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau tweeted. "Gordon Lightfoot captured our country's spirit in his music - and in doing so, he helped shape Canada's soundscape. May his music continue to inspire future generations, and may his legacy live on forever."

Once called a "rare talent" by Bob Dylan, Lightfoot has been covered by dozens of artists, including Elvis Presley, Barbra Streisand, Harry Belafonte, Johnny Cash, Anne Murray, Jane's Addiction and Sarah McLachlan.

Most of his songs are deeply autobiographical with lyrics that probe his own experiences in a frank manner and explore issues surrounding the Canadian national identity. "Canadian Railroad Trilogy" depicted the construction of the railway.

"I simply write the songs about where I am and where I'm from," he once said. "I take situations and write poems about them."

Lightfoot's music had a style all its own. "It's not country, not folk, not rock," he said in a 2000 interview. Yet it has strains of all three.

"The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald," for instance, is a haunting tribute to the 29 men who died in the 1975 sinking

of the ship in Lake Superior during a storm.

While Lightfoot's parents recognized his musical talents early, he didn't set out to become a renowned balladeer.

He began singing in his church choir and dreamed of becoming a jazz musician. At age 13, the soprano won a talent

contest at the Kiwanis Music Festival, held at Toronto's Massey Hall. (AP)



CANTON, Miss: Bestselling author Angie Thomas surprised a senior at a Mississippi high school with a full-ride scholarship for creative writing to the

private university where Thomas earned her bachelor's degree.

Thomas, currently on a new book tour, delivered the news via video. Students cheered as she congratulated Canton High School senior Ahniya Myers for winning the 2023 Angie Thomas Writers Scholarship.

"As I read Ahniya's writing samples, I immediately fell in love with her craft," said Thomas. "Her talent and skill blew me away, and I know that the creative writing program was created with a student like her in mind."

The scholarship was named in honor of Thomas, a 2011 graduate of Belhaven University in Jackson, Mississippi. It was created to help young aspiring writers who need extra support to make their dreams of authorship a reality, the university said in a news release.

"By giving Ahniya this scholarship, she can focus more on her studies and writing, which will allow her gift to thrive," Thomas said.

"It's an honor to know that this scholarship could play a key role in the journey of yet another exceptional writer."

Myers is the fourth student to win the scholarship, which covers tuition, room and board at the university for four years. "Ahniya embodies both the spirit of the Angie Thomas Scholarship and the potential of an Angie Thomas Scholar," said Dr. Randall Smith, professor and chair of creative writing at the school. (AP)



K-pop group IVE perform during a K-Pop concert as part of Seoul Festa 2023 at Jamsil Sports Complex in Seoul, South Korea, Sunday, April 30, 2023. (AP)

Health

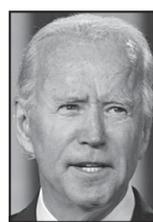
'Endemic illness'

US to end COVID shot 'mandates' next week

WASHINGTON, May 2, (AP): The Biden administration will end most of the last remaining federal COVID-19 vaccine requirements next week when the national public health emergency for the coronavirus ends, the White House said Monday.

Vaccine requirements for federal workers and federal contractors, as well as foreign air travelers to the US, will end May 11. The government is also beginning the process of lifting shot requirements for Head Start educators, healthcare workers, and noncitizens at US land borders.

The requirements are among the last vestiges of some of the more coercive measures taken by the federal government to promote vaccination as the deadly virus raged, and their end marks the latest display of how President Joe Biden's administration is moving to treat COVID-19 as a routine, endemic illness.



Biden

"While I believe that these vaccine mandates had a tremendous beneficial impact, we are now at a point where we think that it makes a lot of sense to pull these requirements down," White House COVID-19 coordinator Dr. Ashish Jha told The Associated Press on Monday.

Deeply polarizing at the time and the subject of numerous legal challenges - many of which were successful - the vaccination requirements were imposed by Biden in successive waves in late 2022 as the nation's vaccination rate plateaued even amid the emergence of new, more transmissible variants of COVID-19.

Recovery

More than 100 million people at one time were covered by Biden's sweeping mandates, which he announced on Sept. 9, 2021, as the delta variant of the virus was sickening more people than at any time up to that point in the pandemic. Biden had ruled out such requirements before taking office that January, but came to embrace them to change the behavior of what he viewed to be a stubborn slice of the public that refused to be inoculated, saying they jeopardized the lives of others and the nation's economic recovery.

"We've been patient. But our patience is wearing thin, and your refusal has cost all of us," Biden said at the time. The unvaccinated minority "can cause a lot of damage, and they are."

Federal courts and Congress have already rolled back Biden's vaccine requirements for large employers and military servicemembers.

Mandates remain for many employees of the National Institutes of Health, Indian Health Service and Department of Veterans Affairs - which implemented their own requirements for healthcare staff and others independent of the White House - will remain while those agencies review their own requirements, the administration said.

Over 1.13 million people in the US have died of COVID-19 since the pandemic began more than three years ago, including 1,052 people in the week ending April 26, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That was the lowest weekly death toll from the virus since March 2020.

"COVID continues to be a problem," Jha said. "But our healthcare system or public health resources are far more able to respond to the threat that COVID poses to our country and do so in a way that does not cause problems with access to care for Americans."

He added, "Some of these emergency powers are just not necessary in the same way anymore."

More than 270 million people in the US, or just over 81% of the population, have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, according to the CDC.

For more than a year, US health officials have been eyeing a long-term response to COVID-19 that is more similar to the approach to influenza, with updated shots yearly targeted at the latest strains of the virus - particularly for the most vulnerable. But fewer than 56 million people in the US, or 17% of the population, have received a dose of the updated bivalent boosters that became available in September 2022 and provide better protection against the omicron variants that remain in circulation.

"We don't have a national mandate for flu vaccines in the same way, and yet we see pretty good uptake of flu vaccines," Jha said. "The goal here really is to continue to encourage people to get vaccinated, but I don't think mandates are going to be necessary for getting Americans vaccinated against COVID in the future."

While federal mandates are ending, Jha predicted that some employers, especially medical facilities, may decide to maintain their COVID-19 vaccination requirements. He noted that the hospital where he practices has had a flu vaccine requirement for employees for 20 years.

Jha dismissed concerns that the ending of the international traveler vaccination requirement would increase the risk of a new variant from overseas entering the US. Biden has already rolled back virus testing requirements for both American citizens and foreign travelers to the US.

Jha said the US was already protected by a traveler genomic surveillance program, which, for instance, tests for different virus strains in aircraft wastewater.

"We think that we are much more able to identify if a new variant shows up in the United States and respond effectively," he said. "And I think that's what makes the need for a vaccine mandate for travelers less necessary right now."

Also:

NEW YORK: For millions of low-income New Yorkers, access to routine dental care has long hinged on whether or not they still have eight crucial teeth.

A mouth with just four pairs of matching back teeth is considered "adequate for functional purposes," according to the state's rules for Medicaid recipients. And those considered functional, no matter how many other teeth they're missing, aren't covered for root canals and crowns, two of the field's most common procedures.

Under a new legal settlement reached on Monday, the New York Department of Health must lift some of its most restrictive rules for Medicaid recipients, including the long-standing "eight points of contact" policy.

The change will expand dental coverage for an estimated 5 million people, dramatically improving oral health for low-income patients across the state, according to **Belkys Garcia**, an attorney with the Legal Aid Society, which brought the class-action suit in federal court in 2018.

"Before this, the Medicaid program was really just a tooth-pulling program," Garcia said. "If you needed a root canal or a crown, the program was set up to pull your teeth rather than treat them."

Medicaid programs vary across states and dental care is not a federally mandated benefit. A handful of states, including **Alabama** and **Delaware**, provide no dental coverage to adult Medicaid recipients, while roughly a dozen others offer care only in emergencies.

But states that do provide the optional benefit are required to cover all medically necessary care. The lawsuit argued that New York had imposed "rigid restrictions on crucial services," leading to the denial of coverage for medically necessary care.

Among the plaintiffs was **Matthew Adinolfi**, a former New York City taxi driver who had all but three of his teeth pulled after contracting a mouth infection in 2010. He soon discovered that his dentures slipped, preventing him from eating.



Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy testifies before the Senate Finance Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington, on Feb. 8, 2022, on youth mental health care. Widespread loneliness in the US is posing health risks as deadly as smoking a dozen cigarettes daily, costing the health industry billions of dollars annually, the US surgeon general said Tuesday in declaring the latest public health epidemic. About half of US adults say they've experienced loneliness, Murthy said in a new, 81-page report from his office. (AP)

Health

Isolation ups premature death risk by 30pct

'Loneliness as deadly as smoking'

WASHINGTON, May 2, (AP): Widespread loneliness in the US poses health risks as deadly as smoking a dozen cigarettes daily, costing the health industry billions of dollars annually, the US surgeon general said Tuesday in declaring the latest public health epidemic.

About half of US adults say they've experienced loneliness, Dr. Vivek Murthy said in an 81-page report from his office.

"We now know that loneliness is a common feeling that many people experience. It's like hunger or thirst. It's a feeling the body sends us when something we need for survival is missing," Murthy told The Associated Press in an interview. "Millions of people in America are struggling in the shadows, and that's not right. That's why I issued this advisory to pull back the curtain on a struggle that too many people are experiencing."

The declaration is intended to raise awareness around loneliness but won't unlock federal funding or programming devoted to combatting the issue.

Research shows that Americans, who have become less engaged with worship houses, community organizations and even their own family members in recent decades, have steadily reported an increase in feelings of loneliness. The number of single households has also doubled over the last 60 years.

Pandemic

But the crisis deeply worsened COVID-19 spread, prompting schools and workplaces to shut their doors and sending millions of Americans to isolate at home away from relatives or friends.

People culled their friend groups during the coronavirus pandemic and reduced time spent with those friends, the surgeon general's report finds. Americans spent about 20 minutes a day in person with friends in 2020, down from 60 minutes daily nearly two decades earlier.

The loneliness epidemic is hitting young people, ages 15 to 24, especially hard. The age group reported a 70% drop in time spent with friends during the same period.

Loneliness increases the risk of premature death by nearly 30%, with the report revealing that those with poor

CANBERRA, Australia, May 2, (AP): Australia's tobacco tax will be increased by billions of dollars over the next four years as the government cracks down on smoking and vaping.

Recreational vaping will be banned as the government seeks to prevent the next generation from becoming addicted to nicotine, Health Minister Mark Butler said Tuesday.

The tobacco tax would be raised by 5% a year starting from September, Butler said - a total increase of 3.3 billion Australian dollars (\$2.2 billion) over four years. This follows an AU\$234-million (\$157-million) boost for tougher regulation of e-cigarettes, including new controls on their importation and packaging.

The government will work with the states and territories to shut down the sale of vapes in retail and convenience stores and make it easier to get a prescription for therapeutic use.

To tackle the growing black market, the government will increase the product standards for vapes, including by restricting flavors and colors. It will require pharmaceutical-like packaging, a reduction in the maximum allowed nicotine con-

centrations and volumes and a ban on single-use vapes.

Butler cited children under 4 reported to Victoria state's poisons hotline after they used a vape to give an idea of the scale of the public health issue.

"This is a product targeted at our kids," Butler said. "Vaping has become the No. 1 behavioral issue in high schools, and it's becoming widespread in primary schools. This must end."

Butler said the hard-won gains in public health relating to the reduction in smoking could be undone by the "new threat."

Steve Robson, president of the Australian Medical Association, the nation's leading doctors group, backed the move. "We know the new young generation of Australians are being hooked on vapes and this is a great initiative," he said.

Alcohol and Drug Foundation CEO Erin Lalor said most people vaping in Australia were using unregulated products, with no idea what was in them.

"Some people who vape, including young people, may be unknowingly consuming nicotine and have formed a dependence," she said.

social relationships also had a greater risk of stroke and heart disease. Isolation also elevates a person's likelihood for experiencing depression, anxiety and dementia.

The surgeon general is calling on workplaces, schools, technology companies, community organizations, parents and other people to make changes that will boost the country's connectedness. He advises people to join community groups and put down their phones when they're catching up with friends; employers to think carefully about their remote work policies; and health systems to provide training for doctors to recognize the health risks of loneliness.

Technology has rapidly exacerbated the loneliness problem, with one study

cited in the report finding that people who used social media for two hours or more daily were more than twice as likely to report feeling socially isolated than those who were on such apps for less than 30 minutes a day.

Murthy said social media is driving the increase in loneliness in particular. His report suggests that technology companies roll out protections for children especially around their social media behavior.

"There's really no substitute for in-person interaction," Murthy said. "As we shifted to use technology more and more for our communication, we lost out on a lot of that in-person interaction. How do we design technology that strengthens our relationships as opposed to weaken them?"



A person poses for a photograph as they vape in Melbourne, March 23, 2023. Recreational vaping will be banned as the government seeks to prevent the next generation from becoming addicted to nicotine, Australia's Health Minister Mark Butler said Tuesday, May 2. (AP)



Planas



Musk

Discovery

Environmental groups sue FAA: Wildlife and environmental groups sued the Federal Aviation Administration on Monday over SpaceX's launch last month of its giant rocket from Texas.

SpaceX's Starship soared 24 miles (39 kilometers) high before exploding over the Gulf of Mexico on April 20. The rocket's self-destruct system caused the nearly 400-foot (120-meter) rocket to blow up, as it spun out of control just minutes into the test flight.

An attorney for the Center for Biological Diversity, one of the plaintiffs, said the groups are suing over what they consider to be the FAA's failure to fully consider the environmental impacts of the Starship program near Boca Chica Beach in South Texas. They asked the court to throw out the five-year license the FAA granted to SpaceX.

The FAA declined comment, noting it doesn't comment on ongoing litigation. The agency is overseeing the accident investigation and has ordered all SpaceX Starships grounded until it's certain that public safety will not be compromised.

Over the weekend, SpaceX founder and chief executive, **Elon Musk**, said his company could be ready to launch the next Starship in six to eight weeks with the FAA's OK.

No injuries or significant damage to public property were reported from any of the rocket wreckage or flying pad debris. A large crater was carved into the concrete pad, as most of the rocket's 33 main engines ignited at liftoff.

The launch pad is on a remote site on the southernmost tip of Texas, just below South Padre Island, and about 20 miles from Brownsville.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service reported last week that large concrete chunks, stainless steel sheets, metal and other objects were hurled thousands of feet (hundreds of meters) from the pad. In addition, a plume of pulverized concrete sent material up to 6.4 miles (4 kilometers) northwest of the pad, the service noted.

It was the first launch of a full-size Starship, with the sci-fi-looking spacecraft on top the huge booster rocket. (AP)

Summer arrives early in Spain: The perilous summer season arrived early to the Spanish shores with exceptionally high temperatures and a prolonged drought so severe it is threatening crops, forests, and the very well-being of residents.

This past month temperatures were high all over the country but especially so in Cordoba as it hit a record-breaking high of 38.8-Celsius degrees.

Spanish Metrology Center asserted that these temperatures are usually associated

with summertime rather than the typically calm months of spring.

This hike of temperature is accompanied by scarcity of rainfall, as Spain's last hydrologic year was the third driest with

23 percent less precipitation than average.

A Hydrologic year is a time period from October 1st to September 30th in which precipitation totals are measured.

This current hydrologic year averaged

334 liters per square meters, 24 percent less than expected value of 455 mmm, this is especially worrying as Spanish water reserves dry out as well.

Spokesperson on behalf of Spanish Metrological Agency, Ruben del Campo, indicated that last September marked the beginning of an extended drought wave that is exacerbating month by month.

In a TV interview, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, **Luis Planas**, described the situation as "unprecedented".

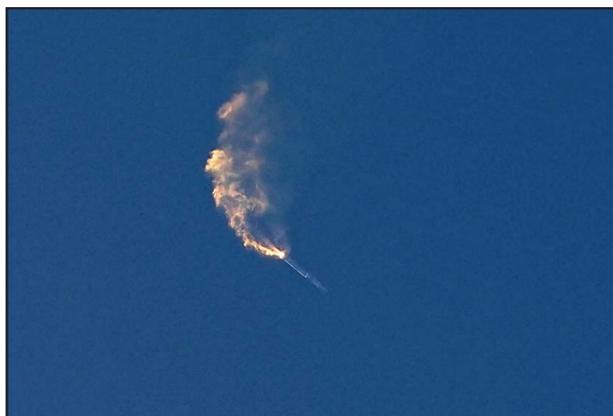
Around 60 percent of crops are being killed by the dehydration, read a report, adding that some 3.5 million hectares of rainfed seeds were lost.

Restrictions on water supply are yet another factor threatening rainfed agriculture.

Livestock farmers and beekeepers are also struggling to keep their businesses afloat as the drought is making it significantly hard to provide nutrition.

This will have direct effect on foodstuff prices, whether meats, produce, or seeds, especially as prices are already high due to the Russia-Ukraine crisis. Inflation of foodstuff prices reached 16.5 percent last April.

Fires are the third foe threatening biodiversity in Spain as the fire season commenced ahead of time and destroyed 57,000 hectares of forests since February 28. (KUNA)



SpaceX's Starship turns after its launch from Starbase in Boca Chica, Texas, Thursday, April 20, 2023. The Federal Aviation Administration is being sued by wildlife and environmental groups over SpaceX's launch of its giant rocket from Texas. The lawsuit was filed May 1, in federal court in Washington. (AP)

SPORTS

'Offers as low as 1% of equivalent TV rights price paid for men's WC not acceptable'

FIFA warns Europe of Women's World Cup broadcast blackout

GENEVA, May 2, (AP) — Publicly criticizing broadcasters for offering to pay too little to screen the Women's World Cup has not worked out yet for FIFA president Gianni Infantino, who is now threatening a blackout in major European markets.

SOCCER

A public standoff started by Infantino last October was intensified late Monday when he warned five key countries — England, France, Germany, Italy, Spain — where deals are still not signed less than three months before the tournament starts in Australia and New Zealand.

"To be very clear, it is our moral and legal obligation not to undersell the FIFA Women's World Cup," Infantino said

in a statement about the July 20-Aug. 20 tournament.

"Therefore, should the offers continue not to be fair (towards women and women's football), we will be forced not to broadcast the FIFA Women's World Cup into the 'Big 5' European countries."

England, France, Germany, Italy and Spain have all qualified for the first Women's World Cup to have 32 teams, and FIFA has a standby broadcasting option with its own online streaming platform FIFA+.

Europe is FIFA's most lucrative broadcast market with \$1.06 billion in TV revenue for the 2019-22 commercial cycle, mostly tied to the men's World Cup in Qatar.

FIFA reported total financial reserves close to \$4 billion at the end of 2022 with \$3.43 billion in broadcast revenue from total income of \$7.57 billion in the past four years.

Infantino first aired the Women's World Cup broadcasting issue seven months ago, when in Auckland for the of-

ficial draw for the tournament. He said then that offers as low as 1% of the equivalent TV rights price paid for the men's World Cup were "not acceptable."

In March, for world soccer's annual meeting in Rwanda, Infantino reported no progress with TV broadcasters while also announcing a more than three-fold increase in team prize money to \$110 million for the tournament.

Infantino has been clearly rankled that player-led criticism of FIFA for not offering equal prize money — the 32 men's teams shared \$440 million prize money at the 2022 World Cup — is amplified by media he believes is undervaluing women's soccer. The Women's World Cup has standalone broadcast and sponsor deals rather than being bundled with the men's tournament — a policy started since Infantino was elected in 2016, when he pledged "continued and intensified effort" to develop the women's game.

The FIFA leader suggested on Monday "public broadcast-

ers in particular have a duty to promote and invest in women's sport."

"Women deserve it! As simple as that!" he said.

However, Infantino's repeated criticism of European public service broadcasters has included Britain's BBC which regularly broadcasts domestic women's games live. The BBC's sports department has been led by a woman, Barbara Slater, for 14 years.

Asked for a response on Tuesday to Infantino's threat, the BBC said it did not comment on sports negotiations.

This Women's World Cup is far from an ideal time zone for European broadcasters. Daytime games in Australia and New Zealand play in the early hours of the morning in Europe, though Infantino said that was not an excuse.

Acknowledging it was not prime time in Europe, Infantino noted the European kickoff times of 9 a.m. or 10 a.m. "is quite a reasonable time" for viewers.

Financial dependence on Gazprom among concerns

IBA aims for progress in Oly dispute

GENEVA, May 2, (AP) — Seeking to resolve a years-long dispute with Olympic officials, the International Boxing Association said on Monday it will update the IOC this week and no longer has Russian energy giant Gazprom as a sponsor. Boxing's financial dependence on Gazprom is among governance and integrity concerns for the International Olympic Committee, which cut ties with the sport's governing body in 2019 and is planning for a second straight Summer Games without the IBA's involvement.

The schism led USA Boxing to terminate its IBA membership last week ahead of the men's world championships in Uzbekistan, which is also being boycotted by teams including Britain, Canada and Ireland.

The IBA and its Russian president Umar Kremlev used the first day of competition on Monday in Tashkent to stage a 90-minute press briefing that was both conciliatory and defiant.



Kremlev

"My mission is not to attract the International Olympic Committee or to make them like me," Kremlev said in translated comments that included a vulgar expression to suggest he had not shown deference to the Olympic body.

"Sorry for saying it in such a straightforward way," Kremlev said.

He noted that medals of "pure gold" will be awarded to champions over the next two weeks rather than gold-plated ones. Olympic champions in Tokyo two years ago got medals plated with at least six grams of gold over pure silver. The IOC also does not award prize money.

"Maybe they don't like us giving prize money which is even greater than the Olympics," said Kremlev, who has promised \$200,000 to champions this month. The

IBA has pledged that will rise to \$1 million prizes in the coming years.

Kremlev was flanked by former world champion Roy Jones Jr as both stressed the IBA was committed to boxers and helping them support their families, who often came from poor backgrounds.

"We don't want to pay for five-star hotels or for travel of sports officials," the IBA president said in what seemed another jibe at the Olympics.

The Kremlev-led IBA has also let boxers from Russia and Belarus compete with their own flag and anthem contrary to IOC guidance that athletes should compete only as neutrals under certain conditions. The IOC has stressed it has "no problem" with boxing and boxers, just with its governing body.

OLYMPICS

Relations deteriorated after 2017 when national boxing federations helped to oust C.K. Wu, a long-time IOC member, as their president.

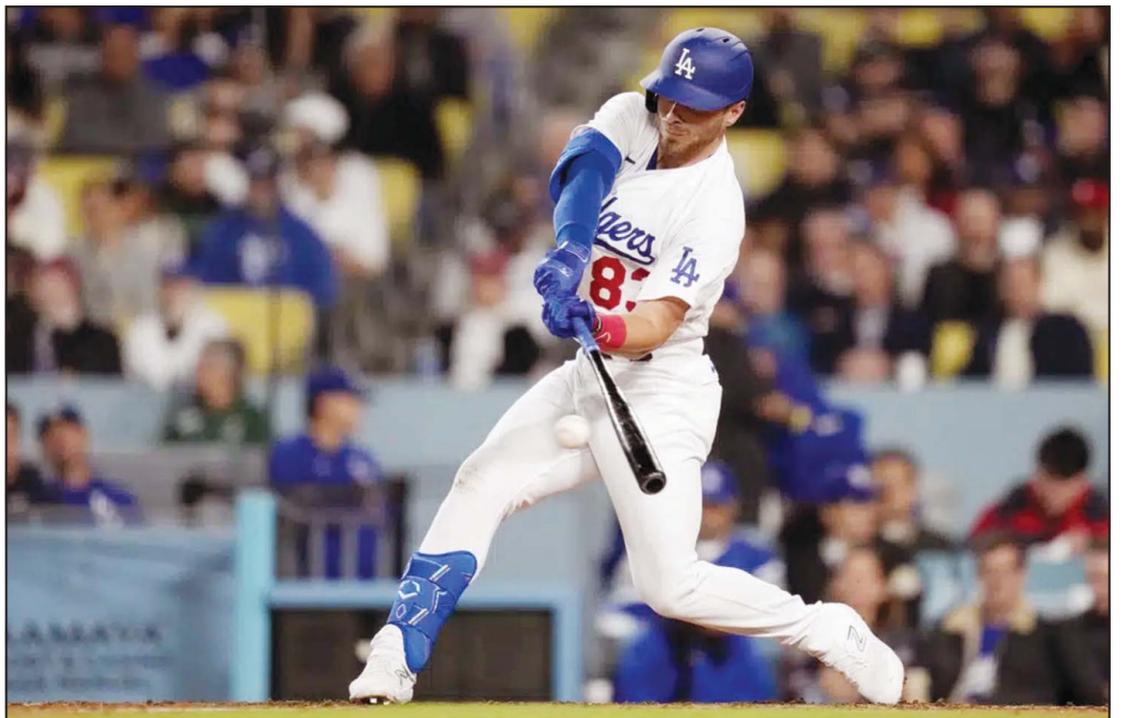
The IOC has declined to confirm boxing's place in the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics and has cut the IBA out of organizing the qualifying and finals tournaments for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

The IBA will respond by Friday to the IOC's latest request for details of governance reforms and changes, its chief executive George Yerolimpos said on Monday.

Asked for details of the IBA's financial future without Gazprom, Yerolimpos said Adidas signed a four-year licensing contract and 10 other "big names" he did not identify wanted to support boxing.

Yerolimpos also suggested the Olympics was not the IBA's core concern, using an image that described all the sport's athletes as like a forest. Still, not all of the boxing family was happy with organizers of the men's worlds. Kosovo, whose independence is not recognized by dozens of countries, said it was denied entry visas by Uzbekistan.

Red Sox 'end' nine-game losing streak to Blue Jays



Los Angeles Dodgers' Michael Busch (83) singles during the fourth inning of a baseball game against the Philadelphia Phillies in Los Angeles. (AP)

Change Name

I, SAKINA holder of Passport No. Z5184717 (write full name as per present passport) do hereby change my name to SAKINA (as given name) MITHIYA (as Surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name SAKINA MITHIYA (write full name as changed now) and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents.

Broncos pick up receiver Jeudy's fifth-year option

DENVER, May 2, (AP) — The Denver Broncos are picking up wide receiver Jerry Jeudy's fifth-year option, which carries a price tag of just under \$13 million in 2024, according to a person familiar with the decision.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condi-

tion of anonymity because the team hasn't announced the move.

Jeudy hasn't lived up to the team's lofty expectations as the 15th overall draft pick in 2020 but he came on strong down the stretch last season when he was finally highlighted in Denver's offense.

Over the final six games, Jeudy caught 37 passes for 523 yards and three touchdowns at the flanker position.

That piqued the interest of other NFL teams but general manager George Paton and new head coach Sean Payton both publicly dismissed the notion that Jeudy was on the trade block this offseason.

Drops bedeviled Jeudy his rookie year and an ankle injury sidelined him two months in Year 2. He played in 15 games last season, catching 67 passes for 972 yards and six touchdowns. In his three seasons, he has 157 catches covering 2,295 yards and nine touchdowns.

Because he hasn't reached the Pro Bowl or playing-time

FOOTBALL

escalators in his rookie contract, Jeudy's price tag on a fifth year was a lot lower than some of his fellow receivers selected in 2020, including Justin Jefferson, whose fifth-year option in Minnesota is worth \$19.743 million.

However, Jeudy's salary in 2024 will balloon by more than \$10 million as he's set to make \$2.68 million this upcoming season.

The Broncos used their first pick (No. 63 overall) to select Oklahoma receiver Marvin Mims in the NFL draft last weekend. He joins a crowded receiver room that features Jeudy, Tim Patrick and Courtland Sutton. Patrick missed last season with a torn ACL and Sutton hasn't been the same dynamic receiver since blowing out a knee in 2020.

The Broncos also signed free agent Marquez Callaway, one of six former Saints reuniting with Payton in Denver, and other veteran receivers include KJ Hamler, who is recovering from a torn chest muscle, Kendall Hinton and Lil' Jordan Humphrey.

BOSTON, May 2, (AP): Alex Verdugo belted a leadoff homer in the ninth inning against Jordan Romano for his third walk-off hit this season, and the Boston Red Sox beat Toronto 6-5 on Monday night to end a nine-game losing streak to the Blue Jays.

Emmanuel Valdez hit his first major league home run, a two-run drive, and Jarren Duran added a solo shot for the Red Sox.

Verdugo also had game-ending hits on Saturday and April 18. This time, he drove a 94 mph fastball from Romano (2-2) into Boston's bullpen in right-center.

Masataka Yoshida had two hits with an RBI and extended his hitting streak to 11 games for Boston, which had lost its last eight games at Fenway Park against the Blue Jays.

Bo Bichette hit a three-run homer and went 5 for 5 for the Blue Jays, who lost for just the fourth time in 12 games. Bichette was moved into the leadoff spot after George Springer was a late scratch due to illness.

Toronto went 16-3 against the Red Sox last season. Boston shortstop Kiké Hernández made two throwing errors in the eighth when the Blue Jays scored two runs to tie it. The second came on Vladimir Guerrero Jr.'s grounder that would have been an inning-ending double play but allowed the tying run instead.

Josh Winckowski (2-0) pitched two innings of relief.

With the Red Sox trailing 3-2, Duran sent a drive into the center-field seats off José Berríos. Valdez then sent a 95 mph fastball into the seats following a walk to Triston Casas.

Berríos dropped to one knee in front of the rubber as he watched Valdez's drive sail out.

Coming off seven shutout innings in his previous start, Berríos gave up five runs in 5 1/3 innings.

Boston starter Corey Kluber allowed three runs in 5 1/3 innings with seven strikeouts and four walks.

Kluber sandwiched walks to Danny Jansen and Kevin Kiermaier around his second strikeout of the second inning before Bichette drove a curveball into the Green Monster seats.

Cubs 5, Nationals 1

In Washington, Dansby Swanson hit a two-run homer and Drew Smyly delivered seven solid innings as the Chicago Cubs bounced back from a rough series at Miami to beat the Washington Nationals 5-1.

Swanson went 3-for-5, including a double and his second homer of the season. The 389-foot blast to left-center in the fifth inning made it 4-1 — a welcome advantage for the Cubs,

who snapped a three-game skid. All those losses to the Marlins were by one run.

Smyly (3-1) allowed a homer by Lane Thomas in the second inning but cruised from there, throwing just 84 pitches. The left-hander gave up six hits and walked none in his fifth straight start allowing two runs or fewer.

MacKenzie Gore (3-2) allowed a season-high four runs over four-plus innings on seven hits — including three doubles and Swanson's homer. Seiya Suzuki had an RBI single in the first for Chicago, and Trey Mancini drove in Suzuki with a double.

Guardians 3, Yankees 2

In New York, with the Yankees about to wrap up a win in 1 hour, 45 minutes, the Cleveland Guardians said not so fast.

Josh Naylor hit a two-run single off Clay Holmes and Mike Zunino drew a go-ahead, bases-loaded walk from Wandy Peralta in a three-run, ninth-inning rally that lifted the Guardians over reeling New York 3-2.

After AL MVP Aaron Judge became the latest in a string of pinstriped stars on the injured list, Domingo Germán was two outs from a one-hitter and his first big league complete game when manager Aaron Boone went to his bullpen. The relievers unraveled and the Yankees (15-15) lost for the sixth time in eight games, dropping to .500 for the first time since they were 1-1.

New York took a 2-0 lead in the third off Quantrill when Jose Trevino drove a changeup to left for a 425-foot home run, the longest of his career, and DJ LeMahieu, in a 1-for-17 skid, added an RBI single.

The game was 1:40 old when Steven Kwan singled with one out in the ninth on Germán's 88th pitch to become Cleveland's third baserunner following Amed Rosario's first-inning single and Josh Bell's fifth-inning walk.

Dodgers 13, Phillies

In Los Angeles, Mookie Betts had



Cleveland Guardians' Amed Rosario (right) scores on a single by Josh Naylor (not shown) as the ball gets by New York Yankees catcher Jose Trevino (left), in the ninth inning of a baseball game in New York. (AP)

three hits, including a two-run homer, and the Los Angeles Dodgers went deep four times in a 13-4 victory over the Philadelphia Phillies on Monday night.

Betts helped propel a Los Angeles offense that belted out a season-best 15 hits. The Dodgers also tied a season high for runs as they scored in every inning but the sixth en route to a fourth straight win.

Betts was batting .233 at the start of the homestand, but has gone 6 for 17 with one homer and four RBIs to raise his average 19 points.

The Phillies dropped their second straight but received good news before the game when slugger Bryce Harper was cleared to return less than six months after having Tommy John surgery on his right elbow. Harper is expected to be activated off the injured list Tuesday.

David Peralta hit a three-run homer, and Will Smith and Jason Heyward had solo shots. It is the 10th time this season Los Angeles has hit at least three homers in a game, which is second in the majors behind Tampa Bay's 11.

It was a return to long ball for the Dodgers, who didn't leave the yard in wins on Saturday and Sunday against St. Louis. That was the first time this season they went consecutive games without a home run.

Peralta, who came into the game batting .167 and in a 1-for-24 slump, went 2 for 4 and drove in four runs. Freddie Freeman also had three hits, including a two-run single in the fourth.

Astros 7, Giants 3

In Houston, Mauricio Dubón had three hits, highlighted by a tiebreaking RBI double in a five-run seventh inning, and the Houston Astros beat the San Francisco Giants 7-3.

The game was tied at 2-2 with one on and one out when Dubón, who played for the Giants from 2019 until last May, smacked his double to right field off Sean Hjelle (1-1).

Dubón showed a lot of emotion after reaching second base, screaming

and jumping around.

Dubón was asked how he was treated by the Giants.

Alex Bregman followed with an RBI single. He later scored on a groundout by José Abreu. Jeremy Peña and Corey Julks added run-scoring singles.

Houston's offensive outburst came after the team saw its starter leave with an injury for a second straight game. Right-hander Luis García was lifted after just eight pitches with discomfort in his throwing elbow.

Baker said García would have an MRI Tuesday. García said his elbow started hurting on his fifth pitch, and after the eighth he realized he needed to leave the game.

His exit came a night after Jose Urquidy left in the sixth inning with a right shoulder injury. Urquidy was placed on the 15-day injured list Monday. Baker said after the game that Urquidy has inflammation in his shoulder and would be shut down indefinitely.

Padres 8, Reds 3

In San Diego, Fernando Tatis Jr. had three hits, scored once and fired up the crowd in his return to Petco Park, and Ha-Seong Kim hit a tie-breaking three-run homer as the San Diego Padres beat the Cincinnati Reds 8-3 for their third straight win.

BASEBALL

The crowd was already in a festive mood for Tatis' first home game since Sept. 26, 2021, when Kim sent fans into a frenzy when he homered to left field off Alex Young with two outs in the fifth inning for a 6-3 lead.

After Kim scored, Tatis placed a sombrero on his head, a reprise of the celebrations the Padres started when they hit six home runs in a 16-11 win against San Francisco on Saturday in the thin air of Mexico City. Tatis bought the sombrero at the team hotel Friday night before the two-game series, which the Padres swept.

Juan Soto and Manny Machado each had a two-run hit and Trent Grisham also had three hits for the Padres. Blake Snell (1-4) pitched around trouble for six innings.

Tatis drew loud cheers several times Monday night, including when he sprinted onto the field for pregame warmups. At the start of the game, he ran out to his position in right field, bowed to the fans and took off his cap and whipped his dreadlocks back and forth before replacing his cap.

The superstar said his gesture toward the crowd "was just energetic. I really respect my fans. I'm just happy to be back out there and just having a great time overall."

Tatis was cheered again when he was announced as the leadoff hitter and beat out an infield single to deep shortstop to extend his hitting streak to nine games. He scored on Soto's two-run double that also brought in Machado.

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SPORTS

New Jersey blanks Rangers in Game 7

Devils face Canes in second round

NEWARK, N.J., May 2, (AP): The New Jersey Devils surprised a lot of hockey experts this past season in going from an NHL also-ran to one of the top teams in the league.

The Devils unleashed another stunner to open the playoffs against their river-rival New York Rangers — 22-year-old Swiss goaltender Akira Schmid.

Schmid rebounded from his only bad game and made 31 saves in Game 7 to lead the Devils to a 4-0 victory over the Rangers on Monday night in an wildly entertaining series.

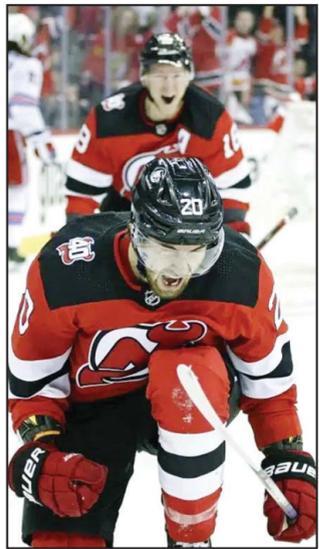
“We believe in each other,” Devils captain Nico Hischier said. “We knew even last year didn’t go our way, lots of injuries, we have a good group here. We got a lot of good characters here. We’re a team that plays with a lot of speed and it’s hard to handle if you do that.”

Coming off a franchise best 52-win season, the Devils will open the Eastern Conference semifinals on Wednesday against the Metropolitan Division-winning Hurricanes in Raleigh, North Carolina. Game 2 in the best-of-seven series is on Friday night.

The major reason the Devils advanced was Schmid, who had had played in a total of 24 regular season games over the last two seasons.

After New York had a pair of 5-1 wins in the opening two games in New Jersey against starter Vitek Vanecsek, Devils coach Lindy Ruff switched to Schmid and the youngster was unbelievable.

Over the next five games, Schmid went 4-1, allowing a total of two goals in his wins. He was driven from the net in Game 6 of a 5-2 loss in Madison Square Garden after giving up all five goals, but the Devils went with him in Game 7 and he delivered his second 4-0 shutout of the series.



New Jersey Devils center Michael McLeod (20) reacts after scoring a goal past New York Rangers goaltender Igor Shesterkin during the second period of Game 7 of an NHL hockey Stanley Cup first-round playoff series in Newark, N.J. (AP)

“You’ve got to be ready if you get the chance, you know,” Schmid said. “And then you’ve got to take the opportunity and play well. Obviously the team helped me out a lot, making the transition a lot easier for me.”

Schmid admitted he surprised himself a little with how well he played.

Michael McLeod and Tomas Tatar scored second-period goals in the series decider and Erik Haula and Jesper Bratt added insurance goals in the third in the game between the long-time Hudson River rivals.

ICE HOCKEY

“Outstanding! Stone cold,” Tatar said of Schmid. “He just seems so patient in his crease, playing so well. He was a big part of this series. Coming in as a young goalie it’s not easy but he stood tall.”

Schmid stopped a pair of Mika Zibanejad power-play blasts in the first period and made a great glove save on Vincent Trocheck with the score still 2-0 in the third period.

Igor Shesterkin was outstanding in defeat, stopping 20 shots, including Jack Hughes’ breakaway late in a scoreless first period.

Rangers coach Gerard Gallant, who led New York to the Eastern Conference finals last year, said the team had a ton of talent and the goaltender played well. However, they generated two goals in the four losses.

“I love to have talent but I love to have a work ethic and more forecheck and stuff like that and we just didn’t get it done,” Gallant said.

New Jersey broke things open midway through the second period on plays set up by playoff veteran Ondrej Palat and defenseman John Marino.

With the Rangers about to go on a power play, Palat, who won two Stanley Cups with Tampa Bay, outworked a slipping Chris Kreider and star defenseman Adam Fox along the boards for a loose puck. He skated toward the net, slid a pass under a sliding Zibanejad and found McLeod, who patiently skated around Shesterkin and deposited a backhand into an empty net at 9:53 for a short-handed goal. It was his first goal since January.

Marino took a cross-ice pass from Hischier at the Rangers’ right point later in the period, swept in on Shesterkin and had the puck slide off his stick to the corner. He retrieved it, and threw a blind pass toward the crease that found Tatar for quick shot into the net at 15:39.

Haula scored his fourth goal of the series with 5:33 left in the third period to send the crowd into a frenzy. Bratt added an empty-net goal with 3:19 to go and the series was all but over.

This was the seventh time the two rivals had met in the playoffs and the Devils cut the Rangers’ lead to 4-3. Two other series also went seven games with the Rangers taking both at Madison Square Garden. They posted a 2-1 win in the 1994 Eastern Conference final on Stephane Matteau’s wrap-around goal in double overtime and 8-4 in the 1992 conference semifinal.



New Jersey Devils defenseman Ryan Graves and New York Rangers left wing Chris Kreider (20) battle for the puck during the first period of Game 7 of an NHL hockey Stanley Cup first-round playoff series in Newark, N.J. (AP)

Challengers successfully defend 126 runs

Bangalore top Lucknow in IPL game

LUCKNOW, India, May 2, (AP): Royal Challengers Bangalore read a slow pitch perfectly and successfully defended 126 runs against Lucknow Super Giants in the Indian Premier League on Monday.

Bangalore’s 126-9 looked under par at the halfway mark, but Lucknow’s counter-charge didn’t work on a tricky home track and it was bowled out for 108 in the final over.

Lucknow suffered a blow when captain Lokesh Rahul went off the field in pain in only the second over of the game while clutching his right thigh. Rahul didn’t appear again until the fall of his team’s ninth wicket. He faced three balls but couldn’t get off the mark before Bangalore wrapped up a convincing win.

“We would have taken 126 at the start of the game, but we just could not execute our plans,” Lucknow stand-in captain Krunal Pandya said.

Defeat cost Lucknow from joining Gujarat Titans atop the table. Instead, Bangalore moved into a tie with Lucknow and three other teams, just a win behind Gujarat.

Bangalore skipper Faf du Plessis, who top-scored with 44, and Virat Kohli, with 31, combined in a 62-run opening stand.

Then Kohli was stumped off legspinner Ravi Bishnoi and du Plessis holed out trying to force the pace after a half-hour

rain delay.

Bishnoi and Amit Mishra, who both took 2-21, strangled Bangalore in the middle overs and Afghanistan fast bowler Siraj’s second ball.

Fast bowler Josh Hazlewood, with 2-15, also made an early impact in his first game of the season, and the spinners took over.

Lucknow was expected to accomplish a comfortable chase at home.

But opening batter Kyle Mayers couldn’t gauge the slowness of the pitch and holed out to mid-on off Mohammed Siraj’s second ball.

Legspinner Wanindu Hasaranga had Deepak Hooda stumped and Karn Sharma got rid of dangerous Nicholas Pooran for 9 as Lucknow slumped to 5-38 in seven overs.

More brilliance in the field by Bangalore fashioned two run outs and a remarkable win.

India cricket star Virat Kohli and former international teammate Gautam Gambhir were fined by the Indian Premier League on Tuesday following their heated altercation after a match.

The incident took place on the field after Kohli’s Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Lucknow Super Giants, for whom the now-retired Gambhir is a team mentor.

CRICKET

Kohli and Gambhir were fined 100% of their fees for the match that took place on Monday.

Both admitted to breaching the IPL code of conduct related to bringing the game into disrepute.

Kohli and Gambhir were teammates on India’s national team for a while across all formats. Gambhir retired in 2018 and became a politician.

Bangalore successfully defended 126-9 against Lucknow to leave the teams tied on points.



Lucknow Super Giants’ Naveen Ul-Haq celebrates the wicket of Royal Challengers Bangalore’s Karn Sharma during the Indian Premier League (IPL) match between Lucknow Super Giants and Royal Challengers Bangalore in Lucknow, India, Monday, May 1, 2023. (AP)

Bills bulk up backfield, sign Latavius Murray to 1-year deal

Giants pick up 5th year option on Thomas

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J., May 2, (AP): The New York Giants picked up the fifth-year option on standout left tackle Andrew Thomas, the team announced Tuesday.

It’ll keep the fourth overall pick in the 2020 NFL draft under contract through the 2024 season. He will earn \$14.18 million in the option year.

Expect general manager Joe Schoen to sign Thomas to a long-term contract long before that.

Thomas has started 43 of 44 games over the past three seasons and is easily the Giants’ top lineman. The only game the Georgia product missed this past season was the regular-season finale in which coach Brian Daboll rested many of his starters with the team’s first playoff berth since 2016 locked up.

FOOTBALL

New York posted a 9-7-1 record this past season and beat Minnesota in a wild-card game before losing to the Philadelphia Eagles in the conference semifinal.

The Giants have bookend tackles, having drafted Evan Neal with the seventh pick overall in the 2022 draft.

Running back Latavius Murray sat down in front of the camera and apologized for being late for his Zoom conference call with reporters

shortly after signing a one-year deal with the Buffalo Bills on Monday.

Fifteen minutes is nothing compared to how long Murray had to wait last year before extending his NFL career to an 11th season. Murray had already lined up a job as a volunteer high school coach when he was signed to the New Orleans Saints practice squad in September.

The 33-year-old can put aside switching careers for another season based on how productive he was in closing last season in Denver. He joins a playoff contender in Buffalo,



New York Giants offensive tackle Andrew Thomas (78) takes the field before an NFL football game against the Baltimore Ravens, Sunday, Oct. 16, 2022, in East Rutherford, N.J. The Giants have picked up the fifth-year option on standout left tackle Andrew Thomas. The Giants announced the decision on Tuesday, May 2, 2023, that will keep the fourth-pick overall in the 2020 NFL draft under contract through the 2024 season, paying him \$14.18 million in the option year. (AP)

in a move that also brings him closer to his hometown of Syracuse, New York, where his mother still resides.

“You do have some doubts, just, you know, ‘Am I going to get another opportunity?’” Murray said, reflecting on last offseason.

After appearing in one game in New Orleans, Murray was signed off the Saints practice squad and finished with 703 yards rushing and five TDs in 12 games with Denver.

“It’s just so crazy how it works, just the fact that I could go out in Denver and do what I thought I knew I could do,” Murray said. “And so, obviously, here I am and this organization saw that, and so just grateful for the opportunity.”

A sixth-round draft pick in 2013 out of Central Florida, Murray is on his sixth NFL team, including two stints with the Saints, and is the league’s active leader in scoring at least four touchdowns rushing in eight consecutive seasons.

Listed at 6-foot-3 and 230 pounds, Murray is a noted downhill runner who can add a physical dimension to the Bills’ rushing attack. He joins a running back position that was down to three players — James Cook, Nyheim Hines and free-agent addition Damien Harris — and lost returning starter Devin Singletary to free agency in March.

Bills GM Brandon Beane said he reached an agreement to sign Murray during the final day of the draft

on Saturday by informing the player he’d stay away from selecting running backs with Buffalo’s final three selections.

“I just appreciated the communication. But even with that, I watched (the draft) close and was hoping obviously that it could work out in my favor,” said Murray, who was eager to play for a contender and paid the Bills a visit last month. “I’m not trying to just go anywhere. And I don’t need to play for more money.”

The signing falls in line with Beane’s philosophy of adding veteran leadership to each position group.

Beane made a similar move in 2019 by signing running back Frank Gore to a one-year contract.

Murray’s 55 touchdowns rushing rank fourth and his 6,252 yards rushing rank sixth among active players.

With 222 receptions for 1,501 yards and two touchdowns, Murray also provides a pass-catching dimension to Buffalo’s Josh Allen-led offense.

Murray re-established himself in helping settle Denver’s revolving door at running back. He topped 100 yards twice, including a 130-yard rushing, one-TD outing in a 24-15 win against Arizona in December.

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Boston Celtics forward Jayson Tatum (0) tries to steal against Philadelphia 76ers guard James Harden (1) during the first half of Game 1 in the NBA basketball Eastern Conference semifinals playoff series in Boston. (AP)

Sports

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Jokic stars, Nuggets extend lead over Suns

Harden scores 45, hits late 3 as 76ers down Celtics

DENVER, May 2, (AP): Nikola Jokic scored 39 points and pulled down 16 rebounds on the eve of the NBA MVP announcement to rally the Denver Nuggets to a 97-87 win over Phoenix on Monday night, giving them a 2-0 lead over the Suns in the Western Conference semifinals.

"I love an aggressive Nikola Jokic," Nuggets coach Michael Malone said after Jokic knocked down 17 shots to offset an off-night by Jamal Murray and Michael Porter Jr., who combined to make miss 17 of 22 shots.

Devin Booker led Phoenix with 35 points and Kevin Durant added 24 but they combined to miss a whopping 32 shots, including 14 from long range.

Jokic shined a night before he learns if he's edged Joel Embiid and Giannis Antetokounmpo for his third consecutive NBA MVP award, recently re-

BASKETBALL

named for Michael Jordan.

"I can't think about that," Jokic said. Malone said that's because Jokic isn't motivated by winning more MVPs but by leading the Nuggets to their first NBA title.

He sure showed why Monday night when 26 of his points and 12 of his rebounds came after halftime, when he dominated at both ends of the floor, denying the Suns a shot at tying the series that shifts to Phoenix for Game 3 Friday night.

The Suns have been outscored by 30 points from long range this series.

The Suns held Murray to 10 points 48 hours after he went off for 34 but they had no answers for Jokic.

Jokic's big night was necessary as Murray shot 3 for 15 and missed all nine of his 3-pointers after sinking six of 10 in the opener, and Porter scored five points on 2-for-7 shooting.

Aaron Gordon added 16 points and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope added 14 points and went 4 for 4 from beyond the arc, including back-to-back swishes that erased the 73-70 deficit and put the Nuggets ahead for good early in the fourth quarter.

The Suns lost Chris Paul to a tight left groin late in the third quarter and he finished with 8 points.

76ers 119, Celtics 115

In Boston, James Harden was asked for most of this season to be a facilitator for a 76ers team built around big man Joel Embiid.

With the MVP finalist sidelined for the opener of his team's second-round playoff series with the Celtics, Philadelphia called on a vintage version of Harden. He happily obliged.

Harden matched his playoff career high with 45 points and hit a go-ahead, step-back 3-pointer over Al Horford with 8.7 seconds left as the 76ers rallied without Embiid to beat Boston 119-115 in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference semifinals.

"We didn't come into the game expecting to lose. We came in here to win," Harden said. "Whether Jo comes back or not, we're going to be ready to go."

Tyrese Maxey added 26 points and Tobias Harris finished with 18 for the Sixers, who made 17 3-pointers with Embiid watching from the bench.

He sprained his right knee in Game 3 of Philadelphia's first-round sweep of the Brooklyn Nets.

After the Sixers endured an early scoring onslaught from the Celtics,



VfL Wolfsburg's Kathrin Hendrich (left), and Arsenal's Stina Blackstenius battle for the ball during the Women's Champions League semifinal second leg soccer match between Arsenal and VfL Wolfsburg at the Emirates Stadium, London. (AP)

Wolfsburg back in Women's Champions League final

Two-time champion Wolfsburg secured a place in another Women's Champions League final after scoring a late winner in extra time to beat Arsenal 3-2 for a 5-4 victory on aggregate.

Pauline Bremer tapped in a finish in the 119th minute for the German team after a

defensive mistake by Arsenal, just when it seemed the match was going to a penalty shootout.

Wolfsburg, which won the competition in 2013 and '14 and was a runner-up in 2016, '18 and '20, will play Barcelona in the final in Eindhoven, Netherlands, on June 3.

The second leg of the semifinals was played in front of 60,063 spectators at Emirates Stadium, the home of Arsenal's men's team. It was the biggest crowd for a women's domestic game in England.

Arsenal, seeking a first appearance in the final since winning the Champions League

in 2007, went ahead through Sweden striker Stina Blackstenius in the 11th minute before goals by former Arsenal player Jill Roord and Alexandra Popp put Wolfsburg ahead on the night and on aggregate.

Jen Beattie's 75th-minute header took the game to extra time. (AP)



Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokic picks up the ball in the first half of Game 2 of an NBA second-round playoff series against the Phoenix Suns in Denver. (AP)

76ers coach Doc Rivers said Harden was patient and knew when to attack and when to pass. Rivers said having a week to prepare for the likelihood Embiid would be out was key.

Jayson Tatum led the Celtics with 39 points and 11 rebounds. Jaylen Brown added 23 points and Malcolm Brogdon finished with 20.

... My family is there and they will come watch so it'll be a wonderful feeling."

Napoli is attempting to win the Italian league for the first time since Diego Maradona led the team to its only two Serie A titles in 1987 and 1990. The team has an 18-point lead and could even clinch the title a day earlier if

SOCCER

Lazio fails to beat Sassuolo.

All that is proving to be something of a logistical nightmare for the club and the city.

City officials in Naples, unable to predict when the title celebrations will start, are considering imposing a traffic ban in the center from Wednesday, before the start of Lazio's match. The city did the same thing on Sunday.

Sabalenka advances

Medvedev, Rublev upset at Madrid Open

Truex wins NASCAR race at Dover for 3rd time on a Monday

DOVER, Del., May 2, (AP) — Martin Truex Jr. mastered the Monster Mile on a Monday for the third time in his career and the former NASCAR champion snapped a 54-race winless streak overall in the Cup Series at Dover Motor Speedway.

Thanks to a race postponed a day because of rain, it was a long weekend sweep for the Truex brothers. Younger brother Ryan Truex won the second-tier Xfinity Series race on Saturday for his first NASCAR victory across all three national series in 188 career starts.

Big brother poked his head in Ryan's Toyota as he pulled it into victory lane. Martin appreciated the winning weekend for the family.

"It's just special," Truex said. "It was such a big day for our family to see Ryan do that on Saturday."

Martin knows how to get to victory lane at Dover. The 2017 Cup champion has the blueprint on how to win at the Monster Mile on a Monday. Truex raced to his first NASCAR Cup win on June 4, 2007, at Dover and 12 years later used another rainout to take the checkered flag on May 6, 2019.

Truex also won a regularly scheduled Sunday race here in 2016.

Truex held strong on the outside lane Monday off the final restart to hold off runner-up Ross Chastain by

a half-second. Ryan Blaney, William Byron and Denny Hamlin completed the top five.

"We knew we could do this," Truex said. "It just never all came together."

Truex was once of the most dominant drivers in the series, winning a career-best eight times in 2017 and 23 times overall from 2016 to 2019. But the Joe Gibbs Racing driver had been winless since his last Cup victory on Sept. 11, 2021, at Richmond Raceway.

Determined to rebound from a winless season, Truex

CAR RACING

opened his 18th full season with an exhibition victory in the Busch Light Clash in the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum.

He did have three top-10 finishes this season in the No. 19 Toyota, but couldn't find his way to victory lane until Monday. He earned his 32nd career Cup victory and became the 10th driver to win four or more Cup races at Dover.

"It feels nice to get one to come around our way," Truex said.

set in 2023. His next opponent will be defending champion Carlos Alcaraz or 13th-seeded Alexander Zverev, who

met late Tuesday.

Khachanov and Rublev made it to the doubles quarterfinals, where Jamie



Carlos Alcaraz of Spain serves to Alexander Zverev of Germany at the Madrid Open tennis tournament in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

Murray and Michael Venus await.

"This (singles) match is over," Khachanov said. "We need to have some time maybe to absorb it. That's how it was in Monte Carlo. The day before, we played doubles, we lost a very tight match, and then the next day he beat me. After one day, life goes on. He's doing well this year, I'm doing well, I'm just happy."

Also through to the quarterfinals was Daniel Altmaier, who defeated Jaume Munar 6-3, 6-0.

Munar was upset with a call that put him down 3-0 in the final set. He challenged it and was irate when the ruling against him stood, saying: "I will destroy this machine. How is it possible? The mark is clear."

He walked to what appeared to be some tour officials near the court and argued with them about the challenge system, telling them "we are playing for 80,000 euros (\$87,600) here."