



No early breakthrough seen in Manila, Kuwait talks

Positions remain divergent

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The talks between Kuwait and the Philippines began with the arrival of the visiting Filipino delegation to Kuwait, reports Al-Rai daily. The purpose of the visit is to attempt to resolve the crisis that has worsened which last week culminated in the suspension of visas for Filipino labor. Informed sources told the daily that the delegation, which includes officials of the Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Migrant Workers, met with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Public Authority for Manpower officials to find a legal solution that satisfies both sides. The same sources said the positions are

still divergent, although officials on both sides are working to bridge the gap as much as possible, especially since there is agreement on many of the claims that the Philippines government wants are enshrined in Kuwaiti laws, but some of them need to be activated. The sources pointed out that according to what is happening on the ground the issue is expected to drag making the resumption of the issuance of visas for Filipino workers a far-fetched reality, despite the assurances of the visiting delegation that Manila is seriously considering lifting the ban that was temporarily imposed on sending its domestic workers to Kuwait last February.



KUNA photo
Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Thursday Ambassador Dafa'llah Al-Hajj Ali, head of the Sudanese delegation partaking in the 32nd session of the Arab summit. Al-Hajj Ali, personal envoy of President of the Sudanese Interim Sovereignty Council, met the Kuwaiti foreign minister on sidelines of the Arab ministerial meeting, held in preparation for the summit, due to kick off in the Red Sea city of Jeddah on Friday.

High hopes for summit

Assad attends

JEDDAH, May 18, (KUNA): The 32nd Arab Summit will kick off on Friday in Saudi Arabia's Jeddah city, amid delicate circumstances in which the Arab nation is trying to restore cohesion, reunion, and coordination.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's Representative, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, accompanied by an official delegation, is scheduled to depart Kuwait on Friday (May 19) to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to head Kuwait's delegation to the 32nd Arab Summit in Jeddah.

The League of Arab States is hoping for this session to be a fruitful summit that achieves its aspired goals.

Meanwhile, Syrian President Bashar Assad headed to Saudi Arabia on Thursday to attend the summit, his first visit to the oil-rich kingdom since Syria's conflict began in 2011, the president's office said.

Seal

Assad's attendance at the Arab League summit, which starts Friday, is expected to seal Syria's return to the Arab fold following a 12-year suspension and open a new chapter of relations after more than a decade of tensions.

The 22-member league, which is convening in the Saudi city of Jeddah, recently reinstated Syria and is now poised to welcome Assad, a long-time regional pariah, back into its ranks. The Syrian president was officially invited to attend the summit last week.

The Arab masses believe that this will be the beginning of Arab reunification in line with the regional developments and international changes amid indications of reshaping the international order in general and the region in particular.

This hope stems from the speech of Arab League Secretary-General Ahmad Abul-Gheit, delivered on his behalf by the Assistant Secretary-General, Ambassador Hussam Zaki, during the preparatory meeting of the Economic and Social Council for the Arab summit in Jeddah.

During the meeting, he emphasized that the return of Syria to the Arab League and the positive atmosphere that the region is witnessing pushes to renew the determination to activate the principle of Arab solidarity.

The League of Arab States is considered the oldest international organization established after World War II and was formed on March 22, 1945.

The headquarters of the League is located in Cairo, and it is an international regional organization based on cooperation among the member states.

Support

This is confirmed by what has been stated in the preamble to its charter that the League was keen to support and consolidate Arab ties on the basis of respecting the independence and sovereignty of those countries.

In its early years, the League of Arab States focused mainly on economic, cultural, and social programs. In 1959, it held the first Arab Petroleum Conference, and in 1964, the Arab Organization for Education, Culture, and Science was established, and in 1974, it recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative of all Palestinians.

The Arab League supported Syria and Lebanon in their disputes with France and demanded the independence of Libya in 1945.

It also supported Tunisia in its conflict with France in 1961. In the same year, it announced its opposition to the formation of a Jewish state in Palestine and demanded its independence.

The Arab summits continued to be held normally and urgently, the last of which was held in Algeria last year, in addition to the economic summits.



Palestinians argue with Israeli border police officers (not seen) while Israelis mark Jerusalem Day, an Israeli holiday celebrating the capture of east Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war, in Jerusalem's Old City, Thursday, May 18, 2023. (AP)

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: The US Justice Department said a naturalized American citizen, living in Virginia has pleaded guilty to money laundering charges in the case that dates back to 2014, reports Al-Rai daily.

The accused had fled the United States in 2014 after learning of the fraudulent bills and checks being exposed, but in 2016, two former employees of the health office admitted conspiring with him and others to launder money that they fraudulently embezzled.

According to the US Department of Justice website, after the accused pleaded guilty to money laundering, he is scheduled to be sentenced on August 24, and faces a maximum penalty that could reach 20 years behind bars.

The man had reportedly escaped to Egypt and extradited to the United States in December 2021, after going underground for nearly 7 years.

TEHRAN: Iran's president warned Afghanistan's Taliban rulers on Thursday not to violate water rights of the Iranian people over their shared Helmand River, the state-run IRNA news agency reported.

President Ebrahim Raisi said his government is determined to defend Iran's water rights.

"We will not allow the rights of our people to be violated," he said and warned the Taliban to take his words seriously, emphasizing the importance of Helmand River, which flows from Afghanistan into Iran.

Raisi spoke in a Pakistani border town on Thursday, during his first official visit to the neighboring country in 10 years, to inaugurate the first of six markets along the Iran-Pakistan border. (AP)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have signed the "Road to Makkah" agreement on Wednesday to facilitate the Hajj pilgrims during the visit of Saudi Deputy Minister for Interior Dr. Nasir bin Abdul Aziz Al-Dawood to Pakistan.

The visiting Deputy Minister for Interior of Saudi Arabia called on Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad, said a press release by PM House.

The premier thanked the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its support during last year's heavy floods and for extending support to evacuate Pakistanis stranded in Sudan as the law and order situation got worse there. (KUNA)

AMMAN: A Jordanian lawmaker has been indicted on charges that he illegally smuggled scores of rifles and handguns into the occupied West Bank through an Israeli-controlled crossing, his lawyer said Wednesday.

The alleged gun-running scandal that gripped headlines last month has threatened to further strain ties between Israel and its Arab neighbor to the east despite their nearly three-decade-old peace treaty.

The apparent effort by a Jordanian parliament member to sneak guns into a restive West Bank - where young Palestinians are increasingly getting their hands on rifles and opening fire at Israeli security forces - has raised fears of Jordanian support for Palestinian militancy that undercuts the country's moderate, pro-Western monarchy. (AP)

ANKARA: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's main challenger in Turkey's presidential race shifted gear and adopted a more nationalist and hard-line stance on Thursday, vowing to send back millions of refugees if he is elected and rejecting any possibility of negotiating for peace with Kurdish militants.

Voters in Turkey will head back to the polls on May 28 for a runoff election after neither Erdogan nor his rival, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, won more than 50% of the votes in Sunday's first round. (AP)

UNITED NATIONS: The U.N. envoy for Yemen expressed "cautious optimism" Wednesday that the country's warring parties will return to U.N.-led negotiations to end their deadly eight-year conflict.

Hans Grundberg told the U.N. Security Council he is confident last month's prisoner releases agreed to by the government and rival Houthis rebels will "build further confidence between the parties" and support an environment conducive for dialogue. (AP)

Opinion

Election results... same old, same old

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

COLD is the democratic wedding that awaits Kuwait. This is evident from the events related to the elections that will take place after about three weeks. The reason is that the common people have lost confidence in the National Assembly after witnessing the parliamentary performance of the past years. It is also because the majority of candidates did not present any realistic programs that serve the people and the country, and convince the voters.

In addition to that, the country is suffering from crises caused by the two authorities - the legislative and the executive. The citizens are on the verge of losing confidence in the state's institutions. This is a major calamity that none of those who presented themselves noticed and they lack a solution to get out of the impasse.

For decades, Kuwaitis have been inheriting the housing crisis, the Bedoun issue, the failure of education, and the health sector's failure in getting rid of the game of overseas treatment. As for the infrastructure, talk without mincing your words. Also, the situation of the economy did not move a step forward.

However, in light of the developments in the field of oil today and the start of its falling prices, in addition to what the other global economic fields suffer from, there is doubt that foreign investments will help bridge the budget deficit.

In the face of these problems, it seems the citizens are convinced that forgetfulness is an escape from the reality of the election game. Therefore, it is estimated that the participation rate will not exceed 40 percent, compared to about 68 percent in 2016. This means a retreat from popular participation in light of the lack of enthusiasm. It is the first time that statistics reports have predicted such a ratio.

There is no doubt that the Kuwaiti people are alive and have the initiative to contribute to the renaissance of their country. However, they need an administration that understands what

the obstacles and problems are, and works to solve them seriously, instead of taking steps in the form of reaction, and get out of the impasse of betting on disagreements between the government and the parliament.

Based on what is currently happening, especially when considering the lawsuits filed to nullify the elections, and the complaints that the solution was not correct, the fate of the upcoming National Assembly has become almost known. The solution is either at the first confrontation between the upcoming cabinet and the winning parliamentarians due to lack of cooperation, or annulment by a ruling from the Constitutional Court after the losers submitted their claims, thus returning to square one.

All this was caused by systematic operations from the executive authority and from the parliamentarians of the services who put their own interests before the interest of the country, and the conflicting currents by drawing their swords and stabbing democracy in order for the influential people in state institutions to do what they want in return for the absence of real public accountability.

Despite all this, the fact remains that Kuwait can no longer tolerate more failed experiences, and its people do not have the ability to bear the miserable situation any more.

Consequently, what Kuwait needs is the will and determination to make a brave decision to end this old and renewed crisis. This unfortunately is absent today, especially in light of a sensitive international and regional stage that does not accept amusement and procrastination of time, which is like a sword that does not have mercy on anyone.

Email: ahmed@aljarallah.com

Follow me on:



ahmedaljarallah@gmail.com

Day by Day

GOVERNMENT stability is the need of the hour. The state is tired of "non-cooperation" decrees because of which the government has not tasted stability of any sorts for the past 30 years or more.

The number of ministers retiring can be counted with every rising of the sun. This is the result of non-cooperation between the government and the National Assembly and

the filing of random grilling requests as everyone sings at their own pace, especially those who have big mouths.

At the end of the day people are confused and cannot distinguish between liars and those who tell the truth.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zaher Matar



OPINION OTHER VOICES

Long game of steady forward movement

Biden, Modi out to deepen bonds

President Joe Biden has made it a mission for the U.S. to build friendships overseas - and the next few weeks will offer a vivid demonstration of the importance he's placing on a relationship with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The two are both scheduled to attend this week's Group of Seven summit in Japan, a subsequent gathering of Pacific island leaders in Papua New Guinea, and a later meeting of Indo-Pacific leaders in Australia. Those travels will be followed by a June 22 state visit by Modi to Washington, a sign that both seem willing to deepen their bonds.

But like many geopolitical friendships, things are complicated between the world's largest economy (the U.S.) and its most populous nation (India).

The personal outreach has a clear strategic calculus as both countries respond to China's economic rise and increased global prominence. Yet while Biden champions democratic ideals and openly opposes Russia for invading Ukraine, Modi has offered tepid criticism of Russia and opponents say he is eroding India's democratic traditions.

That means the future of the alliance depends on a degree of patience. "It's a long game of steady forward movement in defense relations and some fairly rapid intensification of business ties - with the pace of both determined by the speed of movement on the Indian side," said Kurt Tong, a former ambassador for the U.S. who is now managing partner of

The Asia Group, a consultancy.

Biden last year publicly called India's response to the war in Ukraine "shaky." India abstained from voting on U.N. resolutions condemning Russia and refused to join the global coalition against Russia. Modi had a relatively warm relationship with Biden's predecessor, Donald Trump, and has made some efforts to forge a connection with Biden, who is known to focus on his Irish roots even when meeting with leaders of other nations.

When Modi came to Washington in September 2021, he brought with him documents about people with the last name "Biden" in India.

"Are we related?" Biden asked.

"Yes," Modi joked.

While visiting Canada in March, Biden said he's made it a strategic goal to improve relations with the rest of the world as he feels that America's leverage against China and Russia is through its alliances.

"I have now met with 80% of the world leaders just since I've been president," he said. "We're the ones expanding the alliances. The opposition is not."

Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay, a biographer of Modi, said the Indian leader's connection with Biden is not personal - and has its limits. But it is necessary for the U.S. to keep India on its side as tensions with China have accelerated over Taiwan, the federal government's ban on export-

ing advanced computer chips to China and human rights issues.

"To what extent can India be part of the U.S.-led alliance, that is for Modi to decide," Mukhopadhyay said. "At some point or the other, the Americans would realize that Modi is not really going the whole hog as much as they would like India to be. But Modi will not get swayed by meeting Biden several times."

Nirupama Rao, a retired diplomat who served as Indian ambassador to the U.S., said India has its reasons for not joining the condemnation of Moscow.

"The country wants Russia to maintain some distance from China, and it worries that isolating Moscow would just push it closer to Beijing," she said. Relations between India and China are strained, with the two sides embroiled in an intense three-year standoff involving thousands of soldiers stationed along their disputed border in the eastern Ladakh region.

Rao said U.S. policymakers should not mistake India's involvement in the so-called Quad - whose other members are the U.S., Japan and Australia - for an alliance. India is also in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a group dominated by Beijing and Moscow. It routinely attends trilateral meetings with China and Russia. It also continues to participate in the forum known as BRICS, which stands for Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Continued on Page 3



Subur Banoo, 60, wife of late Faizul Ali, cries as she narrates her story sitting outside her house in Bahari, north eastern Assam state, India, April 16, 2023. Ali was sent to a detention center after being declared a 'foreigner' in late 2015, and was released on bail in 2019. He died in March, leaving behind his wife, a mentally ill son, two daughter-in-laws and their children. They all live in a single room house made of corrugated tin in this Muslim majority village. All have been declared "foreigners." (AP)

Demands rise for some to prove citizenship

Namaste ... amended

Editor's note: This story is part of an ongoing series exploring what it means for the 1.4 billion inhabitants of India to live in what will be the world's most populated country.

Krishna Biswas is scared. Unable to prove his Indian citizenship, he is at risk of being sent to a detention center, far away from his modest hut built of bamboo wood that looks down on fields lush with corn.

Biswas says he was born in India's northeastern Assam state. So was his father, almost 65 years ago. But the government says that to prove he is an Indian, he should furnish documents that date back to 1971.

For the 37-year-old vegetable seller, that means searching for a decades-old property deed or a birth certificate with an ancestor's name on it.

Biswas has none, and he is not alone. There are nearly 2 million people like him - over 5% of Assam's population - staring at a future where they could be stripped of their citizenship if they are unable to prove they are Indian.

Questions over who is an Indian have long lingered over Assam, which many believe is overrun with immigrants from neighboring Bangladesh.

At a time when India is about to overtake China as the most populous country, these concerns are expected to heighten as Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government seeks to use illegal immigration and fears of demographic shift for electoral gains in a nation where nationalist sentiments run deep.

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party has promised to roll out a similar citizenship verification program nationwide even though the process in Assam has been put on hold after a federal audit found it flawed and full of errors.

Nonetheless, hundreds of suspected immigrants with voting rights in Assam have been arrested and sent to detention centers the government calls "transit camps." Fearing arrest, thousands have fled to other Indian states. Some have died of suicide.

Millions of people like Biswas, whose citizenship status is unclear, were born in India to parents who immigrated many decades ago. Many of them have voting cards and other identification, but the state's citizenship registry counts only those who can prove, with documentary evidence, that they or their ancestors were Indian citizens before 1971, the year Bangladesh was born.

Modi's party, which also rules Assam, argues the registry is essential to identify people who entered the country illegally in a state where ethnic passions run deep and anti-immigrant protests in the 1980s culminated in the massacre of more than 2,000 immigrant Muslims.

"My father and his brother were born here. We were born here. Our kids were also born here. We will die here but not leave this place," Biswas, said on a recent afternoon at his home in Assam's Murkata village, near the banks of the Brahmaputra River.

The Biswas family has 11 members, of whom the citizenship of nine is in dispute. His wife and mother have been declared Indian by a foreigners' tribunal that decides on citizenship claims. Others, including his three children, his father and his brother's family, have been declared "foreigners."

It makes no sense to Biswas, who wonders why would some be considered to have settled in the country illegally and others not, even though they all were born in the same place.

The family, like many others, has not pleaded their case before the tri-

bunal or higher courts due to a lack of money and the arduous paperwork required in the process.

"If we cannot be Indian then just kill us. Let them (the government) kill my whole family," he said.

The registry was last updated in 2019 and excluded both Hindus and Muslims, but most critics view it as an attempt to deport millions of minority Muslims.

They say the process would become even more exclusionary if Modi's party resurrects a controversial citizenship bill that grants citizenship to persecuted believers who entered India illegally from neighboring countries, including Hindus, Sikhs and Christians, but not Muslims. The nationwide citizenship bill was introduced in 2019, but led to widespread protests across India for singling out Muslims, forcing the government to put it on the backburner.

Supporters of the registry say it is essential to protect the cultural identity of Assam's indigenous people, arguing that those who entered illegally are taking away their jobs and their land.

"The influx of illegal foreigners from Bangladesh is a threat to the identity of the indigenous people of Assam. We cannot stay like a second class citizen under illegal Bangladeshis. It is a question of our own existence," said Samujjal Bhattacharya, who has been part of a movement in Assam against illegal immigration.

Fearing a possible loss of citizenship, scores of people in Assam have killed themselves, leaving a trail of devastation among families.

When Faizul Ali was sent to a detention center after being declared a "foreigner" in late 2015, his family members feared they would be next. The prospect of being thrown in jail drove his son to take his own life.

Continued on Page 3

editor's choice



Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:24	Asr	15:20
Sunrise ..	04:54	Maghrib ..	18:35
Zohr	11:44	Isha	20:02

Local

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

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

By Day: Hot and partly cloudy to cloudy with moderate to fresh southeasterly wind with speeds of 25-55 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times and rising dust.

Weather

By Night: Mild and partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind to light variable wind with speeds of 12-45 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

Station **Max Exp** **Min Rec**
Kuwait City 37 30

Kuwait Airport	39	27
Abdaly	41	26
Jahra	40	29
Salmiyah	31	29
Ahmadi	31	29
Nuwaisib	36	25
Wafra	39	24



Travelers at the Nuwaiseeb border post.

Namaste ...

Continued from Page 2

His brother tried to save him but drowned in the process. A year later, Ali's other son hanged himself.

Ali was released on bail from the detention center in 2019. He died in March, leaving behind his wife, a mentally ill son, two daughter-in-laws and their children. They all live in a single room house made of corrugated tin in Muslim majority Bahari village. All have been declared "foreigners."

Unable to make ends meet, Ali's wife, Sabur Bano, has taken to begging. She can't afford firewood for cooking and uses discarded clothes she collects from streets as burning material.

"I am a citizen of this country. I am 60 years old. I was born here, my children were brought up here, all my belongings are here. But they made me a foreigner in my own land," she said, wiping tears from the hem of her white sari.

Others are still waiting for their loved ones after they were arrested.

On a recent morning, Asiya Khatoon boarded a rickshaw and traveled nearly 31 kilometers (19 miles) from her home to a detention center in Assam's town where her husband has been held since January.

"They (police) just came and picked up my husband saying he is a Bangladeshi," the 45-year-old said, before hurriedly walking toward the detention center circled by a vast perimeter of walls and watchtowers with security cameras and armed guards.

In her hands was a crinkled plastic bag. It carried a green T-shirt, trousers and a cap she wanted to give her husband. (AP)

Biden, Modi

Continued from Page 2

"So far, India has done an impressive job of maintaining its balancing act," she said. "Whether it can continue to do so in the years ahead is an open question. Beijing has become increasingly belligerent, and it may eventually decide it will not deal with India if New Delhi strengthens its security ties to Washington."

Both the U.S. and India have been emphasizing technology partnerships, including defense, clean energy and space. During Modi's visit to the U.S. in June, the two leaders are also expected to discuss common challenges, including climate change and health security.

Russia is India's largest supplier of military hardware. But India has been reducing its dependence on Russian arms by diversifying its purchases, buying from the U.S., France, Germany and other countries. The U.S. defense trade with India has risen from near zero in 2008 to over \$20 billion in 2020.

The U.S. imported about \$86 billion in goods from India last year, according to the Census Bureau. That figure has steadily increased, but it has room to grow as the U.S. still gets more goods from Taiwan and Vietnam than India. With more than 1.4 billion people, India is about 14 times the size of Taiwan and Vietnam combined.

There are some risks for Biden as he devotes more time to Modi, with advocates for human rights wary of the Indian leader's track record. The freedom of the news media in India has been challenged after Modi became prime minister in 2014. Political rivals of Modi's governing Hindu nationalist party have accused him of stifling dissent and introducing divisive policies that discriminate against Muslims and other minorities.

Modi's Hindu nationalist party also suffered a political setback as India's main opposition Congress party won control of the southern Karnataka state, according to a near complete vote count Saturday. The victory could help unite the largely divided opposition in next year's general election, in which Modi will seek a third consecutive term as prime minister.

Yet for Biden, developing a personal rapport out of public view might be critical for overcoming any differences with Modi.

"In this case, the investment is worth it," said Lisa Curtis, director of the Indo-Pacific Security Program at the Center for a New American Security, a think tank. "There are a lot of things that President Biden can say privately to Prime Minister Modi that could end up having a favorable impact on U.S.-India relations." (AP)

'17,000 undergo biometrics procedure at border'

Around 17,000 persons had to undergo the biometrics procedure at the border posts in 3 days, says Colonel Yousef Al-Mhaini, manager at the Nuwaiseeb border post, according to the local Arabic daily Al-Seyassah.

After the activation of the integrated central system of "biometric" features in March as the first experimental stage, the security services operating in all the country's air, land and sea ports officially applied the system on all travelers - citizens and residents - from the early hours of Friday morning.

The sources revealed that the biometric project

includes hand and palm prints, facial image, iris of the eye, and the electronic signature of all individuals, within the framework of the plan, which includes a comprehensive update of the implementation of entry and exit procedures for travelers and vehicles.

With regard to checking vehicles, the sources revealed new security techniques included in this project, whereby every car will be checked at the land ports to verify it is not part of the lists of stolen vehicles that are wanted locally and internationally before documenting the movement of the vehicle.

Panel disqualifies 5 poll candidates

No delay in election: court

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh

Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The concerned committee at the Ministry of Interior has disqualified five candidates, including former MPs Muhammad Al-Juwaihel and Hani Shams in addition to one female candidate, for failure to meet the conditions.

Shams confirmed his disqualification, while Majed Al-Mutairi and Marzouq Al-Hebeini who are standing for election in the Fifth Constituency, as well as Marzouq Al-Khalifa from the Fourth Constituency, denied the circulated information that they are among the disqualified candidates.

Al-Hebeini posted on his Twitter account that such information is absolutely false, affirming he met all the conditions and he is pushing through with his campaign. Al-Mutairi and Al-Khalifa made the same statement.

Meanwhile, the First Instance Court, chaired by Judge Ahmad Al-Muasseb, has dismissed the petition of several former MPs to postpone the parliamentary election scheduled for June 6, 2023 until the Constitutional Court rules on the appeal to cancel its decision to nullify the 2022 Parliament.

The First Instance Court clarified that such a petition is beyond its jurisdiction, while setting the date for the election is a sovereign action.

In a relevant development, the Public Prosecution warned that whoever spreads false information about any of the candidates for the upcoming parliamentary election with the aim of distorting their image will be imprisoned for five years or fined KD2,000. The prosecution added that whoever participates in primary elections will be imprisoned for five years or fined KD2,000 to KD5,000.

Confirmed

Also, official spokesman of Kuwait Municipality Muhammad Al-Mutairi confirmed the issuance of licenses for 80 candidates to establish their campaign centers in various governorates as follows: 35 in the Capital, 14 in Hawally, 17 in Ahmadi, six each in Farwaniya and Jahra, and two in Mubarak Al-Kabeer. He also revealed that the Municipality is still reviewing 12 other license applications.

On the other hand, former MP and First Constituency candidate Muhammad Mervi Al-Hadiya said the implementation of political reform necessitates the urgent issuance of legislation; most importantly the amendment of National Assembly Election Law number 35/ 1962 in order to cancel the one-man-one-vote system which, according to him, weakened national unity. He also stressed the need to amend the law on establishing the Constitutional Court, as it went beyond the authorities granted to His Highness the Amir.

Former MP and Second Constituency candidate Farz Al-Daihani asserted the citizens are suffering due to the rising inflation that reached 3.7 percent. He pointed out this necessitates increasing salaries, especially since the last increment was 10 years ago. He added the government must solve the citizens' loans issue, warning that the continuation of the current conditions will lead to recession and the cost of addressing such an issue will be much higher.

Traditionally, candidates for Kuwaiti National Assembly elections would erect their campaign headquarters nationwide to provide the masses with a glimpse of their agenda if elected, reports Kuwait News Agency (KUNA).

Process

But in recent years, and more in the 2023 elections, candidates had foregone the process of establishing a headquarters for their campaigns, opting for advertisement on social media platforms, in what was deemed as "new media".

In this regard, professor of media studies at Kuwait University (KU) Dr. Fawaz Al-Ajmi said that social media platforms were continuously evolving, which made it very attractive for candidates.

Despite the increase in the number of such candidates, Dr. Al-Ajmi indicated that it was very hard to win the election race via online advertisements.

Voters need to trust the candidates for them to give their votes, affirmed Al-Ajmi who noted that candidates need to have a clear media message to come across for votes to decide.

A headquarter-less candidate would have a problem in providing a professional point of view when came to relaying his or her message to the masses and those who rely on spreading the word via social media celebrities would lessen their chances of appearing professional and dedicated to the cause, he added.

Similarly, professor of media at Kuwait University (KU) Dr. Mohammad Al-Otaibi pointed out that the rapid development of technologies had an obvious effect on elections, candidates and voters. There are some constituencies that adore a face-to-face interaction with candidates, while others force, on rare occasions, candidates to opt for the digital campaign route, indicated the academic.



Photos by Samer Shaqir
Travelers are finger-printed at a border post.

Other Voices

Small clinic and big 'house'

By Ahmad Al-Sarraf

Throughout history, many have taken advantage of the kindness of some, and their love to donate to charitable causes, either seeking a reward or simply wanting to do good.

They took advantage of that to achieve enormous fortunes for themselves, either by exploiting a religious text that allows them to deduct a percentage for themselves, or with the excuse of financing fundraising campaigns for businesses.

They lived an unbelievably extravagant life, owning private planes and luxurious homes with air corridors and river creeks, and yachts, whether they were American clerics, Shiites or Sunnis.

Almost no one knows the truth about the fate of what they collected under this or that label, centuries ago, nor where was it spent, and the only thing that is almost certain is that this money did not contribute, in my opinion, for centuries, to improving the lives of those for whom it was supposed to be collected!

Kuwait is no exception, and the best evidence is the unreasonable number of "charity" associations and committees, which have repeated goals, the majority of which with two influential parties control huge amounts of money!

After publishing my last article on manipulation, which some parties resort to, to raise as much money as possible for philanthropists, I was contacted by a well-known doctor, who told me the following sad story:

An international consultant came to Kuwait for a short visit to provide treatment and medical advice to a number of patients.

Then the specialist asked my doctor friend to find someone willing to donate to build a small dispensary in an African Muslim country, which he visits a few times every year to provide free treatment to patients, because he often performs his operations in a tent.

The friend called one of his well-to-do patients, and explained the matter to him, so he contacted a well-known "charitable body", and asked it, being one of its major donors, to study the donation request after he presented it with the initial building requirements.

The approval of the Board of Directors came quickly, after performing the noon prayer, and allocating 450,000 dinars for the project.

The Kuwaiti doctor announced to his European friend that the "charitable body" had agreed to bear the cost of construction. The consultant was stunned by the huge sum allocated, and asked to give him a period to ascertain the real cost.

After a while, the "infidel Christian" returned to tell my friend that the cost of the dispensary would not exceed 90,000 dinars, so the rich Kuwaiti philanthropist decided to transfer the amount to the European consultant, so that he, on his part, build the infirmary, that's what was done in the end! You can deduce what comes to your mind from this story!

The charitable committees, as is the general impression, have huge financial resources, as is the case, for example, with the government "endowment authority", and these funds require specific financial and investment expertise to be managed and developed, but the majority of these bodies hand over their money to "men" whose only characteristic is that they belong to partisan religious bodies, and often they have no knowledge of the arts and methods of investment, and if any administrative error occurs, they often cover up for each other, and I do not know why the endowment funds are not managed by an investment financial expert, instead of a clergyman, all of his characteristics are that he is one of the "people of God."?

Why does the Ministry of Affairs not oblige these associations to select independent members, other than "the people of God," so that they have a say in what is going on in the boards of directors of these associations?

There are many stories of exploitation, partisan bias, and mismanagement, in the absence of all rules of governance and transparency requirements in most of them!

□ □ □

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



Photo by Samer Shaqir
Umbrellas are out in intermittent drizzles.

More rain expected

The Met department has forecast summer rains in Kuwait from Thursday to Saturday, reports Al-Rai daily.

The daily, quoting Met officials said, this unusual weather condition brings relief from the scorching summer temperatures and gives an opportunity for the public to enjoy a temporary respite.

According to meteorological reports, the anticipated rainfall is a result of a weather system approaching the region, bringing clouds and a higher chance of precipitation.

These summer showers are not a common occurrence in Kuwait, where arid desert conditions prevail throughout most of the year.

Too many fake docs

'Marginal' workers held, to be ousted

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Based on direct instructions from the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Al-Khaleel to clean the labor market from violators and to adjust the demographics, campaigns launched by the Ministry of Interior and other concerned parties resulted in the arrest of about 600 marginal workers who have been referred to deportation prison during the past two weeks, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In the context of regulating the labor market and getting rid of law violators, many field campaigns were carried out by the tripartite committee led by the Public Authority for Manpower, with the participation of officers from the Residency Affairs Investigations Department and a number of sectors of the Ministry of Interior.

The field campaigns carried out by the tripartite committee revealed the increasing phenomenon of "fake doctors", as a group of expatriates were caught in medical centers and private clinics practicing medicine and nursing, and providing specialized medical services without obtaining certificates or licenses that allow them to do so.

Statistics issued by the tripartite committee showed that six of those arrested practiced the medical profession and treated patients. Also, a large number of domestic workers and others were arrested for practicing medicine and nursing. Legal measures were taken against them through cooperation between the Ministry of Interior, the Public Authority for Manpower and the Ministry of Health.

The field teams were also able to monitor and seize 15 dummy recruitment offices for the domestic workers. About 90 workers were found in violation of the residency law, as well as absconders who were working on the basis of daily wages.

They were referred along with those who run these facilities to the concerned authorities, in preparation for their deportation from the country.

تيراس مول السامية مطل على شارع الخليج شارع سالم المبارك
Terrace Mall Salmiya, overlooking Gulf Road Salem Al Mubarak Street

9222 4674 / 75 @exotica_kw

www.mughalmahal.com

LOCAL

Worrisome increase in rate of smoking among students

16.3% of cancer cases related to smoking

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Health experts have warned about the high rates of smoking in the country, especially among adolescents and young adults, reports Al-Qabas daily.

During a press conference held by the Kuwait Society for Combating Smoking and Cancer, the experts revealed that the rate of smoking among school students in Kuwait has risen to 29 percent, according to recent studies, and the rate of smoking cigarettes and shisha among university students is 46 percent.

They explained that about 16.3 percent of cancer cases are related to smoking cigarettes and shisha. The top smoking-related cancer is lung cancer, followed by bladder cancer, and then colorectal cancer.

On the occasion of World No Tobacco Day (WNTD), the experts stressed that the spread of smoking in Kuwait poses a great threat to the health of citizens, and significantly impedes the process of healthy development.

Prevention

Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Society for the Prevention of Smoking and Cancer Dr. Khaled Al-Saleh highlighted a previous study published in the American Library, which showed that those who practiced smoking in their lives in Kuwait amounted to 49.9 percent among men and 4.4 percent among women, and the number of smokers who continued to smoke in Kuwait reached 39.2 percent among men and 3.3 percent among women.

The study conducted in the GCC countries, including Kuwait, on the link between smoking and cancer revealed high rates of cancer among smokers.

In this regard, a member of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Society for Prevention of Smoking and Cancer and a member of the National Anti-Smoking Program Dr. Hessa Al-Shaheen affirmed that smoking in Kuwait has become a direct danger to families, especially after the spread of the electronic cigarette, and the misconception



Rate of smoking among school students in Kuwait has risen to 29 percent.

about its non-dangerousness.

She said studies have shown that the risk of smoking increases among university students, as a study published in 2020 revealed that smoking cigarettes and shisha among university students in Kuwait is 46 percent, while it is 42.3 percent in Saudi Arabia.

A comparative study revealed that the percentage of smoking among primary education students in Kuwait, which amounts to 29 percent, compared to the Sultanate of Oman where it amounts to 9.3 percent. This reflects the seriousness of smoking and its spread among adolescents, as well as the need to intensify educational programs for spreading health education among young people. The study ended with a conclusion about the need to start health education in Kuwait to combat the use of tobacco in all its forms among students.

Meanwhile, Dr. Maryam Al-Otaibi, a member of the Board of Directors and the supervisor of the smoking cessation clinic at the Kuwait Society for Prevention of Smoking and Cancer, stated that the total number of patients at the clinic, which reopened in June 2021, reached 325 patients of both sexes and ages.

Also, health professionals highlighted that smoking is no longer a masculine behavior, as there is an increase in the number of female smokers.

In a related context, educational sources warned of the danger of the smoking phenomenon spread-

ing among male and female students in public and private schools.

They stressed the need to develop quick solutions to reduce this dangerous societal scourge.

The sources indicated that it is difficult to control or limit the number of smokers in every school, especially in light of the spread of electronic cigarettes, something that has become a fashion trend among young people and students in schools due to the ease of carrying it, the lack of smell, and the low financial cost.

They said the toilets in schools are the main refuge for smokers, both male and female.

The sources warned them against smoking and against considering it as a normal behaviour.

They called for updating legislation and tightening family control to support education efforts.

The sources also affirmed the keenness of all school administrations to confront the scourge of smoking inside schools. Penalties are imposed on students who smoke if caught, which may reach suspension from school for several days. However, these procedures and penalties do not seem to reduce the percentage of smokers among students, but rather confine them inside schools, and the students smoke cigarettes as soon as they leave school, despite their young age.

Campaign

In this regard, the Ministry of Health launched an awareness campaign on the harmful effects of tobacco to health and the environment. The campaign's slogan is "We need food, not tobacco", which is this year's theme of World Health Organization (WHO) and public health champions around the world on the occasion of the World No Tobacco Day (WNTD).

The Deputy head of the National Anti-Smoking Program Dr. Ahmad Al-Shatti explained that there is continuous work to reduce the number of smokers because of its negative effects on human health.

There are plans to reduce the number of victims of diseases related to the heart, arteries, lungs, and blood pressure through a systematic approach.

It is a collective responsibility that it shares with the media, the Ministry of Education, and legislators.



GCC economic and financial committee meeting

KUNA photo

\$105 bln trade within Gulf bloc

GCC states eye economic cooperation

JEDDAH, May 18 (KUNA): The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) seeks to bolster economic and financial cooperation within the six-member bloc, its chief Jaseem Al-Bedaiwi said on Wednesday, citing an internal committee tasked with bringing such goals to fruition.

Cooperation between GCC states has led to some notable "economic" achievements as of late, he said in a statement issued by the bloc after a meeting involv-

ing the aforementioned committee held in the Omani capital Muscat.

Trade within the Gulf Arab bloc skyrocketed to nearly USD 105 billion in 2021, added the statement, while some 162,000 people own properties across the region, it showed.

He went on to emphasize that GCC member states will collectively employ all tools at their disposal in a bid to propel economic cooperation to greater levels.



Batch 21 graduates

'Science & creativity are pillars of renaissance'

AASG honors 21st batch graduates

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The American Academy School for Girls organized the graduation ceremony of the 21st batch of its students for the academic year 2022-2023, yesterday evening at the Regency Hotel, Al-Futuh Hall, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Adela Al-Sayer, Chairperson of the New Generation Educational Foundation, and Khaleida Al-Mudhaf, Director General of the Foundation, honored a group of graduates, in the presence of the Minister of Education and former Minister of Higher Education Dr Moudi Al-Hamoud, and a number of important personalities, parents, school administration and faculty members.

Speaking on the occasion, Al-Sayer congratulated the graduates for reaching this stage, after which university and scientific life begins, and urged them to determine their life path, to choose the appropriate major that serves Kuwait and the local la-

bor market, and to continue working hard and diligently to achieve their dreams.

Al-Sayer stressed the school's keenness to motivate students to revive the spirit of competition for academic excellence, and all activities that enrich the student's personality and prepare her to face the future and continuous and permanent encouragement, pointing out that the school administration believes that the progress of nations comes through knowledge, work and diligence.

Therefore, she said, "we must work for the advancement of Kuwait and its progress in all fields, stressing that science and creativity are two pillars of Kuwait's renaissance and achieving the desired development."

Dr. Al-Hamoud, emphasized the great diversity of universities at the present time, calling on graduates to choose the college that suits their aspirations and is compatible with the requirements of the labor market.

Sheikha Fadia honors influential women

Union promotes women's participation

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Kuwaiti Union of Women's Societies stressed on the need to expand women's participation and take the circle of rhetoric to the circle of serious action, reports Al-Qabas daily.

This came in a speech by the President of the Union, Sheikha Fadia Al-Saad, during the celebration on the occasion of Kuwaiti Women's Day.

On this occasion, Sheikha Fadia honored a group of influential Kuwaiti women figures in society, who raised the name of Kuwait in many international forums.

She stressed that Kuwaiti women have proven their competence and worth in all fields, noting the need to set legislative, legal and moral limits to protect women from violence and affirmed keenness to contribute to the liberation of women from all forms of injustice they suffer, and to develop the legal arsenal in line with the awareness they show of their rights and duties and the progress achieved by Kuwait in various fields.

Sheikha Fadia said that the measures aimed at achieving fair equality between women and men must form the backbone of every effective strategy for sustainable development, calling for expanding women's participation by approving the principle of "quota" and the special and temporary measures it bears based on positive discrimination for it.

Dr Rajab appointed new Director General of KFAS

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Coinciding with Kuwait Women's Day on Tuesday, May 16, a decision was issued to appoint Dr. Amina Rajab as the Director General of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) as of June 1, reports Aljarida daily.

In a statement issued on its Twitter account, KFAS expressed its wishes for the new director, who is the first woman appointed to this position, for continued success and achievement.

Dr. Rajab was a member of the Board of Directors of KFAS, and held several academic positions including Associate Professor in the Department of Physics at Kuwait University, Head of the Department of Physics (1999-2004), and Deputy Dean for Research and Laboratories Affairs at the College of Science from 2004 to 2018.

She also held several scientific positions, including senior scientific advisor at the "Scientific Progress" from 2018 to now, acting director of the Research Department at the Foundation from 2016 to 2018, and director of the Research Program also at KFAS from 2011 to 2018.

Dr. Rajab also held the position of Project Leader for the Kuwait Nuclear Data Center (1986-2016), Technical Advisor for the Kuwait Environmental Remediation Program (KERP) and Kuwait Focal Point (KNFP) (2011-2009), Member and Board Meeting Organizer of the Jaber Al-Ahmad Center for Nuclear Medicine and Medical Imaging (2013 - 2020).



Dr. Amina Rajab



albander
hotel & resort

May

Room Promotion







Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	Price
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	BHD 57.200/-net
2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	BHD 128.000/-net
Weekends (Thursday & Friday)	Price
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	BHD 65.000/-net
2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	BHD 145.000/-net

Promo period from 1st - 31st May 2023

Terms & conditions apply

Tel: +973 17701201 - Ext. 351 | Email: reservation@albander.com | www.albander.com | @albanderhotelandresort

'Signing of MoU reflects determination to develop and consolidate bilateral relations'

Bilateral relations with Kuwait has reached new horizons: Canada envoy

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: The Canadian Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Aliya Mawani has praised the level of bilateral cooperation between Canada and Kuwait saying it has reached new horizons that are in the interest of the two friendly countries and peoples.

This is in addition to discussing the aspects of intensifying joint coordination and cooperation between the two sides on many regional and international issues, and discussing ways to continue joint efforts in establishing the foundations of international peace and security.

The Canadian envoy speaking to the media at her residence said the visit of Foreign Minister Salem Al-Abdullah to Canada resulted in holding bilateral talks with Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Melanie Jolie, which dealt with all aspects of the close historical ties that bind the two friendly countries and frameworks for strengthening and developing them accordingly.

Ambassador Mawani praised the signing of a memorandum of understanding for the establishment of a bilateral political consultation mechanism "strategic dialogue" between the two countries, which she said reflects the development and consolidation of bilateral relations in all fields and at various levels, which she said, comes in light of the existence of cooperation agreements between the two friendly countries in the security, trade and military fields, expressing her happiness with this fruitful cooperation.

She explained that the signing of the memorandum reflects the determination of the two friendly countries to develop and consolidate bilateral relations in all fields and at various levels.

On the military cooperation between the two countries, she said "we have a base in Kuwait and it houses about 250 soldiers, most of whom are stationed at Ali Al-Salem base. These armed military forces present in Kuwait," she said, "are working to protect the security and safety of Kuwait and the countries of the region and other countries, pointing out that this base is a foundation for the presence of forces and their participation in operations in the region."

She referred to the participation of 4,000 Canadians in the war in Afghanistan, who passed through Kuwait. She also spoke of the Canadian soldiers in Jordan, Jerusalem, Bahrain and Lebanon, but "Kuwait is the main base for Canadian forces in the region," stressing the importance of the region for her country. She also indicated that she will visit Camp Arifjan soon to meet the Canadians soldiers stationed in Kuwait.

Mawani thanked Kuwait for hosting of the Canadian Armed Forces on its territory and for the facilities provided by the government in this context, pointing out that Kuwait is the first Gulf country to sign a development cooperation agreement with Canada.

She also indicated that there are about 7,500 Canadian citizens residing in Kuwait working in various fields, and that discussions to open a direct flight between the two countries are still under discussion.

Regarding granting visas to Kuwaitis, Mawani said: "We invite Kuwaitis to apply for a Canada visa in advance, noting that the period for obtaining a visa may take up to a month" and explained the study visas do not take time, praising the activity of the Kuwaiti Cultural Office in Canada, which she said works closely with the Canadian government and greatly



HE Aliya Mawani, Canadian Ambassador to Kuwait

supports Kuwaiti students studying there.

Regarding the validity period of the visa, she said visas are granted according to the validity of the passport, noting that there is a difference between tourist visa applications and immigrant visas, as there is confusion between them sometimes, and this applies to asylum seekers to Canada residing in Kuwait.

She also clarified that the conditions for obtaining a Canadian visa applies to all nationalities who wish to travel to Canada.

She disclosed about 450 Kuwaiti medical students enroll in Canadian universities annually, and that Kuwaiti doctors, graduates of Canadian universities, hold supervisory positions in Kuwaiti government hospitals.

On the issue of what has come to be known as fake immigration offices and how to deal with them, she said: "Yes, it is true that there are a number of these fake offices and the embassy does not have any authority over them, as these offices are considered a great challenge to the Canadian government and what I can say in this field is to invite immigration seekers to Canada to visit the embassy site and the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to obtain information or contact the embassy directly about this matter because there is a lot of information required from the applicants, including the fingerprint."

On the economic cooperation between the two countries, she disclosed Kuwait is Canada's third economic partner in the Gulf region, and "we have great cooperation with it in various fields such as health and technology, gas and oil, as well as food security, which became a necessity after the Corona pandemic."

Regarding her vision of Kuwaiti women on Kuwaiti Women's Day, she said: Celebrating this day is very important for Kuwaiti women, and "I was fortunate to meet a number of Kuwaiti women who enjoy a great position in Kuwaiti society."

She went on to say, "Kuwaiti women are smart, persistent, and have great capabilities, and they can work more, as they are present as an active element in the private sector, as academics, as well as in government institutions, and they have very great experience. They are also present in the oil sector, and we cooperate closely with them."

She indicated that the Kuwaiti laws related to women and the families are good.

The Canadian envoy praised Kuwait's position in the United Nations regarding the Ukrainian crisis, due to its repercussions at the regional and international levels, as well as the humanitarian efforts made in this framework and the joint work towards preserving the international order, consecrating the values and principles of international law, and maintaining international peace and security.

Syria centerpiece

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, the Arab League's Ministerial Committee to support Palestine called on the world, Wednesday, to recognize the State of Palestine, and to support its full membership in the United Nations.

This came in a statement issued by the committee held today in Jeddah under the chairmanship of Algeria (the current President of the 31st Arab Summit), and the membership of Jordan, Qatar, Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt, Morocco, and Mauritania on the sideline of the 32nd Arab Summit that will be held in Saudi Arabia on Friday.

The statement noted that the Secretariat of the Arab League called to assign its missions abroad and through councils of Arab ambassadors to move to recognize the State of Palestine and support its full membership in the United Nations.

The committee called on the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States to continue his contacts and consultations with the heads of European Union, African Union, Non-Aligned Movement, BRICS group, and ASEAN, to urge them to recognize the State of Palestine and support its full membership in the United Nations.

The committee concluded its meeting with the call to support the efforts of the State of Palestine to join interna-

tional organizations and strengthening its legal and international status to embody its independence and sovereignty over its occupied land.

Also:

BRUSSELS: European Union (EU) High Representative **Josep Borrell** met on Tuesday with UAE Foreign Minister **Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan in Brussels** and discussed a wide-range of issues, said a statement released by Borrell's office.

"Considering the deepening bilateral relations between the EU and the United Arab Emirates, the High Representative and his Emirati counterpart discussed shared concerns and interests related to trade and investment, climate change, with a view of the upcoming COP28 in Dubai, as well as, economic diversification, and energy transition," it said.

They also addressed the negative consequences of the ongoing war in Ukraine. The EU's top diplomat highlighted the importance and necessity for international community to protect the rules-based multilateral world order and uphold respect for the UN Charter.

They also held an in-depth exchange on the geopolitical situation, with particular focus on the EU-facilitated Dialogue between **Kosovo and Serbia**, the developments in **Sudan** and on **Iran**.

They also received briefly a group of young Emirati students from the Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy, who are on a study tour in Europe, added the statement.

Monetary policy management an obsession that haunts economies

Kuwaiti banks maintain comfortable growth rates

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: The process of managing monetary policy globally has become an obsession that haunts many major economies, since the start of the monetary tightening cycle in March 2022, the economic and geopolitical developments that central banks in the world anticipate are successive, each according to its location of events and the extent of its exposure to successive variables and its ability to deal with them, reports Al-Anba daily.

Despite the passage of a year of the monetary tightening cycle, Kuwaiti banks maintained comfortable growth rates in the deposits and loans portfolios, and despite the decrease in the margins between the interest rates on deposits with banks for both the dinar and the dollar, they are still in favor of deposits in dinars, and the margins between the interest rate on the dinar and the US dollar allow the Central Bank the ability to maintain the stability of the exchange rate of the dinar and prevent any speculative operations that may occur.

Portfolios

Local banks continued to expand their balance sheets during March 2022 to March 2023, by increasing the loan and deposit portfolios, supported by the improvement in the operating environment in conjunction with the reopening of the economy on credit activity, and raising the discount rate (8 times since March 2022 by 250 basis points, to become at 4% currently to a lesser degree than the rate of raising regional and global central in order to devote monetary and financial stability and maintain the competitiveness of the currency.

The national economy serves as a storehouse of local savings and promotes an atmosphere that supports sustainable economic growth,

taking into account the economic conditions locally and globally, the geopolitical repercussions, and the directions of monetary policy in global economies.

The data of the Central Bank of Kuwait's monthly statistical bulletin for the month of March 2023 showed that the budget of local banks expanded to reach 85.4 billion dinars, with a growth rate of 6.8% at the end of March 2023, compared to a balance of 80 billion dinars at the end of March 2022. The deposits and loans portfolios of local banks witnessed growth, as dinar deposits (75.3% of total deposits) continued to grow by 6.1% to reach 35.8 billion dinars at the end of March 2023, compared to a growth rate of 5.6% to reach 33.7 billion dinars at the end of March 2022. The annual growth of loans slowed down to record 5.1% at the end of March 2023 to reach 47.2 billion dinars, to reflect the impact of the previous increases in discount rates, taking into account the period of slowdown.

Rates

The data also showed that the margins of interest rates on deposits remain in favor of the Kuwaiti dinar compared to deposits in US dollars, as the margins between the interest rate on the dinar and the US dollar still allow the central bank the ability to maintain the stability of the dinar exchange rate and prevent any speculative operations that may occur to take advantage of the price differences between the dollar and the dinar. In addition, deposits in dinars are still attractive under the umbrella of the Deposit Protection Law in light of the successive fears and crises experienced by global markets and banks.

Despite the decrease in the margins between interest rates on deposits with banks for both dinars and dollars, they are still in favor of deposits in dinars, as the interest margin between the dinar and dollars for one-month deposits reached 0.730 percentage points in March 2023, compared to 0.780 percentage points in March 2022. The margin for 3-month deposits reached 0.687 percentage points in March 2023, compared to 0.754 percentage points in March 2022.

Sadaaqa poster

Sadaaqa presents Ravi Kohli

Sadaaqa celebrates the long and rich history of friendship and shared cooperation between India and Kuwait.

For centuries, Kuwaiti sailors and merchants sailed to Indian ports leading to a close relationship based on trade and cultural intermingling. In the beginning of the 20th century, Indians began relocating to the Arabian Gulf for work & business.

While following their own individual dreams, they contributed to the development of their adopted home.

Sadaaqa explores this symbiotic relationship and celebrates it through individual experiences.

On May 25, Sadaaqa focuses on the Kohli family of Kuwait.

The Kohlis are one of Kuwait's most well-known Indian families. Mr UC Kohli, grandfather of our guest, Mr Ravi Kohli left India more than a century back. After spending some years in Iraq and Iran,

he shifted to Kuwait in 1936. Here, he set up a spare parts business which was soon booming. Once established, Mr UC Kohli worked hard for the community. His footprints in the field of education is felt even today.

He founded the first Indian school here. Hundreds & thousands of students have passed out of the many branches of the school. Mr Ravi Kohli himself studied there before going to the USA to graduate in Business. After coming back to Kuwait, he had a short stint in the airlines industry. Post that he founded a company that dealt in corporate gifts. He also founded two of Kuwait's very popular Indian restaurants- Dawat and Taal.

In our May episode of Sadaaqa we celebrate the spirit of Indian families like Kohlis who have scripted their own narratives in a foreign land, giving back as much as they have taken.



Group photo of AUK and KISR representatives.



Dr. Rawda Awwad and Dr. Manea Al-Sudairawi signing the MOU.

Significant step towards fostering collaboration & promoting scientific research

AUK signs Memorandum Of Understanding with KISR

'Achievement source of pride'

KU registers patent for latest dental procedure

KUWAIT CITY, May 17, (KUNA): Kuwait University on Monday completed a registration with US Patent and Trademark Office administrators dealing with an innovative procedure related to periodontal tissue responses during insertions of artificial teeth, using cutting-edge 3D technology.

The breakthrough enables local physicians to easily interact with dentistry

centers across the world, in addition to providing higher quality services on a local level, said Kuwait University Dentistry Faculty professor Dr. Fawaz Al-Zaabi.

Hailing the achievement as a source of pride, Kuwait University acting chief Dr. Fahad Al-Rashidi congratulated the inventor on the creation, saying such work is appreciated and supported on a national level.



KUNA photo
Kuwait University honors Dentistry Faculty professor Dr. Fawaz Al-Zaabi

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: The American University of Kuwait (AUK) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Kuwait Institute of Scientific Research (KISR) to foster collaboration between researchers, facilitate the sharing of ideas and expertise, provide networking opportunities for career development, and develop training programs for students.

The MOU was signed by AUK president, Dr. Rawda Awwad, and the Director General of KISR, Dr. Manea Al-Sudairawi; also attending the signing ceremony were KISR and AUK representatives.

Dr. Rawda Awwad expressed her enthusiasm towards bringing together both parties' strengths and expertise to create new opportunities for learning and discovery. "The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the American University of Kuwait (AUK) and the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) is a significant step towards fostering collaboration and promoting scientific research in Kuwait. This partnership will facilitate the exchange of expertise, resources, and knowledge between the two institutions, leading to the development of innovative solutions to the challenges facing Kuwait and the wider region. Through this MOU, AUK and KISR will be able to leverage each other's strengths and contribute towards the advancement of science, technology, and education in Kuwait."

Also commenting on the occasion, the director of the Office of Research and Grants (ORG) at AUK, Dr. Iyad Abu Doush said, "This MOU will open KISR's research resources and facilities to AUK's faculty and students, providing them with opportunities to

access cutting-edge technology and expertise in various fields of science and engineering. It will also provide training and internship opportunities for AUK students and enable AUK faculty to secure funding for their research projects."

Dr. Manea Al-Sudairawi highlighted the purpose of the MOU and its importance. "The objective of this agreement is to promote the exchange of experiences and develop joint projects that aim to provide advanced technical support, transferring scientific information between both parties. Additionally, it includes sharing facilities and equipment for collaborative research and encouraging participation in scientific seminars, forums, and workshops."

Following the signing, a workshop entitled "KISR - Recent Research" was organized by ORG which featured presentations from Dr. Ahmed Al-Mulla, Dr. Husam Arman, and Eng. Noura Al-Ghurair, showcasing significant advancements in research related to various fields such as energy, environment, techno-economics, and software development at KISR. Attendees from all colleges at AUK had the opportunity to gain insight into ongoing research projects at KISR.

About AUK: The American University of Kuwait (AUK) is an independent, private, equal opportunity, and coeducational 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

Center offers personalized counseling

AUK's Counseling Center promotes student wellness thru workshops

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Counseling Center at the American University of Kuwait (AUK) is a core hub of the institution's mission to provide personalized counseling and disability accommodations to support students in their journey towards lifelong learning and development.

In a bid to raise awareness about mental health issues and break the stigma surrounding them, the Counseling Center has been organizing a series of workshops throughout the academic year. These workshops cover a range of topics, including empathy, toxic relationships, emotions, and stress management.

Dr. Georges Chedid, director of the Counseling Center, emphasized the importance of these initiatives in promoting mental health on campus. He said, "Our goal is to reduce the stigma and misconceptions sur-



Dr. Georges Chedid, director of the AUK Counseling Center

rounding mental health issues and provide students with the tools and support they need to achieve overall



A photo of workshop

mental and physical well-being."

The Counseling Center has also been collaborating with external or-

ganizations and experts in the field of mental health to provide students with multiple perspectives. One such

collaboration was a talk presented by clinical psychologist, Dr. Sarah Sease, and psychologist, Dr. Nicholas Scull, on anxiety and positive mental health habits.

The Center has also collaborated with the Ministry of Interior on the Say No to Drugs campaign to raise awareness about drug laws and the risks associated with drug abuse. Internal collaborations with AUK clubs have also provided students with the tools and skills needed to address their mental health needs.

Dr. Georges stressed the importance of caring for students' mental health post-COVID-19, given its impact on all aspects of their lives. He stated, "During COVID-19, students were faced with the additional challenge of adapting quickly to an online educational system deprived of social interactions."

The Counseling Center contin-

ues to collaborate with various departments, student clubs, and organizations in Kuwait to provide students with the resources they need to achieve overall well-being. Through counseling, disability accommodations, coaching, therapy sessions, and clinical support, the Center is committed to ensuring that AUK students are equipped with the resources they need to succeed.

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

Concert on June 2

Indian Cultural Society set to present 'Rasika Shekar Live'

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Singer, flautist, composer and producer Rasika Shekar's music is an amalgam of learning and roots in Indian classical music and exploration into a multitude of genres that creates a soundscape so unique, that it shines like a crepuscular ray in today's contemporary music scene. A chemical engineer by degree and an alumni and scholarship recipient of the prestigious Berklee College of Music, her music education began at the age of seven in Dubai and the US where she grew up and continued to be molded by her gurus. Her distinctive sound as a vocalist and flautist has led her to collaborate with some of the biggest names internationally like John McLaughlin, Shankar Mahadevan, Shankar Ehsaan Loy, Ustad Ghulam Ali Khan, Guitar Prassana, and many other renowned artists across the globe.

She's a playback singer, composer and has featured on shows such as Coke Studio, SaReGaMa and Kaun Banega Crorepati.

Honest

Rasika was recently a part of the double Grammy winning album 'Divine Tides'. It is Rasika's endearingly honest voice, empathy, inventive mind, and her sanguine spirit that makes her one of the most distinct artists of our times.

Rasika Shekar is an Indo-American flautist and singer. She made her Bollywood debut as a singer in the year 2012. Her debut song was under the composition of Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy for the movie "Dekh Indian Circus". After her success in this film, Rasika MTV coke studio songs were out and were adored even more by her fans. The soul-touching and soothing flute

solo by her is just a delight to listen. In the year 2015 Rasika Shekar "Katti Batti" movie song was out and was loved by all.

Rasika was born in Dubai and was brought up in New Jersey, USA. She is a trained Carnatic and Hindustani classical singer. Rasika got trained in Carnatic vocals. She started playing Carnatic music from the age of 14. Rasika completed her bachelor's degree from Rutgers University, New Jersey. After completing her graduation, she joined Berklee College of Music where she learnt jazz and flamenco music.

Career

Rasika's remarkable career in the Indian music industry positioned her as one of the most prominent artists. She has lent her voice and flute playing to Bollywood hits in movies - Dil Bechara, 2 States, Kill Dill, Katti Batti, Love Games and many more.

ICS is a social non-profit organization whose mission is to provide quality entertainment to the audience of Kuwait and give them the feeling of experiencing "home away from home" by means of entertainment.

So join us to get entertained by internationally acclaimed 'Rasika Shekar Live' on Friday, June 2, 2023 at AIS auditorium Maidan Hawally near Police Station Kuwait. It will be a promising evening filled with great fusion of rhythmic instrumental and melodious vocal music. A proud presentation again, by the presenters and promoters of Indian Art, Music and Culture - Indian Cultural Society, Kuwait. For assistance please call or whatsapp 99709495, 97653441, 66550065, 97984603, 97690035 www.icskuwait.org ics.kuwait@gmail.com novestin@gmail.com



A group photo from the event.

Investiture ceremony held for new senate members

ICSK Senior crowns the 'leaders of tomorrow'

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Indian Community School, Senior conducted the Investiture Ceremony for the newly elected School Senate Members and Prefectorial Body of the academic year 2023 - 24 on Monday, 8th May 2023. H.E. Ms. Tuba Nur Sonmez, Ambassador of Turkey to Kuwait, the Chief Guest of the event was given a thumping and resounding welcome by the students of ICSK.

A very solemn occasion, the ceremony began with the Senate members marching to the stage with their flags held high, in sync with mighty fervent music that replicated the aura. The formal programme commenced with the recitation of verses from the Holy Quran followed by a prayer song to invoke the blessings from the Almighty. The gathering paid tribute to the nations by honouring the national anthems of Kuwait and India.

The ceremony was inaugurated by the lighting of lamp by honorable Chief Guest H.E. Ms. Tuba Nur Sonmez and Dr. V. Binumon, Principal and Senior Administrator of ICSK. An august welcome to the gathering was presented by Mrs. Susan Rajesh, Vice Principal of ICSK Senior.

In her address, she stimulated



Chief guest being honored.

the senate members to hold on to the school core values of resilience, perseverance, respect and integrity while discharging their duties. A few momentary glimpses of the students' journey from the interviewing process of the School Senate to the election and declaration of results were presented before the audience.

The Chief Guest, H.E. Ms. Tuba Nur Sonmez in her address, congratulated the young leaders and advised them to be the role models and lead by example. She motivated the students to keep moving forward despite all the obstacles and challenges that life throws. House mentors of the four houses - Achievers, Leaders, Winners and Victors were honoured with badges by the Chief Guest.

Dr. V. Binumon administered the oath for the Senate members. Donning the mantle of responsibility,

the Senate members pledged to bestow their duties to the best of their abilities. 237 students were conferred with a new role as office bearers of the School Senate and Prefectorial Body.

It was a proud moment for all the parents to witness their children being invested by H.E. Ms. Tuba Nur Sonmez with great responsibilities while embarking on a new journey as leaders. As a token of love and appreciation, the Chief Guest was presented a memento by the Principal.

The cultural programme commenced with an enthralling and well directed dancdrama based on the message of an eminent education activist, Malala Yousafzai: 'One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world'. A Medley of Songs presented by the school choir, Swarnajali enraptured and rejuvenated the audience.

The ceremony culminated with the vote of thanks proposed by the President of School Senate, Ms. Sakina Culcuttawala. With pride in their heart and aspirations in their mind, the School Senate led by the Senate Advisor, Mrs. Musarrat Parkar is all set to lead the institution with commitment, confidence and competence.

Members enjoy 2-day picnic

Thanima Kuwait organizes annual 'Ullasathanima 2023'

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: A two-day picnic "Ullasathanima 2023" was organized in Kabd with the participation of members of Thanima Kuwait, a team with an undeniable presence in Kuwait's arts, culture and social issues, as well as the crew of the Macbeth play.

Ullasathanima convener Jinu Abraham, Sangeet Somnath and Ashraf Choorut led the arrangements for the programmes. Gen. Convener Babuji Bathery, Shaiju Pallipuram (Joint Convener) and Jacob Varghese (Drama Convener) managed the various programs.

Babuji informed that the two days of heart-warming performances by children and adults, appreciation of the cast of "Macbeth" successfully organized by Natakathanima and giving away the stress of work became a pleasant memory for the members.

The meeting congratulated those who worked tirelessly in various fields to make Macbeth play a success. Thanima paid tribute to Director Babuji Bathery, Artist Sujathan Master, who made the screenplay, and Raghunathan Nair, a founding member and hardcore member visited Kuwait, who worked hard to



A photo from the event.

make the play Macbeth a reality.

Planning meetings for various future programs of Thanima were also organized.

Program Convener Jinu Abraham entrusted the commitment of Thanima Kuwait in different, transparent and exemplary involvement in the

artistic, cultural and social education levels of Kuwait and the country in general and expressed the willingness to serve.

Indian Cultural Society
Presents
RASIKA SHEKAR
(PLAYBACK SINGER, COMPOSER & FLUTIST)
LIVE
On Friday, **02**
JUNE
2023
at
06:30 PM
Anchor:
A.A. KHAN
American International School Auditorium, Maidan Hawally, Kuwait
ics.kuwait@gmail.com www.icskuwait.org
RSVP: 99709495, 97653441, 66550065, 97690035, 97984603

A flyer of the event.



A photo from the event.

oil down

The Kuwaiti oil price dropped by USD 1.37 to USD 75.57 pb on Wednesday against USD 76.94 pb on the previous day, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) announced on Thursday.

Comparatively, at international markets, forward Brent crude contracts went up by UD 2.05 to USD 76.96 pb, while the West Texas Intermediate crude rose by USD 1.97 to USD 72.83 a barrel. (KUNA)

Kuwait trade surplus with Japan down

Kuwait's trade surplus with Japan narrowed 2.6 percent from a year earlier to JPY 79.9 billion (USD 581 million) in April, down for the first time in two months, due to slowing exports, government data showed Thursday.

But Kuwait stayed in black ink with Japan for 15 years and three months, as exports still offset imports in value, the Finance Ministry said in a preliminary report. Kuwait overall exports to Japan grew 6.4 percent year-on-year

to JPY 104.9 billion (USD 763 million) for the second straight month of expansion. Imports from Japan jumped 50.6 percent to JPY 25.0 billion (USD 181 million), up for the 12th month in a row.

Middle East's trade surplus with Japan narrowed 30.9 percent to JPY 740.1 billion (USD 5.4 billion) last month, with Japan-bound exports from the region sliding 20.9 percent from a year earlier, it said. (KUNA)

Deutsche Bank to pay \$75m to settle lawsuit

Deutsche Bank has agreed to pay \$75 million to settle a lawsuit claiming that the German lender should have seen evidence of sex trafficking by Jeffrey Epstein when he was a client, according to lawyers for women who say they were abused by the late financier.

A woman only identified as Jane Doe sued the bank in federal district court in New York and sought class-action status to represent other victims of Epstein. The lawsuit asserted that the bank knowingly benefited from Epstein's sex trafficking and

"chose profit over following the law" to earn millions of dollars from the businessman.

One of the law firms representing women in the case, Edwards Pottinger, said it believed it is the largest sex trafficking settlement with a bank in U.S. history.

"The settlement will allow dozens of survivors of Jeffrey Epstein to finally attempt to restore their faith in our system knowing that all individuals and entities who facilitated Epstein's sex-trafficking operation will finally be held accountable," the firm said in statement. (AP)

Market Movements

18-05-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts		
JAPAN	- Nikkei	+1.60	30,573.93	UAE	- DFM	-0.29	3,555.50
SAUDI	- Tadawul	+0.59	11,344.40	PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	-0.87	41,472.20
				PHILIPPINES	- PSEi	-0.10	6,628.64
				EGYPT	- EGX 30	-0.58	16,754.54

Business

The Conversation

'Mistaken, misread, misquoted, mislabeled, and mis-spoken' – what Guthrie wrote about national debt debate in Congress during the Great Depression

By Mark Allan Jackson

Middle Tennessee State University

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



The debt ceiling debate between the House GOP and President Joe Biden could, if not solved, lead to economic chaos and destruction - so it might seem strangely lighthearted to wonder what a Great Depression-era singer and activist would think about this particular political moment.

Certainly, in all the research I did in putting together my book "Prophet Singer: The Voice and Vision of Woody Guthrie," I never came across any comment Woody Guthrie made about the debt ceiling.

But he lived through the Great Depression and its aftermath. He also stood witness to legislators struggling to correct the direction that the nation was headed in during the 1930s and early '40s.

He had a lot to say about Congress in general and how it handled the national debt in particular.

He once made a folksy joke that suggests his feelings about this supposedly august body.

"The Housewives of the country are always afraid at nite, afraid they's a Robber in the House. Nope, Milady most of em is in the Senate," he wrote in his regular column for The People's Daily, called "Woody Sez."

Guthrie constantly railed against politicians, both Republican and Democrat, who he thought represented their own selfish interests rather than those of deserving working men and women.

What if he could survey today's America? Would his comments on the state of the nation in the past suggest that he would have something to say in 2023? In fact, some of his observations sound as if they were written about this political moment - rather than his own.

When Guthrie visited Washington, D.C., in 1940, he managed to hear some

Senate debates and provided his thoughts on their effectiveness.

"I gawthered the Reactionary Republicans was in love with the Reactionary Republicans; also that the Liberal Democrats was in love with th' Liberal Demacrats. Each presented a brief case of statistics proving that the other brief cases of statistics, was mistaken, misread, misquoted, mislabeled, and mis-spoken," he wrote in his column.

And just what were politicians arguing over then? The national debt.

Bipartisan legislative efforts raised the debt ceiling three times under President Donald Trump. Now, House Republicans are balking unless certain conditions are met, while the Democrats are demanding a clean bill with no restrictions.

Witnessed

Guthrie witnessed much the same situation in his era. During his visit to Washington, D.C., he listened to "senators a making speeches - on every conceivable subject under the sun, an' though the manner in which they brought forth their arguments, their polished wit, and subtle maneuvers, were all very entertaining, I come out of it as empty handed as I went in," he wrote in "Woody Sez."

He then compared their debates to "hearin' th' hens a cacklin' - and a runnin' out to th barn." Despite the scene's being "loud, noisy, and plenty entertaining," the result was "no eggs."

There's a lot of noise coming from Congress today also - but no results.

What could happen if the two sides cannot agree? A telling example occurred in 2011, when the bipartisan deal to raise the debt ceiling came so late that Standard & Poor's downgraded the country's credit rating - which hiked the interest that needed to be paid on the U.S. debt.

But if an agreement does not happen, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has warned that such a crisis would bring on "economic and financial catastrophe" on a national and global scale.

Guthrie would find this kind of brinkmanship troubling. Not because he was a political operative, with merely an intellectual understanding of the risks. In-

stead, he was driven by a personal knowledge of the day-to-day hardships, the human toll of such momentous political decisions. His family had fallen from middle-class safety into abject poverty even before the onset of the Great Depression.

Because of falling agricultural prices in the aftermath of World War I and his father's real estate speculation in some small farms surrounding their hometown of Okemah, Oklahoma, the Guthries could not keep up with their mortgages. They were forced into foreclosure.

Guthrie joked that his father "was the only man in the world that lost a farm a day for thirty days."

Foreclosures would likely be just one of the ruinous effects of default now, along with interest rates hikes, slashing of social programs, unemployment spikes and decimation of pension plans. All are negative results, but they are certain to hit the poor and working class the hardest.

Those are the people whom Woody Guthrie advocated for throughout his career. Those are the people whose hardships he lamented in such songs as "I Ain't Got No Home" and "Dust Bowl Refugee."

But he also expressed optimism about the power of those same people to make a positive change, such as in "Union Maid" and "Better World A-Comin'." Individual and collective action was necessary, according to Guthrie, and he celebrated both. The union maid would "always get her way when she asked for better pay," and in "Better World" he sings, "we'll all be union and we'll all be free."

Perhaps his best-known comments about the nation appear in "This Land Is Your Land," with the popular version praising the American landscape. But in his early version of that song, he ended it with his narrator surveying a line of hungry people lined up "by the relief office" and then asked, "Was this land made for you and me?"

That question could rise again in 2023: If congressional leaders debating over the debt ceiling fail to find common ground for the nation's greater good, perhaps someone will challenge them and ask if the politicians are in office for the American people, or for themselves - just as Woody Guthrie would have.

Negotiators begin meeting

Biden declares 'US will not default,' says he's confident of budget deal

WASHINGTON, May 18, (AP): An optimistic President Joe Biden declared Wednesday he is confident the U.S. will avoid an unprecedented and potentially catastrophic debt default, saying talks with congressional Republicans have been productive. He left for a G-7 summit in Japan but planned to return by the weekend in hopes of approving a solid agreement.

Biden's upbeat remarks came as a select group of negotiators began meeting to try and hammer out the final contours of a budget spending deal to unlock a path for raising the debt limit as soon June 1. That is when the Treasury Department says the U.S. could begin defaulting on its obligations and trigger financial chaos.

"I'm confident that we'll get the agreement on the budget and America will not default," Biden said from the Roosevelt Room of the White House. Later Wednesday evening, negotiations resumed behind closed doors at the Capitol.

Democrat Biden and Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy have traded blame for a debt-ceiling impasse for weeks. But Biden said of the latest White House session with congressional leaders that "everyone came to the meeting, I think, in good faith."

McCarthy was upbeat, too, though contending Biden had given ground. The president said the budget talks were still separate from the debt limit issue, but the speaker said Biden had "finally backed off" his refusal to negotiate.

"Keep working - we'll work again tonight," McCarthy told reporters later. "We're going to work until we can get it done."

Biden said that every leader at Tuesday's Oval Office meeting - Vice President Kamala Harris, McCarthy, House Minority Leader Hakeem

Jeffries, D-N.Y., Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky. - agreed the U.S. must not default on its obligations.

"It would be catastrophic for the American economy and the American people if we didn't pay our bills," Biden said. "I'm confident everyone in the room agreed ... that we're going to come together because there's no alternative. We have to do the right thing for the country. We have to move on."

He said he would be in "constant contact" with White House officials while at the summit in Hiroshima. He is canceling stops in Australia and Papua New Guinea that were to follow so he can return to Washington on Sunday.

Biden and McCarthy tasked a handful of representatives to work swiftly to try and close out a final deal. They include Steve Ricchetti, counselor to the president; legislative affairs director Louisa Terrell and Office of Management and Budget Director Shalanda Young for the administration, and Rep. Garret Graves, R-La., a close McCarthy ally, for the Republicans.

McCarthy, who has said he would personally be involved, said he planned to stop by the talks later Wednesday. He said he would be in Washington for the weekend while negotiations are underway.

Agreement by the negotiators would still leave any deal needing approval by Democratic Senate and Republican House.

Democrats are upset about the possibility of new work requirements for some recipients of government aid. And Republicans want much tougher budget restraints than the Democrats support.

Bank execs blame panicked depositors for bank failures

NEW YORK, May 18, (AP): Top executives at Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank largely avoided taking responsibility for their banks' dramatic failures at a Senate hearing Tuesday, instead using their time to assign blame to events they said were largely out of their control.

The arguments got little traction with senators on both sides of the aisle. Democrats and Republicans on the Senate Banking Committee criticized the executives for taking risky actions or missing obvious problems that directly led to the demise of their banks, while still accepting lucrative pay packages and bonuses, even in the days and weeks leading up to the failures.

"You were paying out bonuses until literally hours before regulators seized your assets," said Sen. Sherrod Brown, the Democratic chair of the Senate Banking Committee. "To most Americans, a lack of Wall Street accountability tracks with their entire experience with our economy.

Workers face consequences; executives ride off into the sunset."

More than a handful of senators asked if the executives would consider returning part of their compensation, since bank failures are shouldered by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and other banks in the system. Each of the three executives testifying demurred.

Greg Becker, Silicon Valley Bank's former CEO, took the brunt of the criticism from committee members, although Scott Shay, the former chairman and co-founder of Signature Bank, also came under fire. Signature President Eric Howell also appeared.

Becker used his testimony and answers to senators' questions to say that Silicon Valley Bank was a victim of a confluence of factors, including a social media-driven bank run. Regulators have said that customers pulled \$42 billion of deposits from Silicon Valley Bank on March 9, one day after the bank announced it needed to raise capital.

NEW YORK, May 18, (AP): Stocks are drifting higher Thursday after more companies reported better profits than expected, while yields climbed after a Federal Reserve official cautioned the end to its interest-rate hikes may not arrive as early as Wall Street hoped.

The S&P 500 was 0.2% higher in afternoon trading, adding to its rally from a day earlier as momentum seems to build for the U.S. government to avert a disastrous default on its debt. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 163 points, or 0.5%, at 33,252, as of 12:50 p.m. Eastern time, while the Nasdaq composite was 0.8% higher.

Helping to support Wall Street was Walmart, which rose 0.5% after reporting stronger results for the latest quarter than expected. It also raised its financial forecast for the full year, though it said it's seeing shoppers remain cautious about spending.

Bath & Body Works, another retailer, leaped 9.2% after reporting stronger revenue and earnings for the latest quarter.

Much scrutiny has been on the retail industry because strong spending by U.S. households has been one of the main pillars keeping the slowing economy out of a recession.

Video game maker Take-Two Interactive jumped 12.2% after it forecast a huge jump in revenue for fiscal 2025, stoking speculation that Grand Theft Auto VI is on the way.

Stocks have remained remarkably resilient since early April despite a long list of worries. A major reason for that is hope the Fed would take it easier on its hikes to rates, which have slowed inflation at the expense of risking a recession and knocking down prices across financial markets.

The widespread bet was that the Fed would take a pause at its next meeting in June. But Dallas Fed President Lorie Logan cooled some of those hopes in a prepared speech for the Texas Bankers Association.

"The data in coming weeks could yet show that it is appropriate to skip a meeting," Logan said. "As of today, though, we aren't there yet." Treasury yields climbed as traders increased bets that the Fed would raise rates again at its June meeting, though the majority are still forecasting a pause.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury rose to 3.64% from 3.57% late Wednesday. The two-year yield, which moves more on expectations for

Asian stocks higher on hopes for US debt deal

HIROSHIMA, Japan, May 18, (AP): World leaders landed Thursday for a Group of Seven meeting in Hiroshima, the site of the world's first atomic bomb attack, with Russia's war in Ukraine expected to be high on the agenda.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida kicked off his summit diplomacy by meeting with U.S. President Joe Biden after his arrival at a nearby military base. He was due to hold talks with British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak a bit later in the day, before the three-day gathering of leaders of the world's wealthy democracies opens on Friday.

The Japan-U.S. alliance is the "very foundation of peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region," Kishida told Biden in opening remarks.

"We very much welcome that the cooperation has evolved in leaps and bounds," he said.

Biden said: "When our countries stand together, we stand stronger, and I believe the whole world is safer when we do."

The U.S. president exited Air Force One and briefly greeted troops at nearby Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni.

As G-7 attendees made their way to Hiroshima, Moscow unleashed yet another aerial attack on the Ukrainian capital. Loud explosions thundered through Kyiv during the early hours, marking the ninth time this month that Russian air raids have targeted the city after weeks of relative quiet.

"The crisis in Ukraine: I'm sure that's what the conversation is going to start with," said Matthew P. Goodman, senior vice president for economics at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Speaking to reporters aboard Air

the Fed, rose to 4.23% from 4.16%.

Higher rates have already slowed swaths of the economy and helped lead to three of the largest U.S. bank failures in history since March. Reports on the economy Thursday came in mixed.

Europe

In Europe at midday, the FTSE in London rose 0.7%, the DAX in Frankfurt gained 1.5% and the CAC 40 in Paris advanced 0.9%.

Asia

Asian stock markets followed Wall Street higher on Thursday on hopes U.S. political leaders can reach agree-

Ukraine war high on agenda

World leaders land in Japan for G-7 meet

Force One, Jake Sullivan, the White House national security adviser, said there will be "discussions about the battlefield" in Ukraine and on the "state of play on sanctions and the steps that the G-7 will collectively commit to on enforcement in particular."

G-7 leaders and invited guests from several other countries are also expected to discuss how to deal with China's growing assertiveness and military buildup as concerns rise that it could try to seize Taiwan by force, sparking a wider conflict. China claims the self-governing island as its own and its ships and warplanes regularly patrol near it.

Security was tight in Hiroshima, with thousands of police deployed at numerous points throughout the city. A small group of protesters was considerably outnumbered by police as they gathered Wednesday evening beside the ruins of the Atomic Peace Dome memorial, holding signs including one which read "No G7 Imperialist Summit!"

In a bit of dueling diplomacy, Chinese President Xi Jinping is hosting the leaders of the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan for a two-day summit in the Chinese city of Xi'an starting Thursday.

During the meeting in Hiroshima, Kishida hopes to highlight the risks of nuclear proliferation. Leaders are expected to visit a memorial park that commemorates the 1945 atomic bombing by the U.S. that destroyed the city and killed 140,000 people.

North Korea's nuclear program and a spate of recent missile tests have crystallized fears of an potential attack. So have Russia's threats to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine. China, mean-

ment to avoid a potentially disastrous default on government debt.

Shanghai, Tokyo, Hong Kong and Sydney advanced. Oil prices edged lower. Wall Street rallied Wednesday after President Joe Biden expressed confidence "America will not default" despite lack of agreement on Republican demands for cuts in aid to poor families to pay for food, medical care and rent in exchange for raising the amount the government can borrow.

The Shanghai Composite Index gained 0.8% to 3,311.09 and the Nikkei 225 in Tokyo advanced 1.6% to 30,562.40. The Hang Seng in Hong Kong rose 1% to 19,746.90.

while, is rapidly expanding its nuclear arsenal.

The leaders are due to discuss efforts to strengthen the global economy and address rising prices that are squeezing families and government budgets around the world, particularly in developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The debate over raising the debt limit in the U.S., the world's largest economy, has threatened to overshadow the G-7 talks. Biden plans to hurry back to Washington after the summit for debt negotiations, scrapping planned meetings in Papua New Guinea and Australia.

The British prime minister arrived in Japan earlier Thursday and paid a visit to the JS Izumo, a ship that can carry helicopters and fighter jets able to take off and land vertically.

During their bilateral meeting Thursday, Sunak and Kishida are expected to announce a series of new agreements on issues including defense; trade and investment; technology; and climate change, Sunak's office said.

The G-7 includes Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Canada and Italy, as well as the European Union.

A host of other countries have been invited to take part. The G-7 hopes to strengthen its members' ties with countries outside the world's richest industrialized nations, while shoring up support for efforts like isolating Russia.

Leaders from Australia, Brazil, India, Indonesia and South Korea are among those participating as guests. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is expected to join by video link.

Oil

In energy markets, benchmark U.S. crude lost 24 cents to \$72.59 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract rose \$1.97 on Wednesday to \$72.83. Brent crude, the price basis for international oil trading, declined 24 cents to \$76.72 per barrel in London. It gained \$2.05 the previous session to \$76.96.

Currencies

The dollar declined to 137.56 yen from Wednesday's 137.61 yen. The euro retreated to \$1.0830 from \$1.0838.

BUSINESS

Fewer Americans apply for jobless benefits

Fewer Americans applied for jobless benefits last week after a previous spike that some took as a sign that higher interest rates were finally cooling the labor market.

Applications for jobless claims for the week ending May 6 fell by 22,000 to 242,000, from 264,000 the week before, the Labor Department reported Thursday. The weekly claims numbers are broadly as representative of the number of U.S. layoffs.

The four-week moving average of

claims, which flattens some of the week-to-week fluctuations, ticked down by 1,000 to 244,250. Analysts have pointed to a sustained increase in the four-week averages as a sign that layoffs are accelerating, but are reluctant to predict that a spike in layoffs is imminent.

Overall, 1.8 million people were collecting unemployment benefits the week that ended April 29, about 8,000 fewer than the previous week.

Since the pandemic purge of millions of jobs three years ago, the U.S.

economy has added jobs at a breakneck pace and Americans have enjoyed unusual job security. That's despite interest rates that have been rising for more than a year and fears of a looming recession.

Early this month, the Fed raised its benchmark lending rate for the 10th time in a row in its bid to cool the economy and bring down four-decade high inflation. Though the labor market still favors workers, there have been some recent indications that the Fed's policy actions are working. (AP)



A hiring sign is displayed at a cemetery in Skokie, Ill., Wednesday, May 10, 2023. On Thursday, the Labor Department reports on the number of people who applied for unemployment benefits last week. (AP)

President settles for now a long-running dispute

Biden vetoes bid by Congress to reinstate tariffs on solar panel imports

WASHINGTON, May 18, (AP) President Joe Biden on Tuesday vetoed a congressional resolution that would have reinstated tariffs on solar panel imports from Southeast Asia, settling for now a long-running dispute over whether to punish China for trade violations that bypass U.S. rules limiting imports of cheap solar panels from Asia.

The result of Biden's veto is that a two-year delay on tariffs will continue until at least June 2024.

Lawmakers from both parties have expressed concerns about what they call unfair competition from China, which has long dominated the global market for manufacturing solar panels. Some U.S. manufacturers contend that China has essentially moved operations to four Southeast Asian countries - Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia and Cambodia - to skirt U.S. anti-dumping rules.

A Commerce Department inquiry last year found likely trade violations involving Chinese products and recommended steep penalties. Biden halted tariffs for two years before the Commerce investigation was completed, saying his action was needed satisfy demand for renewable energy while providing "certainty" for the solar supply chain and solar installation market.

The mere threat of up to \$1 billion in retroactive tariffs and higher fees led to delays or cancellations of hundreds of solar projects across the U.S. last year. Solar installations are a key part of Biden's agenda to fight climate change and achieve 100% clean electricity by 2035.

"America is now on track to increase domestic solar panel manufacturing capacity eight-fold by the end of my first term," Biden said in his veto statement Tuesday. "But that production will not come online overnight."

A two-year pause on tariffs will provide a temporary "bridge" to ensure that when new U.S. factories are operational, "we have a thriving solar installation industry ready to deploy American-made solar products to homes, businesses and communities across the nation," Biden said.

Biden said he intends to allow the tariffs to take effect when the current suspension expires in June 2024.

The U.S. industry applauded Biden's action, calling solar panel imports crucial as solar installations ramp up to meet increased demand for renewable energy. Less than 30% of solar panels and cells installed in the U.S. are produced here, although that number is increasing as U.S. manufacturers take advantage of tax

credits included in the landmark climate law adopted last year.

Abigail Ross Hopper, president and CEO of the Solar Energy Industries Association, said the congressional resolution threatened up to 30,000 American jobs while weakening U.S. energy security.

"The solar and storage industry must build more manufacturing capacity in America, and the two-year tariff moratorium provides a bridge for us to do just that," Hopper said. "Curbing supply at this critical time (would) hurt American businesses and prevent us from deploying clean, reliable energy in the near-term."

The measure on solar tariffs is among several legislative efforts being pushed by newly empowered Republicans to rebuke the Democratic president and block some of his administration's initiatives, including a rule on clean water and a measure that allows federal retirement plan managers to consider climate change in investment plans. Biden vetoed both legislative measures aimed at undoing his administration's actions.

Nine Democratic senators supported the reinstatement of solar tariffs, along with 12 Democrats in the House. Only one Republican senator and eight GOP House members voted against the tariff plan.

Twitter purging inactive accounts including people 'who have died'

Action angering those still grieving

WASHINGTON, May 18, (AP) Emily Reed lost her younger sister Jessica more than 10 years ago. For much of the last decade, she's visited Jessica's Twitter page to help "keep her memory alive."

Twitter became one of the places where Emily processed her grief and reconnected with a sister she describes as almost like a twin. But Jessica's account is now gone.

Last week, owner Elon Musk announced Twitter would be purging accounts that have had no activity for several years. That decision has been met by an outcry from those who have lost, or who fear losing the thoughts and words of deceased loved ones linked to now-inactive accounts.

Reed immediately returned to Jessica's page as she had done a day or two earlier after learning of the purge. In place of Jessica's page was an "account suspended" message that suggested it may be in violation Twitter rules.

Reed's tweet recounting her shock over the loss of the account has received tens of thousands of responses. Others shared similar experiences of pain upon learning that the account of a deceased loved one had vanished. "Having these digital footprints... is super important to me," Reed, 43, told The Associated Press.

The advent of social media has come with new way in which people mourn, returning to the place where they connected with friends and family in the past. In addition to memories and physical traces left behind, snippets of lives are now being captured in the digital space.

It is something that social media platforms have wrestled with for recent years.

Twitter backed off an attempt to purge inactive accounts in 2019, years before Musk arrived, due to a similar backlash.

Other social media sites have found ways to allow people to mourn those they've lost.

Facebook and Instagram allow users to request an account be deactivated, or a memorialization of the account. Memorialized accounts show the word "Remembering" next to the person's name.

"In this modern age, we have these electronic reminders of people - (including) little snippets of a thought they had on a particular day or pictures that they shared," said Shira Gabriel, professor of psychology at University at Buffalo. Looking through a late loved one's social media can be both a healthy way to process grief and gather as a community in remembrance, Gabriel said.

The prospect of that resource disappearing "can bring about a sense of mourning again," Gabriel said. "There is a real psychological cost of getting rid of this digital thumbprint that was left behind and this ability for community members to gather in one spot."

It is unknown if Musk will backtrack on the decision to purge. The billionaire CEO of Tesla has launched



In this file photo, the seal of the Board of Governors of the United States Federal Reserve System is displayed, Feb. 5, 2018, in the ground at the Marriner S. Eccles Federal Reserve Board Building in Washington. To Wall Street's relief, the end appears in sight for the Federal Reserve's sharp hikes to interest rates. The hikes are supposed to lower inflation, but they also hurt the economy and drag down stock prices. (AP)

Why a Fed rate-hike 'pause' may not be as great for stocks as Wall Street hopes

NEW YORK, May 18, (AP) The possible end to the Federal Reserve's long campaign of rate hikes appears like an oasis to beaten-down Wall Street investors, but is it a mirage?

With inflation cooling from its peak last summer, Wall Street overwhelmingly assumes the central bank will hold rates steady for the first time in more than a year when it meets next month.

High rates knock down inflation by slowing the economy, raising the risk of a recession and hurting prices for all kinds of investments. The stock market has held steady in recent weeks as investors bet on a pause by the Fed, offsetting a long list of other concerns, from cracks in the U.S. banking system to the U.S. government's edging toward what could be a catastrophic

default on its debt.

History seems to be on Wall Street's side. Going back to the 1980s, the S&P 500 has jumped an average of nearly 6% in the three months after the Fed makes its final increase in a rate-hike campaign.

But something makes today different than those four times: how bad inflation is. Inflation was still 4.9% in April, way above the Fed's 2% target.

That may make today's scenario more like the rate-hike campaigns that ended in 1969, 1973 and 1981. The S&P 500 fell by an average of 6.6% in the three months following the final rate hike in those episodes, according to strategists at Morgan Stanley.

The difference may be that when inflation is elevated, the Fed may need

to keep rates on hold for a long time. When inflation is lower, meanwhile, it can more quickly begin cutting rates, something that acts like steroids for financial markets.

Traders have already built bets for the Fed to cut rates later this year, while the Fed has said it expects none if things go according to plan.

"I think rate cuts are something more like a 2024 story," said Megan Horneman, chief investment officer at Verdence Capital Advisors. "Right now markets are pricing in some chance of a rate cut as early as this summer." That may be setting already pricey stocks up for drops if those expectations aren't met, she said. "The market is getting a little complacent, that does worry me."

policies that have rattled users and advertisers alike and shown little interest in amending those policies in response.

Musk named a new CEO last week, Linda Yaccarino, a former NBCUniversal advertising executive, who will have her hands full with a platform seemingly now in a perpetual state of chaos.

Deleting inactive accounts can be seen as fulfilling a promise Musk made when he bought the company, particularly winnowing down junk accounts and bots, said Samuel Woolley, an assistant professor at the University of Texas at Austin's School of Journalism and Media.

There are good reasons to preserve inactive accounts, and also reasons to delete them, Woolley said, but he is leery of the "one-size-fits-all" approach.

Advocates of purging accounts cite skewed metrics caused by inactive accounts or bogus on social media platforms. Yet on top of emotional pain for some users mourning late loved ones, deleting inactive accounts could also mean losing tweets that documented historical events, commentary and breaking news on the app over the years.

"Twitter operates in many ways like a library of data," Woolley said. "Just

because someone hasn't been active for 30 days or a few years, doesn't mean their tweets don't still have a great amount of relevance."

Musk did say the reasoning behind removing inactive accounts was to free up unused Twitter handles, or user names, and that those inactive accounts would be archived.

What exactly that means is not known - including what inactive accounts will look like when they're archived, and whether they'll be easily accessible. Other details of the plan are also unclear, such as the number of accounts to be removed and whether the policy will be evenly enforced.

EU backs Microsoft buying Call of Duty maker Activision Blizzard

LONDON, May 18, (AP) The European Union on Monday approved Microsoft's \$69 billion purchase of video game maker Activision Blizzard, deciding the deal won't stifle competition for popular console titles like Call of Duty and accepting the U.S. tech company's remedies to boost competition in cloud gaming.

But the blockbuster deal is still in jeopardy because British regulators have rejected it and U.S. authorities are trying to thwart it.

The acquisition, sweetened by Microsoft's promises to automatically li-

cense Activision games to cloud gaming platforms, "would no longer raise competition concerns and would ultimately unlock significant benefits for competition and consumers," said the European Commission, the 27-nation bloc's executive arm and top antitrust watchdog.

The commission's approval "has removed one potential major roadblock for this deal" but "it doesn't necessarily mean they're in a stronger position" to overturn the U.K.'s rejection, said Liam Deane, a game industry analyst for tech research and advisory firm

Omdia.

The all-cash deal announced more than a year ago has been scrutinized by regulators around the world over fears that it would give Microsoft and its Xbox console control of Activision's hit franchises like Call of Duty and World of Warcraft.

Fierce opposition has been driven by rival Sony, which makes the PlayStation gaming system.

Microsoft sought to counter the resistance by striking a deal with Nintendo to license Activision titles like Call of Duty for 10 years and offering the

same to Sony if the deal went ahead.

Following its review, the European Commission dismissed the possibility that Microsoft would cut off its games from PlayStation, saying that excluding the most popular gaming console would put a big dent in its profits.

The emerging cloud gaming market received closer scrutiny from Brussels. Cloud gaming frees players from buying expensive consoles and gaming computers by allowing them to stream games they own to tablets, phones and other devices, typically through a cloud platform that may charge a fee.

Potential legal fight set up

Montana governor bans TikTok ... But can the state enforce the law?

NEW YORK, May 18, (AP) Montana Gov. Greg Gianforte on Wednesday signed into law a first-of-its kind bill that makes it illegal for TikTok to operate in the state, setting up a potential legal fight with the company amid a litany of questions over whether the state can even enforce the law.

The new rules in Montana will have more far-reaching effects than TikTok bans already in place on government-issued devices in nearly half the states and the U.S. federal government. There are 200,000 TikTok users in Montana as well as 6,000 businesses that use the video-sharing platform, according to company spokesperson Jamal Brown.

Here's what you need to know: Why is montana banning TikTok?

Proponents of the law in Montana claim the Chinese government could harvest U.S. user data from TikTok and use the platform to push Beijing misinformation or messages to the public.

That mirrors arguments made by a bipartisan group of lawmakers in the U.S. Senate, as well as the heads of the FBI and the CIA, all of whom have said TikTok could pose a national security threat because its Beijing-based parent company ByteDance operates under Chinese law.

Critics have pointed to China's 2017 national intelligence law that compels companies to cooperate with the country's governments for state intelligence work. Another Chinese law, implemented in 2014, has similar mandates.

TikTok says it has never been asked to hand over its data, and it wouldn't do so if asked.

How does montana plan to ban TikTok?

The law will prohibit downloads of TikTok in the state and fine any "entity" - an app store or TikTok - \$10,000 per day for each time someone accesses TikTok, "is offered the ability" to access it, or downloads it.

That means Apple and Google, which operate app stores on Apple and Android devices, would be liable for any violations. Penalties would not apply to users.

The statewide ban won't take effect until January 2024. It would be void if the social media platform is sold to a company that is not based in "any country designated as a foreign adversary" by the federal government.

The governor indicated he wants to expand the bill to other social media apps in order to address some of the bill's "technical and legal concerns." But the legislature adjourned before sending him the bill, which meant he couldn't offer his amendments.

Montana Attorney General Austin Knudsen has pointed to technology used to restrict online sports gambling apps as a way to curtail TikTok from operating in the state. Those violations can be reported by anyone. And once the state verifies a breach has taken place, it sends a cease-and-desist letter to the company involved, said Tyler Nerison, a spokesperson for Knudsen's office. He said different companies use different methods for compliance and it's up to them "to not allow their apps to work in Montana and other states where they are not legal."

So, could the Tiktok ban work?

Cybersecurity experts say that, other than avoiding the fine, there's nothing incentivizing the companies involved to comply and it will be extremely difficult - if not impossible - to adequately enforce the law.

For one, the U.S. doesn't have anything equivalent to the type of control countries like China have on what their citizens access on the web. Compounding that, internet service providers are out of the picture.

Before the Montana law passed, lawmakers rewrote portions of the

bill to let them off the hook after a lobbyist for AT&T said during a February hearing the legislation was "not workable" to put into effect.

Could tech companies block it?

Apple and Google have not spoken out against the law. But a representative for TechNet, the trade group that counts the two tech giants as its members, has said app stores don't have the ability to "geofence" apps in different states and it would be impossible to prevent TikTok from being downloaded in Montana. The group has also said the responsibility should be on an app to determine where it can operate, not an app store.

Telecoms analyst Roger Entner, of Recon Analytics, says he believes the app stores could have the capability to enforce the law, but it would be cumbersome to implement and full of loopholes. Apple and Google's address-linked billing could be bypassed with prepaid cards and IP geolocation easily masked by using a VPN service, which can alter IP addresses and allows users to evade content restrictions, said mobile security expert Will Strafach, the founder of Guardian, which makes a privacy protection app for Apple devices.

Oded Vanunu, head of products vulnerability research at the cybersecurity firm Check Point, agreed it would be difficult for app stores to isolate a single state from downloading an app. He suggested it would be more feasible for TikTok to comply since it controls the software and can "adjust the settings based on the geographical location or IP addresses" of users.

Could tiktok block itself?

When users allow TikTok to collect their location information, it can track a person to at least 3 square kilometers (1.16 square miles) from their actual location. If that feature is disabled, TikTok can still collect approximate location information - such as the region, city or zip code in which a user may be located - based on device or network information, like an IP address.

But similar to the app stores, cybersecurity experts note that any enforcement measures the company implements could be easily bypassed with a VPN and efforts to use IP geolocating might lead to other issues.

David Choffnes, the executive director of the Cybersecurity and Privacy Institute at Northeastern University, said cell providers may use the same types of IP addresses for multiple states, which could mean someone who is not in Montana could incorrectly be blocked from using TikTok.

What's going to happen next?

Likely a legal battle. Knudsen, Montana's attorney general, has already said he expects the law will end up in court.

TikTok spokesperson Brooke Oberwetter said in a prepared statement Wednesday that the law infringes on Montanan's free speech rights and is unlawful.

"We want to reassure Montanans that they can continue using TikTok to express themselves, earn a living, and find community as we continue working to defend the rights of our users inside and outside of Montana," Oberwetter said.

Oberwetter declined to say if the company will file a lawsuit but described some of the legal issues at play. She argued Montana is attempting to override U.S. foreign policy by claiming the bill addresses a national security risk. She said foreign policy and national security laws are not made at the state level.

NetChoice, a trade group that represents TikTok and other tech companies, says the bill would violate the First Amendment and "bill of attainder" laws that prohibit the government from imposing a punishment on a specific entity without a formal trial.



Photos from the event.

LuLu Hypermarket holds Mango Mania promotion

LuLu Hypermarket, the leading retail chain in the region, kicked-off its Mango Mania promotion, offering an enticing celebration of mangoes from 17-23 May at all its outlets in Kuwait.

The week-long festival of the 'king of fruits' promises an unforgettable experience for mango enthusiasts across the country. The LuLu Mango Mania was inaugurated at the LuLu Hypermarket's Quraïn outlet on 17 May, by First Secretary, Political and Commerce, at the Indian Embassy, Smita Patil, in the presence of top management of LuLu Kuwait.

Held annually in summer, the Mango Mania festival at LuLu Hypermarket is a much-awaited event among shoppers in Kuwait. With over 70 varieties of mangoes sourced from 10 different countries, including the classic

Indian Alphonso the Nam Dok Mai from Thailand and Philippines' own Manila mango or Carabao, the event is a veritable nirvana for mango lovers in Kuwait.

The event not only offers an extensive selection of fresh mangoes but also showcases the versatility of this tropical fruit through a wide range of mango-infused dishes, such as mango payasam, mango curries, mango cakes, pastries, mango halwa, and much more.

Spectacular displays of mangoes are a major highlight of the event, with LuLu Hypermarket transforming its outlets into a tropical paradise with captivating mango-themed creative displays and cutouts.

As part of the festivities, LuLu Hypermarket is offering amazing promotions and discounts on all varieties of mangoes. Shoppers can take advantage

of special deals and offers, making it the perfect opportunity to stock up on their favorite mangoes and enjoy the sweet flavors of this beloved fruit.

One of the standout attractions of LuLu Mango Mania is the creative cutouts of mango trees, adding a touch of whimsy and charm to the event. Visitors can capture memorable photos in front of these artistic installations, creating lasting memories of their Mango Mania experience.

LuLu Hypermarket invites all citizens and residents in Kuwait to join in the Mango Mania celebration and experience the joy of indulging in the king of fruits. Do not miss this exciting opportunity to explore the diverse world of mangoes and enjoy the delightful flavors and aromas that define this tropical treasure at very special prices.

'Check for fees'

Pick a college bank account as carefully as your college

By Spencer Tierney
NerdWallet

Attending college can get pricey, so you'll want to avoid costs from other places - like your bank account.

More than 668,000 students paid nearly \$15.5 million in bank account costs in a year, an average of almost \$26 per person, according to a 2022 report by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. What's worse is that some colleges endorse costly bank accounts as part of their partnerships with banks.

"Do not assume that because your college or university partners with a bank, that bank is offering you a good deal," Aaron Klein, senior fellow in economic studies at the Brookings Institution, said in an email.

Before heading off to college, consider what factors you need in a college checking account. There's no grade on this, but the wrong bank can cost you.

Features matter

Checking accounts work similarly wherever you bank, but some features vary or aren't available at every bank, including branches, highly rated mobile apps, certain account fees and perks such as direct deposit up to two days early.

Decide a few things going in, like whether you need a bank that offers joint bank accounts to share finances with a parent and whether you'll want credit cards or other loan options at the same place.

The biggest banks generally have robust apps and big branch networks, but their account fees can be high. In contrast, regional banks and credit unions - the not-for-profit counterpart to banks - might have lower fees and more of a community focus, but they have fewer branches and might lag in technology. Online banks can have minimal fees and high-quality apps, but they often lack a branch network and the ability to deposit cash isn't guaranteed. Nationwide ATM access is usually available at credit unions and online banks through shared networks, but they might not be as easy to spot as big bank ATMs.

Just don't limit your options to only accounts marketed as "college checking." You might miss out on banking features you'd want.

Check for fees

Watch out for fees on monthly maintenance, ATM usage and overdrafts. You can often avoid a monthly fee, such as \$5 or \$10, by having a certain minimum balance or direct deposits into your account - or by finding a checking account without monthly fees. Using an ATM to withdraw cash outside your bank's network can trigger a fee of around \$2 to \$3 from your bank, plus a fee from the ATM operator. And overdraft or non-sufficient funds fees can be \$30 or more per transaction, which will kick in if a payment drops your account balance below zero.

Carla Sanchez-Adams, senior attorney at the National Consumer Law Center, recommends looking into Bank On certified accounts, which don't have overdraft or NSF fees. Transactions that would bring an account balance below zero get declined instead. Plus, these accounts can have screening practices inclusive of those with less banking history.

You might have to pay fees for some services, such as getting a checkbook. "Not every account is going to be completely free," says David Rothstein, senior principal at Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund, who manages Bank On, CFE Fund's national platform that promotes financial inclusion.

Account security

This year, there have been three bank collapses. While bank failures are rare, federal deposit insurance protects your money. If a bank fails, you get up to \$250,000 of your money back. Banks get insured through the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp., and credit unions have the equivalent protection through the National Credit Union Administration.

However, it's more complicated with bank accounts at newer financial tech firms, such as Chime and Current, as well as with debit cards at firms like Cash App and PayPal's Venmo. These companies typically partner with banks to provide "pass-through" FDIC insurance in their accounts. But if these companies fail, getting your money isn't as straightforward as with a bank. This uncertainty is one reason why tech firms' accounts aren't eligible to be Bank On accounts.

"It's true that a lot of the fintechs have a relationship with banks behind the scenes, but that's never really been tested," Rothstein says.

Beyond FDIC insurance, look for multifactor authentication in banks' mobile apps to boost account security. Also, confirm that a bank provides monthly statements and spending alerts so you can monitor transactions and flag any that appear fraudulent.

Go beyond checking

Once you have a checking account for college, consider a savings account for money you won't need to spend next month. See if your bank offers secured credit cards or credit builder loans, which can be good steps to establishing credit history. Secured credit cards usually require a cash deposit upfront equal to your borrowing amount, while credit builder loans entail making all payments before receiving the full loan amount. (AP)



A combo photo from the event.

Panel discusses 'climate change and renewable energy'

ASSP organises 11th Int'l HSSE & PDC Conference

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP), Kuwait Chapter is an ISO-certified premier voluntary, non-profit health, safety, and environmental organization that strives to provide professional guidance, training, consultancy, and resources to the industrial and social sectors in the region.

As a part of its continuous efforts in its professional journey, ASSP Kuwait Chapter organized the 11th International HSSE & Loss Prevention Professional Development Conference (PDC) and Exhibition on May 10th & 11th under the patronage of Minister of Oil, State of Kuwait. The conference aims to provide a platform for HSE professionals and practitioners to participate in the mega event as technical experts, presenters, exhibitors, authors, or delegates. As part of its continuing efforts to prevent workplace injuries and illnesses and adverse impacts on the environment by ensuring the professional development of HSE professionals, ASSP Kuwait Chapter has been organizing PDC since the Year 2004.

The two-day conference, with the theme "Environmental Excellence Through Sustainable Solutions," was inaugurated by Eng. Samira Mohamad Al Kandari, Acting General Manager & Environmental Control Affairs Sector, Kuwait EPA as a representative of H.E. Minister of Oil, State of Kuwait.

The inaugural session was attended by Ms. Wadha Al Khatib, CEO, KNPC; Ms. Nadia Al Hajji CEO of PIC; Mr. Bader Al-Saad Al-Munaiif, DCEO KOC; Mr. Abdul Aziz Al Duaij, DCEO, Support Services, KNPC and several other dignitaries from Oil sector companies, ASSP Region IX Vice President Mr. Vasudevan Narayan, Area 1 Director Mr. Sampath Reddy, BCSP representative and other distinguished guests.

ASSP Kuwait Chapter President Mr. Mazharuddin Shaikh kick started the ceremony with a presidential address followed by welcome speeches by Chairman Eng. Fadel Al-Ali and Conference Director Eng. Fares Al-Mansouri. Mr. Jignesh Shah, Conference Deputy Director, briefed the key features of the Conference. Eng. Ahmed Al Shatti, Honorary Secretary of the ASSP Kuwait chapter, and Mr. Bader Al Hadhrami, Honorary Vice President (elect) of the ASSP Kuwait chapter, anchored the proceedings of the inaugural ceremony.

Speeches

The inauguration featured keynote speeches by the dignitaries. At the end of the inaugural ceremony, all the dignitaries were recognized with a memento. The ceremony was concluded with a thanking speech by Eng. Bader Al Hadhrami. Later, the dignitaries inaugurated the conference exhibition.

After the inaugural ceremony, an Executive Panel Discussion on 'Climate Change and Renewable energy' was held with the participation of Mr. Abdulaziz Ahmed Al-Duaij, DCEO, Support Services, KNPC, Mr. Hamad Al Subaie, DCEO, Manufacturing & Marketing PIC, facilitated by Engr Ahmad Ismail Conference Mentor.

During the two-day Conference, three symposiums, namely Energy & Environment, Process Safety Management, & HSE Regulations in Kuwait, Three plenary sessions, Ten concurrent Technical sessions on topics related to Occupational Health & Industrial Hygiene, Process Safety, Personal Safety, Fire Safety, and Environment Management, were presented. In addition, E-posters are presented on various topics. During the two days of the Conference, 50 plus papers were presented with the participation of more than 600 Delegates, visitors, and guests.

Recognized

The second-day opening session featured keynote speeches from recognized HSE professionals of organizations like ASSP & BCSP (Mr. Vasudevan Narayanan, Regional Vice President - ASSP Region IX, Mr. Sampath Reddy Area Director -1, Mr. Ashok Garlapati, Director - BCSP, USA).

The opening session of the second day was followed by the second Executive Panel Discussion (EPD) on "Role of Technology in Safety at Work" with the participation of Mr. Dhari Al Garaballi -Manager HSE KIPIC, Mr. Ahmed Ismael Team Leader KNPC and Mr. Raghuraman from Board of Certified Safety Professionals which Mr. Larry Wilson from SafeStart Canada facilitated. Mr. Mohammed Mohiuddin and Mr. Ashok Garlapati facilitated EPD & Plenary sessions.

An exposition by more than 20 major industrial suppliers, service providers, and consultants was organized during this two-day Conference, where the delegates had an opportunity to witness the latest innovative technology and safety and fire equipment.

The Conference was endorsed by KPC & its subsidiaries E as well as supported/endorsed by many international agencies like the International Association of Drilling Contractors (IADC), the Board of Certified Safety Professionals (BCSP), The Gulf Downstream Association (GDA) as the Knowledge Partner of the Conference.

The conference delegates, including Managers, Team Leaders, Consultants, Specialists, Engineers, Physicians, Coordinators, Inspectors & Supervisors of various disciplines from the oil sector and other companies, attended the Conference. The evening session was also conducted for the benefit of the ASSP Members.

Mr. Bala Srikanth Advi, Mr. Rajasekhar, Mr. Sanjay Jaiswal, Mr. Abdul Gani, Mr. Kashif Ali, Mr. Munir Khan, Mr. Chary Ramakrushna and Eng. Hanan Almomhammed (WISE) led different committees in organizing PDC 2023.

The Conference's closing ceremony was held in the afternoon on 11th May 2023 with all the volunteers and committee members.

'Identify the keepers'

Some steps to downsize belongings in a hurry

By Liz Weston
NerdWallet

Ideally, you'd spend months or even years carefully purging excess belongings - but life may have other plans. Maybe you or someone you love has a health crisis and needs to move into assisted living. Or someone has died and their home has to be cleared before next month's rent is due. Maybe you're just moving soon and want to significantly lighten your load.

If you need to downsize in a hurry, here's how to go about it while minimizing stress - and avoiding sending something valuable to the dump.

Gather paperwork

Dealing with paperwork and photos takes time you may not have, says professional organizer Katherine Lawrence of Ashland, Virginia. Consider boxing unsorted documents and photos for temporary storage in a climate-

controlled area, Lawrence suggests.

Make a plan to sort through the boxes later, since you don't want to store old bills and blurry photos indefinitely any more than you want to risk throwing away something important if you rush.

Next, deal with the stuff that can't be sold or donated, Lawrence recommends. That includes unneeded medications - a pharmacy can offer suggestions about proper disposal - and perishable food that won't be eaten in time. Non-perishable, unopened food items typically can be donated to a local food bank.

Identify the keepers

"Keepers" are possessions that have a definite home. If someone is moving, that includes stuff that will be going with them. If you're clearing out after a death, keepers may include items destined for heirs.

Those officially charged with settling someone's estate, such as an executor or successor trustee, may be required to hire appraisers to

value possessions before anything is distributed. An estate planning attorney or real estate agent may offer referrals, or you can check with the Appraisers Association of America, the American Society of Appraisers or the International Society of Appraisers.

If you have potentially valuable stuff - such as antiques, jewelry, artwork or collections - a personal property appraiser could help you figure out what may be worth the extra effort of selling, says Julie Hall, an estate expert in Charlotte, North Carolina, who specializes in personal appraisals and estate liquidations. The appraiser might also suggest appropriate venues, such as an auction house or consignment store, Hall says.

However, hiring an appraiser can cost hundreds or thousands of dollars, which may not always be practical. You also can get a rough idea of many items' potential worth by checking eBay and using the "sold items" filter.

Once you've identified all the keepers, Lawrence recommends tagging them with painter's tape, which is safe for most surfaces. If items are going to different people or locations, she suggests buying different colored rolls and assigning a color to each person or destination.

Next, make arrangements to get each item to its new home. That could involve hiring movers, renting storage, shipping items or setting a date and time for recipients to pick up their treasures. Avoid holding items indefinitely for others: The point is to declutter, not provide free storage for procrastinators, says Mary Kay Buysse, executive director of the National Association of Specialty & Senior Move Managers, an organization that helps people downsize and relocate.

Decide on remaining stuff

If you have several rooms of furniture and household items left over, consider an estate sale. These are most commonly held in someone's home after their death, but they also can help those who need to dramatically downsize, Hall says. (AP)

The Conversation

'Results could revolutionize our understanding of how life works'

Quantum physics proposes a new way to study biology

By Clarice D. Aiello
University of California, Los Angeles

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

Imagine using your cellphone to control the activity of your own cells to treat injuries and disease. It sounds like something from the imagination of an overly optimistic science fiction writer. But this may one day be a possibility through the emerging field of quantum biology.

Over the past few decades, scientists have made incredible progress in understanding and manipulating biological systems at increasingly small scales, from protein folding to genetic engineering. And yet, the extent to which quantum effects influence living systems remains barely understood.

Quantum effects are phenomena that occur between atoms and molecules that can't be explained by classical physics. It has been known for more than a century that the rules of classical mechanics, like Newton's laws of motion, break down at atomic scales. Instead, tiny objects behave according to a different set of laws known as quantum mechanics.

For humans, who can only perceive the macroscopic world, or what's visible to the naked eye, quantum mechanics can seem counterintuitive and somewhat magical. Things you might not expect happen in the quantum world, like electrons "tunneling" through tiny energy barriers and appearing on the other side unscathed, or being in two different places at the same time in a phenomenon called superposition.

I am trained as a quantum engineer. Research in quantum mechanics is usually geared toward technology. However, and somewhat surprisingly, there is increasing evidence that nature - an engineer with billions of years of practice - has learned how to use quantum mechanics to function optimally. If this is indeed true, it means that our understanding of biology is radically incomplete. It also means that we could possibly control physiological processes by using the quantum properties of biological matter.

Imaging

Researchers can manipulate quantum phenomena to build better technology. In fact, you already live in a quantum-powered world: from laser pointers to GPS, magnetic resonance imaging and the transistors in your computer - all these technologies rely on quantum effects.

In general, quantum effects only manifest at very small length and mass scales, or when temperatures approach absolute zero. This is because quantum objects like atoms and molecules lose their "quantumness" when they uncontrollably interact with each other and their environment. In other words, a macroscopic collection of quantum objects is better described by the laws of classical mechanics. Everything that starts quantum dies classical. For example, an electron can be manipulated to be in two places at the same time, but it will end up in only one place after a short while - exactly what would be expected classically.

In a complicated, noisy biological system, it is thus expected that most quantum effects will rapidly disappear, washed out in what the physicist Erwin Schrödinger called the "warm, wet environment of the cell." To most physicists, the fact that the living world operates at elevated temperatures and in complex environments implies that biology can be adequately and fully de-

scribed by classical physics: no funky barrier crossing, no being in multiple locations simultaneously.

Chemists, however, have for a long time begged to differ. Research on basic chemical reactions at room temperature unambiguously shows that processes occurring within biomolecules like proteins and genetic material are the result of quantum effects. Importantly, such nanoscopic, short-lived quantum effects are consistent with driving some macroscopic physiological processes that biologists have measured in living cells and organisms. Research suggests that quantum effects influence biological functions, including regulating enzyme activity, sensing magnetic fields, cell metabolism and electron transport in biomolecules.

Tweak

The tantalizing possibility that subtle quantum effects can tweak biological processes presents both an exciting frontier and a challenge to scientists. Studying quantum mechanical effects in biology requires tools that can measure the short time scales, small length scales and subtle differences in quantum states that give rise to physiological changes - all integrated within a traditional wet lab environment.

In my work, I build instruments to study and control the quantum properties of small things like electrons. In the same way that electrons have mass and charge, they also have a quantum property called spin. Spin defines how the electrons interact with a magnetic field, in the same way that charge defines how electrons interact with an electric field. The quantum experiments I have been building since graduate school, and now in my own lab, aim to apply tailored magnetic fields to change the spins of particular electrons.

Research has demonstrated that many physiological processes are influenced by weak magnetic fields. These processes include stem cell development and maturation, cell proliferation rates, genetic material repair and countless others. These physiological responses to magnetic fields are consistent with chemical reactions that depend on the spin of particular electrons within molecules. Applying a weak magnetic field to change electron spins can thus effectively control a chemical reaction's final products, with important physiological consequences.

Currently, a lack of understanding of how such processes work at the nanoscale level prevents researchers from determining exactly what strength and frequency of magnetic fields cause specific chemical reactions in cells. Current cellphone, wearable and miniaturization technologies are already sufficient to produce tailored, weak magnetic fields that change physiology, both for good and for bad. The missing piece of the puzzle is, hence, a "deterministic codebook" of how to map quantum causes to physiological outcomes.

In the future, fine-tuning nature's quantum properties could enable researchers to develop therapeutic devices that are noninvasive, remotely controlled and accessible with a mobile phone. Electromagnetic treatments could potentially be used to prevent and treat disease, such as brain tumors, as well as in biomanufacturing, such as increasing lab-grown meat production.

Quantum biology is one of the most interdisciplinary fields to ever emerge. How do you build community and train scientists to work in this area? (AP)

Myovant's survey highlights the unseen burdens of people with uterine fibroids

SAN MATEO, Calif., May 18: As part of National Women's Health Week, Evidation and Myovant Sciences Ltd. ("Myovant"), a wholly owned subsidiary of Summitovant Biopharma Ltd. ("Sumitovant") announced results from a survey exploring the lived experiences of individuals with endometriosis and/or uterine fibroids. The survey results highlight the negative impacts of these conditions on employee and student experiences and quality-of-life, underscoring the need for conversations and accommodations that advance equity for these populations.

At Myovant, we know that stigma can often keep people quiet about periods, leading to delayed care and increased discomfort. It also contributes to the lack of awareness about how conditions such as endometriosis and uterine fibroids can increase absenteeism and impact performance at work and school," said Kalahn Taylor-Clark, vice president and head of Strategic Partnerships and Innovation at Myovant Sciences. "As a company focused on women's health conditions, we hope these survey results will encourage employers to recognize and better understand the issue and work to create an environment that improves workplace equity."

It is estimated that 19 million people in the United States suffer from uterine fibroids and approximately 7.5 million premenopausal individuals suffer from endometriosis. A survey conducted on the Evidation platform found negative impacts on individuals with these conditions, across multiple dimensions, including:

Participation and absenteeism at work or school

■ 31% of individuals with endometriosis and 18% of individuals with uterine fibroids have considered quitting work or school because of menstrual symptoms, while 16% of individuals without a diagnosis had the same consideration.

■ 34% of individuals who are diagnosed with endometriosis and/or uterine fibroids missed work with at least every 3 menstrual cycles due to symptoms, while 21% of respondents without a diagnosis experienced the same.

■ Roughly 41% of respondents with endometriosis and/or uterine fibroids who have missed work or school due to menstrual symptoms report missing more than a full work day (9 or more hours); 31% of those who are not diagnosed report the same.

Activities of daily living

21% of respondents with endometriosis and/or uterine fibroids report being unable to complete daily tasks outside of work during every menstrual cycle, which can add up to approximately 3 months of the year; meanwhile, about 12% of respondents without a diagnosis say they are unable to complete such tasks during every menstrual cycle.

Controlling for age and race, diagnosis of endometriosis and/or uterine fibroids was associated with taking fewer daily steps, of those who consented to sharing their wearables data and compared to those who did not

Stigma can often keep people quiet



Family comes to celebrate a birthday of Mykita, 20, a Ukrainian serviceman who was wounded in Bakhmut, at the military hospital in Kyiv, Ukraine, on May 5. (AP)

'I only operate'

Ukrainian trauma surgeon operates on soldiers all day long amid Russia's war

KYIV, Ukraine, May 18 (AP) - As the lead trauma surgeon at a military hospital in Ukraine's capital, Petro Nikitin has his hands deep in a war churning hundreds of kilometers (miles) away. The 59-year-old doctor's work to repair the bodies of some of the most badly injured soldiers is all-consuming.

"I only operate," Nikitin said, taking a short pause as his team continued surgery on a patient. "I do nothing else in my life now. I don't see my children, who have been evacuated, I don't see my wife, who has been evacuated, I live by myself, and all I do is treat the wounded."

While the Ukrainian military does not provide casualty figures, some Western sources estimate more than 100,000 Ukrainian troops have been killed or wounded since Russia invaded the country almost 15 months ago.

Fighting has been particularly fierce in recent weeks around the eastern city of Bakhmut, scene of the war's longest and bloodiest battle, where Ukrainian forces have recently clawed back more territory from Russian forces.

A major Ukrainian counteroffensive is expected in coming weeks,

with more people likely to end up on operating tables in Nikitin's hospital, which like other Ukrainian military hospitals, is short-staffed because physicians were pulled away to work in field hospitals closer to the front. The Associated Press agreed not to identify the Kyiv hospital for security reasons.

On Feb. 25, 2022, the day after Russian troops invaded, Nikitin posted a photo on Facebook that showed him listening to an Israeli specialist in treating gunshot wounds. Surgeons from around the world had agreed to participate in an online training on combat-related injuries that Nikitin hastily organized as president of Ukraine's chapter of an international association of trauma specialists.

Rare

"Every one of us had relevant experience before the invasion, but not in such volume," Nikitin said. "The high numbers of traumas is something new for us."

Gunshot wounds turned out to be rare. "I don't even remember the last time I extracted a bullet," the surgeon said. But during the long days and

months, he has become familiar with a range of traumatic injuries: explosive weapons such as landmines, artillery shells and grenades frequently harm many parts of the body at the same time.

"We receive people with damaged legs, chests, stomachs and arms all at once," Nikitin said. "In such cases, we have to decide what part of the injury should be our priority."

The military hospital is one of several in Kyiv. As a top-level trauma center, it receives the most complex cases, typically ones involving patients who were stabilized at the front and spent time in a field hospital before their transfer to the capital, Nikitin said.

"We don't save lives. That's done by the medics," he said. "What we try to do is return these people to a normal life."

Dealing with wounds involving damage to soft tissue, bone and the structures that bind nerves and veins are the most difficult for his surgical team, Nikitin said. Sometimes they are forced to amputate a soldier's arm or leg, which "from a moral point of view" is always a gut-wrenching decision, he said.

have a diagnosis. No statistical comparison was planned in the analysis of survey results or wearable data; statistics presented are descriptive.

"Millions suffer silently from endometriosis and uterine fibroids. Both diseases have excruciating impacts and insidious yet outsized effects in everyday life," said Christine Lemke, Co-Founder and CEO at Evidation. "We are proud to partner with Myovant to ignite a conversation around how we

can better understand and improve the daily health experiences of people with these conditions."

These survey results mark the second joint research effort conducted by Myovant and Evidation following the "State of the Cycle" survey published in 2019. Building on the goal to expand women's health education and awareness, the most recent cross-sectional survey was carried out on the Evidation platform, with retrospective

wearable data, from a self-selected sample of roughly 9,900 individuals who identified as being female at birth, who were aged 18-50, and did not have a diagnosis of polycystic ovarian syndrome, pelvic inflammatory disease, premature ovarian failure, ovarian cancer, or uterine cancer. The survey covered four areas, including demographics, menstrual history and health, experiences at work or school, and experiences with medical providers.

MEDICAL CLASSIFIEDS

Take care of your health

To advertise in this page please call: (+965) 24813566 Ext.: 513 or E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

CITY CLINIC GROUP
A CARING MISSION

EVERY DAY 7.00 AM - 10.00 PM
GYNAECOLOGY SPECIALISTS

City Clinic Int'l - Fahaheel
Dr. Sarita Hari
(MBBS, MD, MRCOG)
Obstetrics & Gynaecology
6070 6812 | 2391 5593

City Clinic - Mahboula
Dr. Susan Sheeba
(MBBS, MD, MRCOG)
Obstetrics & Gynaecology
222 199 12 | 222 199 13

City Clinic - Khaitan
Dr. Ambily.T.Kumaran
(MBBS, MD, DGO, FRCOG)
Obstetrics & Gynaecology
1880020

f /cityclinicgroup | info@cityclinicwt.com | www.cityclinicwt.com

We Accept all Major Insurance Cards | Home collection services available

مركز شفاء الجزيرة الطبي-الفروانية
SHIFA AL JAZEERA MEDICAL CENTRE - FARAWANIYA

Our Services
PRP | Peels | Painless laser hair removal | Treatment for scars, acne scars, wrinkles, aging, | Skin tightening, stretch marks
Cellulite, fat, warts, moles, corn | Mesotherapy | Crystal Peel & diamond microdermabrasion | Whitening treatment (Localized & Whole body) Dualpeel | Carboxytherapy
Dualpeel | Botox | Fillers | Hair loss treatment | Nail surgeries
Skin biopsies | Cryotherapy | Dermapen

Dr. Abdul Nazer
MBBS, MD
Dermatologist & Cosmetologist

Phone : 24 734 000
Hotline: 60 749 749

CLINIC WORKING HOURS: 7 am to 12 Midnight

Behind Maghateer Commercial Complex & Opp. Police station - Farwaniya
info@shifaaljazeera.com.kw - www.shifaaljazeera.com.kw

NYC mayor condemns royal incident as 'reckless and irresponsible'

Prince Harry and Meghan made getaway in taxi after pap chase

NEW YORK, May 18, (AP) — Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, were trailed in their car by photographers as they left a New York City charity event Tuesday night, briefly taking refuge at a police station before being whisked away in a yellow taxicab.

The pursuit and media frenzy evoked memories of the 1997 car chase through Paris that killed Harry's mother, Princess Diana - though in this case, police said, no one was hurt.

The royal couple set off alarms when their spokesperson claimed Wednesday that they had been dangerously pursued by paparazzi in a "near catastrophic car chase" through the streets of Manhattan. That account led New York City Mayor Eric Adams to condemn the paparazzi chasing them as "reckless and irresponsible."

Later, though, police said the pursuit was relatively short and led to no injuries, collisions or arrests, and warranted no further investigation. Still, it drove home real security concerns surrounding the royal couple and the trauma brought on by the death of Harry's mother when he was just 12 years old.

The cab driver who drove them from the police station said he instantly recognized his passengers and that paparazzi "were following us the whole time," though he said wouldn't call it a chase.

"They had this look on their faces," the driver, Sukhcham Singh, said. "All of a sudden paparazzi came out and started taking pictures."

Police issued a short statement confirming an incident Tuesday night

involving photographers and the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, who were accompanied by Meghan's mother.

Meanwhile, police in California were called this week about an episode near the couple's property in Montecito. A man was arrested shortly after 2 a.m. Monday on suspicion of prowling near the property, the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office said in a statement.

It wasn't immediately clear whether the man actually entered the property. He was released on \$2,500 bail after the misdemeanor arrest.

A message seeking comment on the arrest was sent Wednesday evening to a representative for the couple.

Security

In New York on Tuesday night, the couple left Manhattan's Ziegfeld Ballroom - where Meghan had just accepted the Ms. Foundation's Woman of Vision Awards with Black Voters Matter co-founder LaTosha Brown - and got into an SUV as crowds of pedestrians and photographers gawked, according to video posted to social media.

Harry and Meghan's vehicle was then followed by photographers in a scene that their office said "resulted in multiple near collisions involving other drivers on the road, pedestrians and two NYPD officers." The couple's office called the incident "near catastrophic."

Police intervened and, assisting the couple's private security detail, led them to a police station about 18 blocks from the ballroom, a law

enforcement official told the AP.

The couple spent several minutes at the police station, waiting for the situation to de-escalate. Once it was safe, they left in a taxi, according to the official, who was not authorized to speak publicly about the matter and did so on condition of anonymity.

"While being a public figure comes with a level of interest from the public, it should never come at the cost of anyone's safety," the couple's office said in a statement.

Bruce Cotler, the president of the New York Press Photographers Association, said the way photographers allegedly acted Tuesday night violated the basic photojournalism principle of covering news "as documentarians and observers" and the code of ethics to which his members and "any press photographer with respect for themselves and the profession" are expected to adhere.

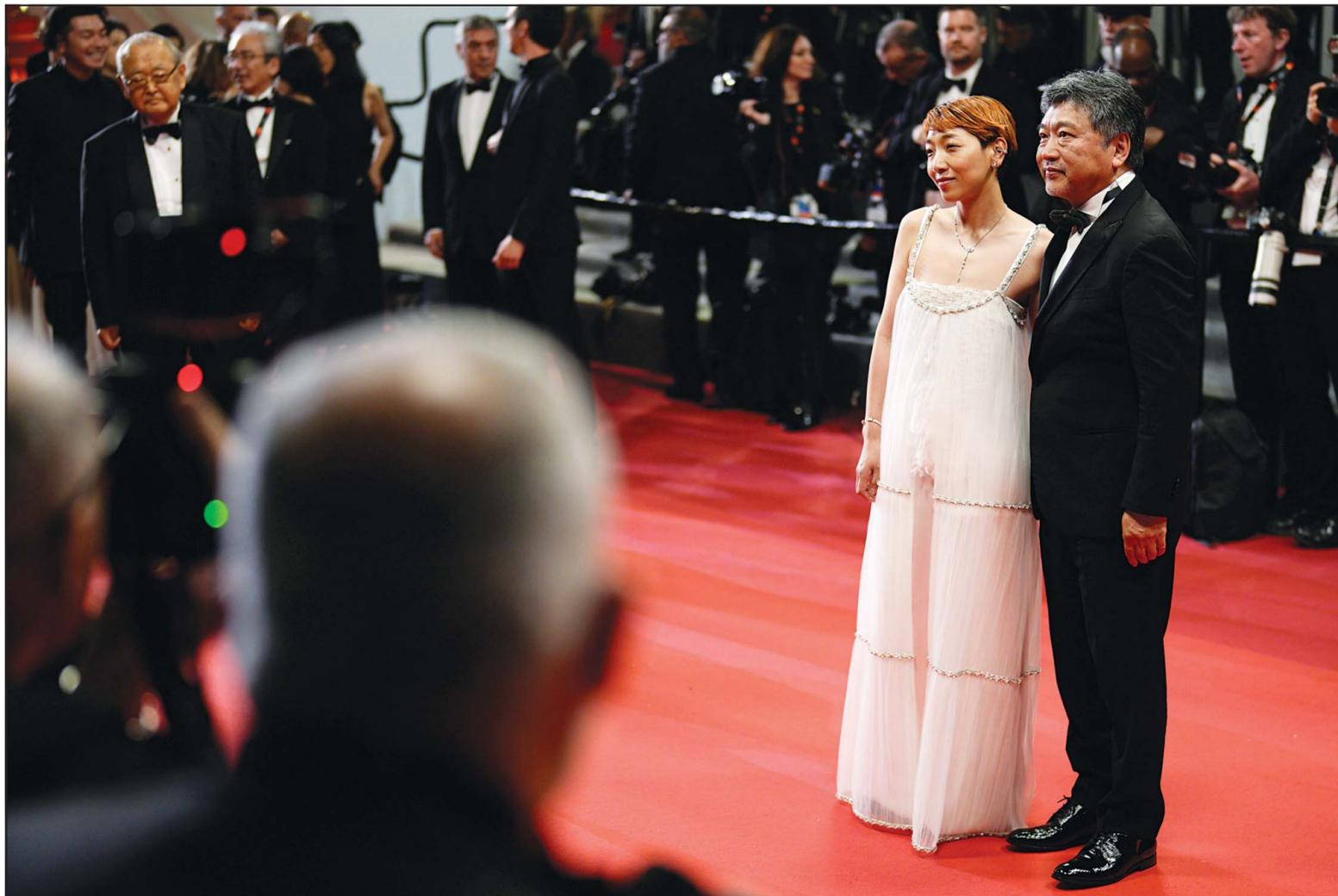
The award presentation was Meghan's first public appearance since she skipped the coronation of her father-in-law King Charles III earlier this month in order to stay at home in California for her son Prince Archie's fourth birthday. Harry attended the coronation.

Harry's fury at the media has been building for years. He blames an overly aggressive press for the death of his mother, and also accuses the media of hounding Meghan.

"My deepest fear is history repeating itself," Harry said in a 2019 statement when Meghan filed suit against the publisher of the Mail on Sunday.

People

Variety



Sakurako Ando, (left), and director Hirokazu Koreeda pose for photographers upon departure from the premiere of the film 'Monster' at the 76th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Wednesday, May 17. (AP)

Film

McQueen's Holocaust docu is 'an experience'

Past & present fuse in 'Occupied City'

CANNES, France, May 18, (AP) — In Steve McQueen's "Occupied City," a young woman with an even voice narrates, with rigorous specificity, Nazi encounters and crimes throughout Amsterdam during World War II. The accounts go address by address, and so does McQueen's camera.

Yet the images that play throughout "Occupied City" are of modern day Amsterdam. In the roving, 4-hour-plus documentary made by McQueen, the "12 Years a Slave" director, with his partner, the Dutch documentarian and author Bianca Stigter, past and present are fused - or at least provocatively juxtaposed.

The effect can be startling, stirring and confounding. An elderly woman shifts to country music in an apartment complex where, we're told, a family was once arrested and sent to a concentration camp. A radio throbs with Bob Marley in a park where German officer once resided in the surrounding townhouses. A boy plays a virtual reality videogame where an execution took place.

"It's almost like once upon a time there was this place called Earth," McQueen said in an interview alongside Stigter.

"Occupied City," which premiered Wednesday at the Cannes Film Festival, includes no archival footage or talking heads. Instead, it invites the viewer to consider the sometimes hard-to-fathom distance between one of history's darkest chapters and now. It's about remembering and forgetting.

"You want to wake people up and at the same time take them with you," says McQueen, a British expat who has made Amsterdam his adoptive home with Stigter and their children.

The film is rooted in Stigter's illustrated book "Atlas of an Occupied City (Amsterdam 1940-1945)," which likewise catalogued the Nazi occupation of Amsterdam and the methodical murdering of its Jewish citizens. Stigter and McQueen have researched their own address. A few doors down, McQueen says, a Jewish man in hiding paid for his keep by teaching a family's child how to play piano. Their lessons were conducted quietly by tapping on the table.

"Occupied City" details how the Nazi occupation unfolded, door to door, name by name. At the same time, it can be hard to reconcile those accounts with the accompanying footage that captures mostly civic

harmony throughout modern Amsterdam. Though "Occupied City," which A24 financed and is distributing, touches on monuments and museums to the Holocaust, its imagery mostly lingers on the thriving life of a city. Life moves along, relentlessly.

"The present erases history," says McQueen. "There's going to be a time when no one is going to be around who knew certain people. It kind of echoes what's happening with the Second World War. There's not a lot of people around who can testify about what actually went on in that time. They're all passed. This film in some ways is erecting those memories in another way."

History

McQueen is currently in post-production on a more traditional film about WWII set in London: "Blitz," for Apple, starring Saoirse Ronan. Though in many ways McQueen is among the most fiercely contemporary filmmakers working, history has deeply animated much of his work. "12 Years a Slave" plunged into slavery-era America. His five-film anthology "Small Axe" spanned generations of West Indian immigrant life in London. He has dramatized the Irish hunger strike of 1981 ("Hunger") and, most recently, the Grenfell Tower tragedy ("Grenfell"), in which 72 died.

"I feel recording is very important. Witnessing is very important. Not looking away is very important," he says. "The thing about cinema that's powerful is an audience and a community witnessing something together. There's nothing more special, there's nothing more powerful than to have this kind of communal witness to something."

Stigter considers "Occupied City" not a history lesson but "an experience."

"Your brain is programmed to match, to put together what you hear and what you see," she says. "Here, sometimes it's hard to find that link. And sometimes you find it."

The length of "Occupied City," which is playing with an intermission, encourages rumination. Drifting from narration to imagery and back again, McQueen says, is part of the experience. He would rather it was longer, if anything.

"There is a 36-hour version of this. We shot everything in the book. Maybe one day I'll get a chance

to show that," says McQueen. "The actual method of shooting was about that. You just have to let it happen."

"The ordinary becomes extraordinary," he adds. "As you get older, you realize it's the small things in life that are the treasures. There's a value. There's a value to sitting with a cup of tea with a biscuit. I'll have it any day."

In the context of such horrors, some scenes, like a boy and girl gently kissing, become "monumental," Stigter says. Ghosts are everywhere, whether they're acknowledged or not. In the film, Amsterdam is also literally occupied - busy, running errands, biking and, more often than not, on their phones. "Oh my God," sighs McQueen, shaking his head. "There it is in black and white, even though it's in color."

Stigter and McQueen made "Occupied City" through the pandemic so it also shows the waves of COVID-19, from lockdown to vaccine protests to parties, once again, in the street. Another upheaval is quickly moved on from. Other losses come and go. The film is dedicated to Stigter's father, who died a year and a half ago.

"You try to hold onto things but they always slip away. It's like this film. After four hours and 22 minutes, it's done," says McQueen. "What I want this film to be is almost like tossing a stone into a pond. The ripple effects afterwards, how it enters the viewer's everyday life, that's what I hope for."

Also:

CANNES, France: Indiana Jones and Harrison Ford will swing into Cannes on Thursday for the world premiere of "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny" in one of the most anticipated events of the French Riviera festival.

Ford, who has said "Dial of Destiny" will be his last performance as the character, is also set to receive an honorary Palme d'Or from the Cannes Film Festival. Last year, Cannes feted "Top Gun Maverick" and Tom Cruise in a similar manner.

It's not the first "Indiana Jones" film to premiere in Cannes. The fourth installment, "Indiana and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull" launched at the 2008 edition of the festival. Critics and fans alike dismissed "Crystal Skull" as a misjudged sequel, though it still made \$790 million worldwide.

Features

ARABIC TIMES

FRIDAY-SATURDAY, MAY 19-20, 2023

OAKLAND, Calif: The late Tupac Shakur will have a stretch of an Oakland street renamed for him after a unanimous vote by the city council Tuesday.

Shakur was born in Harlem and later lived in Baltimore, Maryland; and in Marin City, California, but credited Oakland as the location where he got his "game" and launched his career, according to legislation authorizing the commemorative street renaming.

A stretch of MacArthur Boulevard by Lake Merritt where Shakur once lived will keep its existing name, but also receive the additional, honorary name of Tupac Shakur Way. Commemorative plaques and signs signaling the change will be paid for by the Tupac Shakur Foundation.

Oakland has honored others with street names, including Black Panther Party co-founder Huey P. Newton and rapper and record producer Too Short.

Shakur was 25 when he was shot and killed in a drive-by shooting in Las Vegas in 1996.

The City Council legislation says the renamed part of the street will remind people of Shakur's contributions to Oakland and celebrate art and culture as a catalyst for societal change.

No timeline was provided for the name change. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: A man has been indicted by a grand jury on charges of stealing a pair of ruby red slippers worn by Judy Garland in "The Wizard of Oz," federal prosecutors in North Dakota say. The shoes were stolen in 2005 and recovered by a 2018 FBI sting operation, but no arrests were made at the time.

Terry Martin was indicted Tuesday by one count of theft of a major artwork, prosecutors announced Wednesday. The indictment did not provide any further information about Martin and online records do not list an attorney for him.

Garland wore several pairs of the ruby slippers during production of the 1939 musical, but only four authentic pairs remain. When they were stolen, the slippers were insured for \$1 million but the current market value is about \$3.5 million, federal prosecutors said in a news release. The slippers were on loan to

the Judy Garland Museum in the late actor's hometown of Grand Rapids, Minnesota, when someone climbed through a window and broke the display case, prosecutors said when they were recovered. Over the years, several enticing rewards were offered in hopes that the slippers would turn up. Law enforcement offered \$250,000 early in the case, and an anonymous donor from Arizona put up \$1 million in 2015. The road to the missing slippers began when a man told the shoes' insurer in 2017 that he could help get them back. After a nearly year-long investigation, the FBI nabbed the shoes in Minneapolis in July 2018. At the time, the bureau said no one has been arrested or charged in the case.



Shakur



Garland

On Wednesday, a summons was issued for Martin. An initial court appearance was set for June 1, and it will be via video. Terry Van Horn, spokesman for the US Justice Department in North Dakota, said he could not provide any information beyond what was included in the indictment. The shoes are famously associated with one of the iconic lines in

"The Wizard of Oz," as Garland's character Dorothy clicks her heels and repeats the phrase, "There's no place like home." The shoes are made from about a dozen different materials, including wood pulp, silk thread, gelatin, plastic and glass. Most of the ruby color comes from sequins but the bows of the shoes contain red glass beads. (AP)

People & Places

Film

Father-son comedy

De Niro is whimsical in 'About My Father'

NEW YORK, May 18, (AP): Comedian Sebastian Maniscalco wanted to make a movie for and about his father. Salvo Maniscalco had immigrated from Sicily to America in 1960 when he was 15. At 18, he became a hairdresser and raised and supported a family in Chicago. As a man from a different generation and culture, he could be aggressive and embarrassing at times - especially in situations involving different cultures and tax brackets as with Maniscalco's in-laws - and the set-up seemed ripe for a big screen comedy.

Like anyone dream casting a comedy about an Italian American man of a certain age, one name topped the list: **Robert De Niro**. Not that Maniscalco thought they stood a chance landing the two-time Oscar winner, but it couldn't hurt to try.



De Niro

Maniscalco had worked on a film with De Niro before, on Martin Scorsese's "The Irishman," but it was brief and didn't exactly establish anything like a friendship where he could, say, call him up. Then one day he got word that De Niro had the script, through producer Paul Weitz, and wanted to do a table read with some actors in New York. It's something he likes to do if he's taking something seriously, he said.

"It sort of lifts it off the page a little bit," De Niro said. Between the Sebastian/Salvo relationship and director Laura Terruso's background as an Italian American with Sicilian roots, he said, "I knew I'd be in good hands on both sides. So we decided to do it."

The setup for "About My Father," opening nationwide on May 26, is a meet-the-parents situation. Sebastian brings Salvo to his girlfriend's family home for the Fourth of July weekend. Ellie's (Leslie Bibb) family is WASPy and wealthy - Kim Cattrall plays her mother, Tigger, and David Rasche is her father, Bill. Her brothers are played by Anders Holm and Brett Dier. And the culture clashes ensue.

Relationship

"My rep called me and said, 'I've just been given a script, it stars Robert De Niro and he's playing a hairdresser,'" Cattrall said. "I just thought: 'I'm in.'"

But before they could start filming, De Niro had a little homework to do. He invited the elder Maniscalco to Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he was filming Scorsese's "Killers of the Flower Moon" so he could pick his brain about everything from being a hairdresser to Sicilian dialect.

"The relationship that he has with Sebastian is great. They're friends and they talk a lot," De Niro said. "That's wonderful for any parent and their child to have a relationship, especially as they get older and have their own life."

De Niro even arranged for Salvo Maniscalco to meet Scorsese during the three-day sojourn.

"It's not every day that you send off your father to sit down with Robert De Niro and talk about a script, especially when my father doesn't really know anything about moviemaking and script analysis and what have you," Maniscalco said. "But, from what he was telling me, he really helped him with the Italian... He never taught me Sicilian. But he taught Robert De Niro."

Later, he would call him for refreshers which Maniscalco was happy to oblige - though one time he told De Niro he'd have to call him back. He'd interrupted a pizza dinner. De Niro understood. And, at least according to some Sicilians who turned out for the Chicago premiere of the film, De Niro nailed it. Someone even told Maniscalco that his Italian was better than it was in "The Godfather Part II."

"He's wondering why he wasn't paid as a dialect coach," Maniscalco said, gesturing to his father sitting next to him.

"I'm waiting for a paycheck," Salvo Maniscalco, who did get a creative consultant credit, responded.

The Alabama set was fun too, which everyone knows is never a given with comedies. Holm said that often the more fun a set is, the worse the movie is. But all are pretty sure that they got the best of both worlds.

Original

"The funniest guy in the whole cast was De Niro," Rasche said. "He's just absolutely so charming and so funny and so whimsical and original. And it just breaks your heart."

De Niro always made time to rehearse. Bibb said there's often pressure to just do a take and figure something out on camera to save time but with De Niro around, no one was rushing.

"I like being cradled under that Bob De Niro umbrella," Bibb said.

Cattrall also liked when he would laugh at something happening on camera.

"I think one of the most gratifying things is if you're doing a scene which he's part of and the camera's not on him, it's on you and you see him after the take and he's smiling or he's chuckling. You think, 'Hey, it must have been OK!'" Cattrall said.

Maniscalco, who left Chicago for Los Angeles in 1998 to pursue a career in stand-up comedy, brought Hollywood back to his hometown for the world premiere of the film recently. It was a bit of a full circle moment for him to be surrounded by relatives, friends and in-laws.

"When we left the theater last night, a lot of people came up and said to me, 'Man, it made me want to call my father,'" he said. "There's a sense of nostalgia it brings back for people with their families."

He hopes that it's a film that brings audiences to the theater with their families and inspires a renewed closeness.

"I grew up in a family where we used to sit down, we used to eat together," Maniscalco said. "And I know things are different. I know the two parents are now working in the house and maybe it's not possible. Or technology has taken people in different ways. But, I mean, for us as a family, sitting around the table, eating dinner, joking around, really bonded us forever."



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Vin Diesel, (left), and Daniela Melchior in a scene from 'Fast X.' (AP)

Film

Monstrously silly and stupidly entertaining

A delicious Jason Momoa saves 'Fast X'

By Mark Kennedy

Fans and critics may disagree over when exactly the "Fast & Furious" franchise jumped the shark, but there is only one correct answer: When the Pontiac Fiero went into space.

Weightless and violating every physical law, the floating car - tasked with bumping a satellite in the ninth installment - was the very symbol of how bloated and crazed the once-plucky series had become. There really was no way down after that.

And yet we have come to 10, part of a planned series of films finally saying goodbye. "Fast X" is, thankfully, shackled to Earth's gravity - sometimes tenuously, it must be said - but it has become almost camp, as if it breathed in too much of its own fumes.

"Fast X" reaches into the fifth movie - 2011's "Fast Five" - for the seeds to tell a new story. In a memorable moment five movies ago, Vin Diesel's Dom Toretto wrecked a bad guy and his team on a bridge in Rio de Janeiro. Little did we know then, but that bad guy had a son who survived and now, years later, vows vengeance. That's it. That's the plot.

That said, "Fast X" is monstrously silly and stupidly entertaining - just Wile E. Coyote stuff, ridiculous stunts employing insane G-forces and everything seemingly on fire. There are elements of "Mission: Impossible," "007" and "John Wick," as if all the action franchises were somehow merging. But here's a warning: It careens to an end without a payoff, a more dangerous stunt than any in the movies themselves.

The film would not be near enough as fun without Jason Momoa, who plays the bad guy's son as a full-on flamboyant psycho,

licking a knife clean after killing someone with it and painting the toenails of a dead victim as he displays the corpse in a demented garden party. "Never accept death when suffering is owed," he says.

He is half Joaquin Phoenix from "The Joker" and half Jack Sparrow from "Pirates of the Caribbean." Momoa has a penchant for planning explosions and then standing on a high spot and throwing his arms wide like Christ the Redeemer as the blast wave hits. The film sags as soon as he's not in it.

Momoa is part of the franchise's familiar tactic of stacking ever more stars with not enough to do - this time we also welcome Brie Larson, Alan Ritchson, Daniela Melchior and Rita Moreno. There's even a Pete Davidson cameo.

Protect

That's on top of regulars Michelle Rodriguez, Tyrese Gibson, Chris "Ludacris" Bridges, Jordana Brewster, John Cena, Jason Statham, Charlize Theron, Sung Kang, Scott Eastwood and Helen Mirren, whose attempt once again at a working-class accent is comical. This is a clown car of talent. The poster for the film includes 14 characters, like an Avengers movie.

At the center is the always-sleeveless Diesel, who keeps getting exposed as a truly terrible actor, one who evidently only attended the Brooding 101 seminar in drama school. The filmmakers usually just prop him up in front of a wall of family photos and he stares at them intently. "I only care about protecting the people that I love," he will growl.

Family - as fans of the franchise know well - is always central, or rather, a gothic zero-sum notion of blood's bond explained with soap opera dialogue. Toretto must protect family no matter the cost

(but apparently OK with leaving his 8-year-old son in someone else's care as he drag races in Rio). "You know what your problem is?" teases Momoa. "Family. You can't save them all."

New director Louis Leterrier - from a screenplay by veteran Justin Lin and newcomers Zach Dean and Dan Mazeau - take us from Los Angeles to Antarctica, threatening much of Rome with a 20 kiloton bomb along the way and ending the movie at the side of a dam in Portugal in a cliffhanger. Stick around for the credits and even more megastars are promised for the next installment.

What you get this time are two brutal hand-to-hand fights, a car smashing two helicopters and rush hour traffic, car bombs, remote-controlled cars (big and small), vehicles that leap into the sky like salmon and a plane that drops a souped-up racer from its belly onto the highway.

Taking material from "Fast Five" means the delicate task of returning to Paul Walker, the franchise veteran who died in 2013. Old footage of Walker does appear in "Fast X" as the movie recreates events on that Rio bridge. It is handled respectfully and coolly. In a nice touch, Walker's daughter, Meadow, has a cameo as a flight attendant.

With a foot in the past, one in the future and one on the gas, "Fast X" is pure popcorn lunacy. Was that too many feet? Oh, excuse us, you wanted logic?

"Fast X," a Universal Pictures release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for intense sequences of violence and action, language and some suggestive material. Running time: 134 minutes. Three stars out of four.



Viola Davis poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'Monster' at the 76th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Wednesday, May 17. (AP)



Kelly



Jolie

Variety

NEW YORK: Angelina Jolie announced a new fashion venture Wednesday aimed at allowing customers to participate in the making of their own creations with master tailors, pattern makers and artisans around the world while keeping discarded fabric out of landfills.

The actress, director, and former special envoy for the United Nations' refugee agency said on Instagram and the new website of **Atelier Jolie** that the project will make use of deadstock fabric and vintage materials.

"We hope to create a community of creativity and inspiration, regardless of socio-economic background," Jolie posted on the brand's site. "We will spotlight the people who play a part in each creation. We will bring together a diverse team, including apprenticeships for refugees and other talented, underappreciated groups, with positions of dignity based on skill."

The project hopes to "help share the richness of their cultural heritage and support the development of their own businesses," Jolie wrote. In addition, customers will be able to repair or upcycle pieces from their closets as a way to eliminate waste.

"We can all collect, appreciate, and be influenced by the designs of others. But the highest form of self-expression - and I believe the most fun - is to create for ourselves," she said. (AP)

MINNEAPOLIS: Minnesota prosecutors have dropped sex abuse charges against disgraced R&B superstar **R. Kelly** that alleged he invited a 17-year-old girl to his hotel room in 2001 and paid her \$200 to dance naked with him.

The Hennepin County Attorney's Office said in a statement Tuesday that it believes her and that Kelly would likely be convicted if tried, but prosecuting him on charges that had been dormant since being filed in 2019 wouldn't make a difference now that Kelly's federal convictions could keep him in prison for the rest of his life.

"The overwhelming impact of proceeding to trial in this case on the survivor victim, the community, and the Hennepin County legal system would be enormous while a conviction would not add any additional time in prison," the statement said.

The woman Kelly allegedly abused in Minnesota wanted to testify at a trial

anyway, her lawyer said.

Attorney **Gloria Allred** issued a statement on behalf of the woman, identified only as **Jane Doe**. It said what Kelly did to her has been weighing heavily on her for more than 20 years and would continue to hurt her for the rest of her life.

Federal juries in **Chicago** and **New**

York convicted Kelly, now 56, of crimes including child pornography, enticement, racketeering and sex trafficking related to allegations that he victimized women and girls. Born **Robert Sylvester Kelly**, he was sentenced to 30 years in the New York case last year and a mostly concurrent 20 years in February in the **Chicago**

case. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: Jurors in **Danny Masterson's** rape retrial finished their first day of deliberations Wednesday without reaching a verdict in the case against the former "That '70s Show" star.

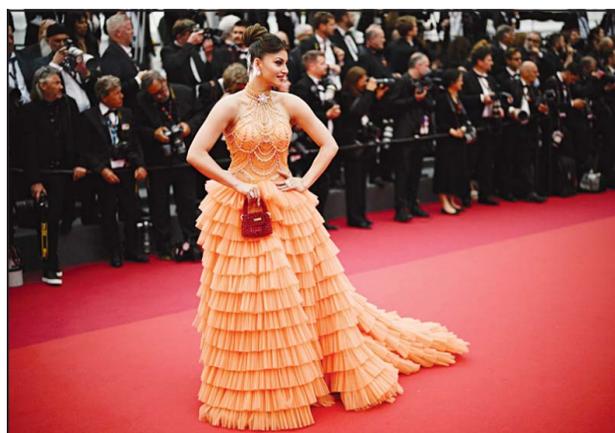
The jury of seven women and five men got the case in the morning when prosecutors finally finished their rebuttal after all-day closing arguments a day earlier. They deliberated for about 3 and a half hours before going home, without asking any questions or giving an indication of how discussions were going.

Late last year, a jury was unable to reach a verdict in the case against Masterson involving rape allegations by three women, and Los Angeles Judge **Charlaine Olmedo** declared a mistrial.

Prosecutors said in their closing argument Tuesday that Masterson drugged the women in order to assault them, then relied on his status as a prominent member in the Church of Scientology to avoid consequences for decades.

"You don't want to have ...? You don't have a choice," Deputy District Attorney **Ariel Anson** told the jury. "The defendant makes that choice for these victims. And he does it over and over and over again."

After closing arguments, Masterson's attorney **Philip Cohen** made a motion for a mistrial, one of several that he made during the three-week trial, because of the prosecution's mention of drugging, which is not part of the charges. (AP)



Indian actress Urvashi Rautela poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'Monster' at the 76th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Wednesday, May 17. (AP)

Environment

Health, safety priority

EPA rule to force toxic clean-up at coal plants

WASHINGTON, May 18, (AP): The Environmental Protection Agency is strengthening a rule aimed at controlling and cleaning up toxic waste from coal-fired power plants. A proposal announced Wednesday would require safe management of so-called coal ash dumped in areas that currently are unregulated at the federal level.

EPA Administrator **Michael Regan** said the plan would hold polluters accountable for controlling and cleaning up coal ash, a byproduct of burning coal in that can pollute waterways, groundwater, drinking water and the air. Coal ash contains contaminants such as mercury, chromium and arsenic associated with cancer and other health problems.

"Ensuring the health and safety of all people is EPA's top priority, and this proposed rule represents a crucial step toward safeguarding the air, groundwater, streams and drinking water that communities depend on," Regan said in a statement.



Regan

If finalized, the rule would help protect underserved and minority communities already overburdened by pollution, reflecting the Biden administration's commitment to environmental justice, Regan said.

"Many of these communities have been disproportionately impacted by pollution for far too long," he said, noting that power plants, chemical plants and other large industrial sites are commonly located in poor and minority neighborhoods.

The proposed rule follows an EPA proposal last week to impose new limits on greenhouse gas emissions from coal- and gas-fired power plants - the Biden administration's most ambitious effort to roll back planet-warming pollution from the power sector, the nation's second-largest contributor to climate change.

The agency also has proposed rules to crack down on polluted wastewater from coal-burning power plants and limit emissions of mercury and other harmful pollutants from coal-fired power plants, updating standards imposed more than a decade ago.

Pollution

The coal ash rule follows a legal settlement between the agency and public interest groups, including the National Association for Advancement of Colored People, Sierra Club and Clean Water Action.

The groups said in a lawsuit that a 2015 EPA rule on coal ash failed to regulate a large portion of coal ash pollution in the United States.

Earthjustice, an environmental group that represented the coalition that sued EPA, called the new proposal a major win for communities near coal-fired power plants. The revised rule extends federal coal ash regulations to most coal ash disposed at power plants and extends federal monitoring, closure and cleanup requirements to hundreds of older landfills and dump sites that previously were excluded, the group said.

"This is a really big deal, said Lisa Evans, senior counsel for Earthjustice. "The Biden administration is standing up for people near hazardous coal waste sites around the country. For far too long, a large portion of toxic coal ash around the U.S. was left leaching into drinking water supplies without any requirement that it be cleaned up."

The EPA proposal closes a loophole that allowed many power-plant owners to avoid "cleaning up the toxic mess they created," Evans said. "Power plants will finally lose their hall pass to leave coal ash wherever they dumped it."

Based on analysis of industry data provided to the EPA, Earthjustice identified 566 landfills and ponds at 242 coal plants in 40 states that were excluded from the 2015 federal regulations, Evans said.

The power industry has complained about an "onslaught" of EPA rules aimed at the power sector. The agency's actions are "designed specifically to cause the premature closure of coal power plants," said Michelle Bloodworth, president and CEO of America's Power, a lobbying group for industries involved in producing electricity from coal.

She urged EPA to modify its proposals "to avoid premature coal retirements, rather than speed up retirements and jeopardize grid reliability."

Coal ash storage and disposal goes back decades, but went largely unregulated until a 2008 spill at a Tennessee Valley Authority power plant in Kingston, Tennessee. A containment dike burst and flooding covered more than 300 acres (121 hectares), dumped waste into two nearby rivers, destroyed homes and brought national attention to the issue.

In 2014, an estimated 39,000 tons of coal ash spewed into the Dan River after a drainage pipe running below a waste dump collapsed at a Duke Energy plant in Eden, North Carolina. The toxic sludge turned the river gray for more than 70 miles (112 kilometers).

Also:

NEW YORK: The US Department of Agriculture announced a nearly \$11 billion investment on Tuesday to help bring affordable clean energy to rural communities throughout the country.

Rural electric cooperatives, renewable energy companies and electric utilities will be able to apply for funding through two programs, US Department of Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack** said during a media briefing recently.

Vilsack said it was the largest single federal investment in rural electrification since President **Franklin D. Roosevelt** signed the Rural Electrification Act in 1936 as part of the New Deal.

"This is an exciting opportunity for the Rural Utility Service to work collaboratively with our great partners, the Rural Electric cooperatives, in order to advance a clean energy future for rural America," Vilsack said. "So this is an exciting and an historic day, and it continues an ongoing effort to ensure that rural America is a full participant in this clean energy economy."

The Empowering Rural America program will make \$9.7 billion available for rural electric cooperatives to create renewable energy, zero-emission and carbon capture systems.

Jim Matheson, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, praised the administration for the investment.

"This is an exciting and transformative opportunity for co-ops and their local communities, particularly as we look toward a future that depends on electricity to power more of the economy," Matheson said. "USDA has smartly structured this program in a way that will help electric co-ops leverage new tools to reduce costs and keep energy affordable while meeting the future energy needs of their rural communities."

The Powering Affordable Clean Energy program will make \$1 billion available in partially-forgivable loans for renewable energy companies and electric utilities to help finance renewable energy projects such as large-scale solar, wind and geothermal projects.

The Department of Agriculture said in a press release that the goal of this program is provide affordable clean energy to vulnerable, disadvantaged and Indigenous communities. But there is tension between building a clean energy infrastructure for all and mining the materials needed for that infrastructure.

For example, conservationists and Indigenous communities in Nevada have sued to block the opening of the largest mine planned in the US for extraction of lithium used in electric vehicle batteries.



Forensic assistant Laurentiu Bigu, left, and investigator Ryan Parraz from the Los Angeles County coroner's office cover the body of a homeless man found dead on a sidewalk in Los Angeles on April 18, 2022. The 60-year-old man died from the effects of methamphetamine, according to his autopsy report. Drug overdose deaths in the US went up slightly in 2022 after two big leaps during the pandemic. (AP)

Health

Experts see hopeful signs in overdose epidemic

Drug overdoses in US slightly up

NEW ORLEANS, May 18, (AP): Drug overdose deaths in the US went up slightly last year after two big leaps during the pandemic.

Officials with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say the numbers plateaued for most of last year. Experts aren't sure whether that means the deadliest drug overdose epidemic in US history is finally reaching a peak, or whether it'll look like previous plateaus that were followed by new surges in deaths.

"The fact that it does seem to be flattening out, at least at a national level, is encouraging," said Katherine Keyes, a Columbia University epidemiology professor whose research focuses on drug use. "But these numbers are still extraordinarily high. We shouldn't suggest the crisis is in any way over."

An estimated 109,680 overdose deaths occurred last year, according to numbers posted Wednesday by the CDC. That's about 2% more than the 107,622 US overdose deaths in 2021, but nothing like the 30% increase seen in 2020, and 15% increase in 2021.

While the overall national number was relatively static between 2021 and 2022, there were dramatic changes in a number of states: 23 reported fewer overdose deaths, one - Iowa - saw no change, and the rest continued to increase.

Eight states - Florida, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia - reported sizable overdose death decreases of about 100 or more compared with the previous calendar year.

Some of these states had some of the highest overdose death rates during the epidemic, which Keyes said might be a sign that years of concentrated work to address the problem is paying off. State officials cited various factors for the decline, like social media and health education campaigns to warn the public about the dangers of drug use; expanded addiction treatment - including telehealth - and wider distribution of the overdose-reversing medication naloxone.

Plus, the stigma that kept drug users from seeking help - and some doctors and police officers from helping them - is waning, said Dr. Joseph Kanter, the state health officer for Louisiana, where overdose deaths fell 4% last year.

"We're catching up and the tide's turning - slowly," said Kanter, whose state has one of the nation's highest

overdose death rates.

Beginning in the mid-1990s, abuse of prescription opioid painkillers was to blame for deaths before a gradual turn to heroin, which in 2015 caused more deaths than prescription painkillers or other drugs. A year later, the more lethal fentanyl and its close cousins became the biggest drug killer.

Last year, most overdose deaths continued to be linked to fentanyl and other synthetic opioids. About 75,000, up 4% from the year before. There also was a 11% increase in deaths involving cocaine and a 3% increase in deaths involving meth and other stimulants.

Overdose deaths are often attributed to more than one drug; some people take multiple drugs and officials say inexpensive fentanyl is increasingly cut into other drugs, often without the buyers' knowledge.

Research from Dr. Daniel Ciccarone, a drug policy expert at the University of California, San Francisco, suggests "there appears to be some substitution going on," with a number of people who use illicit drugs turning to methamphetamines or other options to try to stay away from fentanyl and fentanyl-tainted drugs.

Counseling

Ciccarone said he believes overdose deaths finally will trend down. He cited improvements in innovations in counseling and addiction treatment, better availability of naloxone and legal actions that led to more than \$50 billion in proposed and finalized settlements - money that should be available to bolster overdose prevention.

"We've thrown a lot at this 20-year opioid overdose problem," he said. "We should be bending the curve downward."

But he also voiced some caution, saying "we have been here before."

Consider 2018, when overdose deaths dropped 4% from the previous year, to about 67,000. After those numbers came out, then-President Donald Trump declared "we are curbing the opioid epidemic."

But overdose deaths then rose to a record 71,000 in 2019, then soared during the COVID-19 pandemic to 92,000 in 2020 and 107,000 in 2021.

Lockdowns and other pandemic-era restrictions isolated people with drug addictions and made treatment harder to get, experts said.

Keyes believes that 2022's numbers

didn't get any worse partly because isolation eased as the pandemic ebbed. But there may be issues ahead, others say, like increased detection of veterinary tranquilizer xylazine in the illicit drug supply and proposals to scale back things like prescribing addiction medications through telehealth.

"What the past 20 years of this overdose crisis has taught us is that this really is a moving target," Keyes said. "And when you think you've got a handle on it, sometimes the problem can shift in new and different ways."

Also:

BROWNSVILLE, Texas: State and federal health officials are warning US residents to cancel planned surgeries in a Mexico border city after five people from Texas who got procedures there came back and developed suspected cases of fungal meningitis. One of them died, officials said.

The five people who became ill traveled to Matamoros, across the border from Brownsville, for surgical procedures that included the use of an epidural, an anesthetic injected near the spinal column, the Texas Department of State Health Services said Tuesday. Four remain hospitalized, and one of them later died.

Those who became ill range in age from 30 to 50 years old, the department said.

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a travel advisory Tuesday for US residents seeking medical care in Matamoros.

Meningitis is the swelling of the protective covering of the brain and spinal cord and should be treated urgently. Symptoms include fever, headache, a stiff neck, nausea, vomiting, confusion and sensitivity to light. Cases of meningitis can be caused by viruses, bacteria, trauma or fungi.

Fungal meningitis, like in the Texas cases, is not transmitted person to person, health officials say. It could be accidentally introduced during a medical or surgical procedure.

US and Mexican authorities are attempting to find the source of the infection, whether the cases are linked and if there are other cases, the Texas health department said.

The CDC urged anyone who had an epidural injection of anesthetic in that region after Jan. 1, 2023, to watch for symptoms of meningitis symptoms and consider consulting a doctor.



People use a plastic portable pool to carry bags and personal effects in a flooded road in Lugo, Italy, May 18. Exceptional rains Wednesday in a drought-struck region of northern Italy swelled rivers over their banks, killing at least eight people, forcing the evacuation of thousands and prompting officials to warn that Italy needs a national plan to combat climate change-induced flooding. (AP)



Anchor



Manber

Discovery

Voyager Space's Manber honored:

Voyager Space announced **Jeffrey Manber**, its President of International and Space Stations, has been named a recipient of NASA's 2023 Distinguished Public Service Medal, which is awarded to individuals who, by distinguished service, ability or vision, have personally contributed to NASA's advancement of United States' interests. The award was presented to Manber during a ceremony in the Teague Auditorium at NASA's Johnson Space Center on May 16.

Manber, who co-founded Nanoracks, now a Voyager Space company, and currently serves as Chairman of the Board, received this esteemed award for his ongoing contributions over the years to the commercial space industry, specifically for his exceptional leadership in pioneering the development of commercial services in low-Earth orbit (LEO), furthering NASA's goal of developing a commercial economy in space.

For more than 20 years, Jeff has played an exceptional role in the vanguard of efforts to develop a robust, commercially-driven economy aboard the International Space Station (ISS) and in LEO. As described in the award citation, "he is uniquely deserving of this recognition for his decades of leadership in the pursuit of continued U.S. leadership in space, and in developing the foundation for the nascent commercial economy in LEO."

Manber's contributions to the growing space ecosystem are significant. As noted in the citation, he was among the first to attempt to develop a commercially-operated platform in LEO as the head of MirCorp in the 1990s, and was the first to approach NASA in 2009 about his company, Nanoracks, developing and operating their own commercial research hardware. (AP)

Priest convicted over protest: A German court on Tuesday convicted a Jesuit priest of coercion in connection with a climate protest last year and ordered him to pay a small fine.

The district court in Munich handed down its verdict in the case of the Rev Joerg Alt after he participated in a road blockade in the Bavarian capital on Oct 28. Also appearing in the proceedings were Cornelia Huth, a biologist and member of the group Scientist Rebellion, and Luca Thomas, a student.

The court convicted all three of coercion and imposed fines in line with their income. In Alt's case, that was a 10-euro (\$10.85) fine; the court said the other two defendants' fines added up to a "low to mid-three-digit" sum.

Numerous similar protests have taken place across Germany and other countries recently as climate activists try to draw attention to the urgency of tackling global warming. The public and political

response to such road blockades has been mixed.

So far, most courts have acquitted the protesters or handed down fines, though in at least one recent case a judge sen-



Emissions rise from the smokestacks at the Jeffrey Energy Center coal power plant as the sun sets, near Emmett, Kan., Sept. 18, 2021. The Environmental Protection Agency is moving to strengthen a rule aimed at controlling and cleaning up toxic waste from coal-fired power plants. A proposed rule announced Wednesday, May 17 would require safe management of so-called coal ash dumped in areas that currently are unregulated at the federal level. (AP)

tenced three activists to prison terms ranging from three to five months.

Activists accuse the government of failing to do enough to put Germany on course to meet its goal of cutting emissions to "net zero" by 2045. (AP)

Turtle's video goes viral: Footage of a plump snapping turtle relaxing along a Chicago waterway has gone viral after the man who filmed the well-fed reptile marveled at its size and nicknamed it "Chonkosaurus."

Joey Santore was kayaking with a friend along the Chicago River last weekend when they spotted the large snapping turtle sitting atop a large chain draped over what appear to be rotting logs.

He posted a jumpy video of the turtle on Twitter, labeling it the "Chicago River Snapper aka Chonkosaurus."

In the video, Santore can be heard sounding stunned by the size of the turtle, which was displaying folds of flesh extending well beyond its shell.

"Look at this guy. We got a picture of this most beautiful sight. Look at the size of that ... thing," he says, using an expletive. "Look at that beast. Hey, how ya doing guy? You look good. You're healthy."

Chris Anchor, the chief wildlife biologist with Forest Preserves of Cook County, said the snapping turtle Santore filmed is quite rare, considering its apparent size. (AP)

Kyrgios out of French Open due to foot injury

Medvedev making more progress on clay with semifinal appearance

ROME, May 18, (AP): Daniil Medvedev's clay-court game keeps improving.

First came a run to the French Open quarterfinals in 2021. Then an appearance in the fourth round at Roland Garros a year ago.

Now, the third-ranked Russian is making big strides at the Italian Open. Medvedev beat German qualifier Yannick Hanfmann 6-2, 6-2 on Thursday to reach the semifinals in Rome after losing his opener in his three previous appearances at the Foro Italico.

TENNIS

On an overcast day, Medvedev controlled play with his flat groundstrokes and big first serve to the end of the run of Hanfmann, who upset Monte Carlo Masters champion Andrey Rublev in the previous round after also taking out ninth-seeded Taylor Fritz.

Medvedev has dropped only one set



Russia's Daniil Medvedev returns the ball to Germany's Yannick Hanfmann during their quarter final match at the Italian Open tennis tournament, in Rome. (AP)

in four matches.

This year's French Open starts in 10 days. Nick Kyrgios has withdrawn from the French Open due to a foot he

injured at his Canberra home after a man allegedly threatened his mother with a gun and stole his car, according to Australian media.

Austin hand Sounders 2nd consecutive loss at home

Crew blank Galaxy

SEATTLE, May 18, (AP): Ethan Finlay had a goal and an assist and Austin FC handed the Western Conference-leading Seattle Sounders their second straight loss at home with a 2-1 victory on Wednesday night.

Finlay took passes from Adam Lundkvist and Emiliano Rigoni and scored in the 36th minute. Finlay's first goal of the season gave Austin (3-5-4) a 1-0 lead at halftime.

Gyasi Zardes stretched the lead to 2-0 with a goal in the 57th minute off assists from Finlay and Jon Gallagher.

Fredy Montero pulled the Sounders (7-4-3) within a goal when he scored in the 79th minute. Héber and Jordan Morris picked up assists on Montero's first netter of the season.

Brad Stuver finished with three saves to help Austin beat Seattle for the first time after going 0-2-2 in the previous four match-ups. Stefan Frei had two saves for the Sounders.

The San Jose Earthquakes are now the only team Austin has played at least four times without a victory.

Austin entered the match with an 0-4-4 record in its last eight matches, tying a club-record winless streak. Austin was shut out in five of its previous eight matches.

Seattle tied a club record set in 2015 with seven shutouts through its first 12 matches, but the Sounders have surrendered four goals in their last two home matches after a 2-1 loss at the hands of Sporting KC last week.

Seattle leads second-place and defending-champion Los Angeles FC by a point in the Western Conference standings after LAFC managed only a 1-1 tie at home against Sporting KC.

Lucas Zelarayán and Malte Amundsen scored first-half goals and Patrick Schulte made them stand up as the Columbus Crew blanked the Los Angeles Galaxy 2-0.

Zelarayán staked Columbus (5-4-3) to a 1-0 lead when he found the net in the 25th minute. Cucho Hernández picked up an assist on Zelarayán's fifth goal in his 10th appearance this season.

SOCCER

The Crew took a 2-0 lead into halftime on defender Amundsen's first goal of the season with an assist from Alexandru Matan in the 43rd minute. Amundsen subbed in and played 13 minutes in his lone appearance this season. Amundsen's only other MLS goal came while playing for New York City FC in 2021.

It was the first meeting between the clubs since the Crew beat the Galaxy 3-1 in May of 2019. Columbus improves to 4-0-2 in the last six match-ups at home with LA. The Galaxy's last win in Columbus was a 1-0 victory in September of 2011.

The Galaxy fall to 0-5-2 in their last seven road matches dating to last season's playoffs, including the last five by shutouts. It is LA's longest scoring drought on the road since a six-match run spanning the 2004-05 seasons.

Columbus had a 10-9 edge in shots and a 3-2 edge in shots on goal.

Bongokuhle Hlongwane scored 14 minutes into the match and Dayne St. Clair made it stand up to lead Minnesota United to a 1-0 victory over the Houston Dynamo on.

Hlongwane's third goal of the season was unassisted.

St. Clair saved four shots to earn the clean sheet for Minnesota United (4-5-3), which ended a six-match winless streak by beating the Dynamo (4-5-2) for a sixth straight time - the club's longest such streak against any opponent.

Houston's loss equals its longest losing streak against a single opponent - a six-match skid at the hands of the Seattle Sounders from 2017-21.

Minnesota United was 0-5-1 in its previous six matches. The one point earned equals a club low for a six-match span.

The Dynamo played without midfielder Héctor Herrera and Amine Bassi, who both received red cards in a 1-0 home loss to the Seattle Sounders last week. Houston is tied with Sporting Kansas City with a league-high nine red cards since the start of last season.

Steve Clark had four saves for Houston.

The Dynamo fall to 9-60-26 in their last 95 road matches against fellow Western Conference opponents.

Jesús Ferreira scored a goal in each half to lead FC Dallas to a 2-1 victory over the Vancouver Whitecaps.

Vancouver (3-4-5) grabbed a 1-0 lead in the 23rd minute on an unassisted goal by Pedro Vite, his first netter of the season. It was only the second goal Dallas (6-3-3) has allowed at home in its last nine matches, including the playoffs.

Ferreira scored the equalizer in the 37th minute with an assist from Jader Obrian. Ferreira buried the match-winner in the 54th minute with an assist from Tsiki Ntsabeleng.

Ferreira's two-goal effort leaves him with eight on the season and in a three-way tie for second place with Jordan Morris of the Seattle Sounders and the San Jose Earthquakes' Cristian Espinoza. Denis Bouanga of Los Angeles FC entered play with a league-high nine.

Vancouver had gone 2-0-3 in its previous five visits to Frisco. Dallas beat Vancouver eight straight times at home to begin the series. The Whitecaps' five-match unbeaten road run against Dallas equaled the club record set from 2017-21 against the Colorado Rapids.

The Whitecaps have not won in 14 straight road matches, matching the San Jose Earthquakes for the longest current skid in the league.

Maarten Paes, who finished with three saves against the Whitecaps, and Dallas have not allowed more than one goal in the last 16 home matches. The Whitecaps were the last team to score more than one goal against Dallas in a 2-0 win last June.

Yohei Takaoka had one save for the Whitecaps.

Thiago Almada had a first-half goal and Atlanta United scored three times in the final 10 minutes of regulation to cruise to a 4-0 victory over the Colorado Rapids.

Almada staked Atlanta (6-4-3) to the lead for good with his sixth goal of the season - unassisted in the 29th minute. Almada has contributed to 13 goals this season.

Luiz Araújo started the late scoring flurry for Atlanta United in the 80th minute when he took a pass from Brooks Lennon and scored for a third time this season.

Tyler Wolff scored his first career goal - unassisted in the 87th minute - to make it 3-0. Wolff's first goal came in his seventh start and 19th appearance since 2020.

Lennon picked up another assist in the final minute of regulation when Giorgos Giakoumakis scored for a sixth time in five starts and nine appearances this campaign.

Colorado (2-5-6) suffered its first road loss in its last seven matches (3-1-3). The Rapids beat Atlanta United for the first time last year 3-0, but have lost the other four match-ups by a combined 9-0 score.

Atlanta United entered play having lost four straight in all competitions for the second time in club history. Atlanta United has never lost five in a row.

Atlanta United had advantages of 27-6 in shots and 10-3 in shots on goal.

Quentin Westberg saved three shots to earn the clean sheet for Atlanta United. William Yarbrough had six saves for Colorado.

An own-goal by Joel Waterman in the second minute of play provided the spark, leading FC Cincinnati to a 3-0 victory over CF Montreal on Wednesday night.

Luciano Acosta stretched the lead to 2-0 with his third goal of the season - unassisted in the 26th minute.

Brandon Vazquez added his third goal of the season - with an assist from Obinna Nwobodo - to give Cincinnati a three-goal lead in the 65th minute.



Los Angeles FC forward Kwadwo Opoku (left), and Sporting Kansas City midfielder Erik Thommy try to head the ball during the first half of a Major League Soccer match in Los Angeles. (AP)

Soccer, health officials gather for head injury summit amid criticism from CTE researchers

CHICAGO, May 18, (AP): Alecko Eskandrian starred at the University of Virginia before playing for five teams during seven seasons in Major League Soccer. The All-Star forward had five documented concussions during his MLS career, leading to his retirement in 2010.

When it comes to head injuries and soccer, Eskandrian said, the sport has come a long way.

"When I was younger, growing up, that wasn't even a thing to, hey, report your concussion," he said. "It was more of like, if you felt OK, you carried through, you carried through, and there were never discussions about short-term, long-term effects, things like that."

The 40-year-old Eskandrian, who works for MLS in player relations and player development, shared his perspective while speaking on a panel Wednesday on the first day of a head injury summit at a downtown Chicago hotel.

The conference of scientists, medical professionals and athletic trainers and officials was organized by U.S. Soccer, Major League Soccer, the National Women's Soccer League and the United Soccer League. It also included speakers from the Premier League, English Football Association and World Rugby.

Looking to build on the findings of the sixth International Conference on Concussion in Sport held in Amsterdam in October 2022, the summit featured presentations and discussion on the latest developments in concussion prevention, diagnosis and care.

"The amount of literature that's been published in the last two, three, four years is equal to the amount of literature that's been published in the last 20," said Margot Putukian, the chief medical officer for MLS. "So this is a really important topic."

The summit opened a day after the Concussion Legacy Foundation announced that four more former professional soccer players had been diagnosed with chronic traumatic encephalopathy - a degenerative brain disease that has been linked to concussions in athletes, combat veterans and others who sustained repeated head trauma.

There was little mention of CTE during the presentations and panels on Wednesday, and no researchers from the Boston University CTE Center - the brain bank that has led the research into the disease that can cause depression and other cognitive difficulties - were invited to address the conference.

Speaking during a break Wednesday, Concussion Legacy Foundation co-founder Chris Nowinski said he was looking forward to a "deeper discussion of heading" and for "a sense of urgency."

"I don't think the level of concern for how many soccer players are being diagnosed with CTE is high enough," Nowinski told The Associated Press. "I don't think it's what the players would want it to be, who are actually the ones out there risking CTE and could have a future (CTE) prevented if there were changes made today."

Asked about the criticism by some CTE researchers, Putukian defended the agenda for the summit - pointing to a Thursday session that includes presentations on neurological markers for chronic degenerative disease, neurocognitive dysfunction and neurodegenerative disease in soccer.

"We've, I think, tackled and been very transparent about all the issues," she said. "We want to hear about all the issues. We want to continue to learn from all the stakeholders that we've invited."

Thomas stays in Giro lead

Denz claims first Grand Tours stage win

RIVOLI, Italy, May 18, (AP): Nico Denz won the 12th stage of the Giro d'Italia on Thursday for his first victory in a Grand Tour, while Geraint Thomas kept hold of the pink jersey as the race prepares to head into the mountains.

Denz, who rides for Borhan-Hansgrohe, beat Toms Skujiš and Sebastian Berwick at the end of the 185-kilometer (115-mile) hill leg from Bra to Rivoli in the Piedmont region.

The first stage win for Denz in his sixth Giro prompted the German to yell in joy after crossing the line and put his hands on his head as his eyes appeared to tear up.

All three riders were in a large breakaway that had to battle to escape at the beginning of the day.

The trio pulled away from its fellow escapees and had an advantage of more than eight minutes on the general classification group on the toughest part of the stage, a second-category climb 30 kilometers (20 miles) from the finish.

CYCLING

The rest of the breakaway rolled across the line two minutes, 20 seconds behind, around six minutes ahead of the GC contenders.

Thomas, who rides for Ineos Grenadiers, remained just two seconds ahead of Primož Roglič and 22 seconds ahead of João Almeida.

There was a minute of silence before the start on Thursday to honor those affected by the severe flooding in Emilia-Romagna.

It was a quieter day in the

peloton after an eventful few days which saw pre-race favorite Remco Evenepoel withdraw after testing positive for the coronavirus and Tao Geoghegan Hart leave the race on a stretcher after a crash on Wednesday.

The majority of the riders on Thursday would have been saving their legs ahead of the mighty mountains.

Friday's 13th stage has three top-category climbs on the 199-kilometer (124-mile) route from Borgofranco d'Ivrea to the summit finish at Crans-Montana.

It will be an exceptionally tough day even though the route has been altered and the race will not go over the top of the Passo del Gran San Bernardo because of snowfall and a risk of avalanches, but through a tunnel.

The Giro ends in Rome in 10 days.



Germany's Nico Denz competes on his way to win the 12th stage of the Giro D'Italia, tour of Italy cycling race, from Bra to Rivoli. (AP)

Livingstone's quickfire 94 goes in vain as Delhi beats Punjab in IPL

DHARAMSALA, India, May 18, (AP): Delhi Capitals hung in against Liam Livingstone's onslaught in the final overs to record a consolation 15-run win over Punjab Kings in the Indian Premier League.

Livingstone bludgeoned nine sixes and five fours in scoring 94 off 48 balls but couldn't get enough support from the other end before holing out at long off of the last ball as Punjab ended up at 198-8.

Delhi, already out of knockout contention, finally managed to breach a total of 200-plus this season by posting 213-2. Rilee Rossouw smashed an unbeaten 82 off 37 for his maiden IPL half century and Prithvi Shaw, returning to the side after almost a month because of lack of form, made 54 off 38 balls.

Punjab has 12 points and needs a miracle to qualify for the playoffs. It

not only needs to beat Rajasthan Royals by a heavy margin in the last league game, but also hope other results go in its favor.

Livingstone turned the game on its head in the last four overs with Punjab still needing 79. The next two overs from fast bowlers Khaleel Ahmed and Mukesh Kumar went for 20 and 21, respectively, before Anrich Nortje bowled at hard lengths and conceded just five off the penultimate over to finish with 2-36.

Livingstone smashed 17 off the first three legitimate balls from Ishant Sharma (2-36) before he missed out a full toss off a free hit in the final over which sealed the game in Delhi's favor.

Delhi's poor fielding let Punjab sneak in when Nortje dropped a sitter of Livingstone when the Englishman was on three and then Atharva Taide was also dropped before he finally got retired out after scoring 55 off 42 balls in the 15th over.

Earlier, Shaw and captain David Warner (46) raised Delhi's best opening stand of the season when they shared 94 runs. Warner, who got dropped in the 30s, couldn't last long as Punjab skipper Shikhar Dhawan took a stunning running catch.

CRICKET

Shaw also holed out in the deep to give Sam Curran (2-36) his second wicket before Rossouw and Phil Salt smashed 65 runs in the last five overs. Dhawan's decision to give left-arm spinner Harpreet Brar the final over also backfired as Rossouw and Salt smashed 23 runs to propel Delhi's total.

Rossouw hit six fours and six boundaries while Salt, demoted in the batting order to accommodate Shaw upfront, made 26 off 14 balls.

Astros complete three-game sweep of Cubs

Alvarez, Alonso give Mets improbable win over Rays

NEW YORK, May 18, (AP): Francisco Alvarez hit a tying three-run homer with two outs in the ninth inning and Pete Alonso hit a game-ending three-run shot in the 10th, giving the New York Mets an improbable 8-7 win over the Tampa Bay Rays on Wednesday night.

New York trailed 2-0 before Mark Vientos, a rookie brought up from the minors for his season debut, tied the score with a two-run homer in the seventh off Ryan Thompson.

Brandon Lowe put the Rays back ahead with a two-run homer off Adam Ottavino in the eighth. Randy Arozarena added an RBI single in the ninth for a 5-2 lead.

BASEBALL

Alvarez homered on a sweeper from Jason Adam, a 426-foot shot off the facing of the left-field second deck, to send the game into extra innings. The Rays opened a 7-5 lead when pinch-hitter Harold Ramirez and Josh Lowe had run-scoring singles in the 10th against David Robertson (1-0).

Jeff McNeil singled against Pete Fairbanks (0-1) leading off the bottom half, advancing automatic runner Brandon Nimmo from second to third. Alonso pulled a fastball into the left-field second deck for his major league-leading 15th home run, giving the Mets their first walk-off win this season.

Astros 7, Cubs 6

In Houston, Kyle Tucker's two-run single capped a four-run rally in the bottom of the ninth inning and Houston completed a three-game sweep.

Chicago built a 6-1 lead in the fourth behind two early homers from Seiya Suzuki and one by Christopher Morel.

But the Astros roared back late, scoring twice in the eighth before cutting the deficit to one on a two-run homer by Jake Meyers off Keegan Thompson with nobody out in the ninth. Thompson walked pinch-hitter Mauricio Dubón and was replaced by Brandon Hughes (0-2), who was greeted by Jeremy Peña's double.

Hughes intentionally walked Alex Bregman to load the bases before Dubón was thrown out at the plate on a grounder by Yordan Alvarez. Tucker then lined a single to center field. Bregman slid home with the winning run just before catcher Yan Gomes got the tag down. The play was reviewed and the call was confirmed.

Suzuki, who also homered in the ninth inning Tuesday night, kept it going with a solo shot in the first off rookie J.P. France before smacking a two-run drive off him in the third to make it 5-1. Suzuki became the first Japanese-born player to homer in three straight plate appearances in the majors and the first Cubs hitter to do it since Kris Bryant on May 17, 2019.

Dodgers 7, Twins 3

In Los Angeles, James Outman hit a go-ahead grand slam in the seventh inning and the Los Angeles Dodgers rallied for a 7-3 victory over the Minnesota Twins on Wednesday.

Byron Buxton and Joey Gallo homered for the Twins, who dropped two of the three in a matchup of division leaders. Gallo left the game with two outs in the ninth after taking a foul ball off his leg.

The Dodgers trailed 3-2 in the seventh before scoring five runs all with two outs. Will Smith tied it after Emilio Pagan walked Miguel Vargas with the bases loaded and Outman put them on top when he drove a first-pitch fastball over the wall in center. It was the rookie outfielder's ninth home run of the season and second career grand slam.

José De León (0-1) took the loss after he allowed two-out base hits to Smith and Max Muncy in the seventh.

Brusdar Graterol (2-1) got the win with 1 1/3 scoreless innings in what was largely a bullpen game for the Dodgers.

Royals 4, Padres 3

In San Diego, Vinnie Pasquantino



New York Mets' Pete Alonso (20) hits a walk-off three-run home run during the tenth inning of a baseball game against the Tampa Bay Rays in New York. (AP)

hit a tiebreaking two-run homer off Yu Darvish to lead Kansas City.

Pasquantino's homer to right field, his eighth, and Maikel Garcia's RBI double gave the Royals a 4-1 lead in the sixth inning.

Darvish (2-3) allowed four runs and six hits in 5 1/3 innings.

Many in the crowd of 32,416 booed the Padres after Scott Barlow retired the side in the ninth for his sixth save. San Diego's star-studded lineup went 2 for 9 with runners in scoring position and stranded 12 overall as the Padres lost for the ninth time in 11 games.

The Padres, closer to last in the NL West than they are first, were without slugger Manny Machado for a second straight day after he was hit by a pitch on the left hand in Monday night's 4-0 win.

Diamondbacks 5, Athletics 3

In Oakland, Lourdes Gurriel Jr. led off the ninth with a double and scored the go-ahead run on a sacrifice fly by Jose Herrera, and Arizona got its fifth win in six games.

Christian Walker and Corbin Carroll homered as the Diamondbacks took two of three from Oakland in the series despite the bullpen giving up another late lead.

Gurriel led off the ninth with a double off Shintaro Fujinami (1-5) for his seventh straight game with an extra-base hit. Two walks loaded the bases before Herrera's drive to right off Adrian Martinez allowed Gurriel to score easily. Ketel Marte added an RBI single.

Orioles 3, Angels 1

In Baltimore, Kyle Bradish pitched impressively into the seventh inning and Austin Hays homered to lift Baltimore.

Mike Trout went deep for the Angels, but they fell back to .500 with their eighth loss in 11 games.

Bradish (2-1) allowed a run and four hits in 6 2/3 innings against the team that drafted him. He struck out five without a walk. Danny Coulombe, Yennier Cano and Félix Bautista got the final seven outs, with Bautista working the ninth for his 11th save in 14 chances.

Marlins 4, Nationals 3

In Miami, Jorge Soler hit a go-ahead home run for the second straight game, and Miami held off Washington.

With the Marlins trailing 2-1, Luis Arraez led off the fourth with a single before Soler sent MacKenzie Gore's first pitch to left-center for his 11th home run of the season. That came a day after Soler drove a 3-2 pitch over the wall in left-center for a 5-4 win in



Houston Astros' Alex Bregman (2) scores the game-winning run as Chicago Cubs catcher Yan Gomes reaches to tag him during the ninth inning of a baseball game in Houston. (AP)

the series opener for his first career walk-off shot.

Bryan De La Cruz gave Miami a two-run cushion in the sixth with an RBI double against Gore (3-3). De La Cruz stretched his hitting streak to a career-high 11 games.

Washington pulled within 4-3 in the seventh on Alex Call's run-scoring grounder.

Braves 6, Rangers 5

In Arlington, Orlando Arcia hit a tiebreaking solo homer with two outs in the ninth inning and NL East-leading Atlanta avoided consecutive series losses for the first time this season.

Ronald Acuña Jr. homered in his fourth consecutive game for the Braves, and Eddie Rosario had a two-run shot in the second that ended Texas starter Nathan Eovaldi's scoreless streak at 29 2/3 innings.

Adolis García went deep twice for AL West leader Texas, those solo shots extending his MLB-best RBI total to 46.

The Braves won two of three in Texas after getting swept in three games at Toronto last weekend.

Atlanta tied the game at 5 in the eighth when Ozzie Albies had an RBI single and Austin Riley drove him home with a double that chased reliever Josh Sborz. Arcia's fourth homer of the season came off Brock Burke (2-2).

Nick Anderson (2-0), the fourth Braves pitcher, worked a scoreless eighth before Raisel Iglesias worked a perfect ninth for his second save.

Giants 7, Phillies 4

In San Francisco, Thairo Estrada hit a tiebreaking RBI single as part of a

three-run eighth inning and San Francisco completed a three-game sweep.

Wilmer Flores and Casey Schmitt each had two-run singles, and Blake Sabol and Brandon Crawford also drove in runs as the Giants won their sixth straight game against the Phillies.

Bryson Stott homered for Philadelphia, which lost its fourth in a row.

With the game tied at 4, J.D. Davis and Mitch Haniger began the eighth inning with pinch-hit singles. Joey Bart followed with a bunt single to load the bases. After Gregory Soto (1-3) retired LaMonte Wade Jr., Estrada looped a single to shallow center field, scoring the go-ahead run. Flores added a two-run single.

The Phillies loaded the bases with two outs in the ninth, but Camilo Doval struck out Trea Turner swinging to record his third straight save in the series and his 11th in 12 chances this season.

John Brebbia (2-0) pitched a scoreless eighth inning for the win as the San Francisco bullpen combined to allow one run in 5 2/3 innings for the second straight day.

Blue Jays 3, Yankees 0, 10 innings

In Toronto, Danny Jansen hit a three-run homer in the 10th inning and the Toronto Blue Jays beat the New York Yankees 3-0 on Wednesday night.

Long after Blue Jays starter Chris Bassitt and Yankees ace Gerrit Cole exited a scoreless duel, Jansen's fourth homer of the season came on the first pitch he saw from reliever Wandy Peralta (2-1).

Whit Merrifield reached on short-stop Anthony Volpe's error to begin the bottom of the 10th as automatic runner Cavan Biggio advanced from second to third.

New York moved left fielder Oswald Cabrera into the infield, and Alejandro Kirk grounded out to short-stop before Jansen followed with his game-winning drive to left.

Toronto closer Jordan Romano (3-2) tossed two hitless innings for the win.

Cardinals 3, Brewers 0

In St. Louis, Matthew Liberatore tossed five scoreless innings in his season debut and Paul DeJong homered to lead the St. Louis to its eighth win in 10 games.

Milwaukee has dropped two of three following a three-game winning streak.

Nolan Arenado added a run-scoring hit for St. Louis, which remains in last place in the NL Central for the 22nd successive day after winning the division last season.

Liberatore (1-0), a 23-year-old left-hander, gave up three hits in a 95-pitch stint. He struck out six and left after giving up a leadoff walk to Willy Adames to start the sixth. Relievers Andre Pallante, Giovanni Gallegos and Ryan Helsley combined to nail down the seven-hit shutout. Helsley recorded the final four outs for his fifth save in eight chances.

Corbin Burnes (4-3) gave up three runs on eight hits over six innings in the loss.

Rockies 11, Reds 6

In Denver, Elias Díaz drove in three runs and Kris Bryant, Jurickson Profar and Brenton Doyle each had two RBIs in a two-inning, 11-run outburst for Colorado.

The Rockies sent 19 batters to the plate and recorded 10 hits while scoring five times in the fifth and six more times in the sixth. Doyle's two-run triple put Colorado ahead to stay in its 11th win in 16 games.

Reds starter Graham Ashcraft (2-2) was charged with seven runs and 10 hits in five-plus innings.

Backup catcher Luke Maile homered and drove in two runs as the Reds built an early lead before collapsing as they finished a 2-4 trip.

Brent Suter (2-0) worked a scoreless sixth for the Rockies to pick up the win.

White Sox 7, Guardians 2

In Chicago, Jake Burger and Gavin Sheets both homered for the second straight game, leading Chicago past Cleveland.

Burger added a triple and single for the White Sox, who have posted consecutive victories against the Guard-

MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, May 18, (AP): Results and standings from the MLB games on Wednesday.

Arizona	5	Oakland	3
Kansas City	4	San Diego	3
Baltimore	3	LA Angels	1
Boston	12	Seattle	3
Toronto	3	NY Yankees 10 inn	0
NY Mets	8	Tampa Bay 10 inn	7
Atlanta	6	Texas	5
Chicago W. Sox	7	Cleveland	2
Houston	7	Chicago Cubs	6
Minnesota	5	LA Dodgers	1
Oakland	9	Arizona 12 inn	8
Pittsburgh	8	Detroit	0
Colorado	11	Cincinnati	6
LA Dodgers	7	Minnesota	3
San Francisco	7	Philadelphia	4
Miami	4	Washington	3
St. Louis	3	Milwaukee	0

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	32	12	.727	—
Baltimore	28	15	.651	3-1/2
Toronto	25	18	.581	6-1/2
New York	25	20	.556	7-1/2
Boston	24	20	.545	8

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	24	20	.545	—
Detroit	19	22	.463	3-1/2
Cleveland	19	23	.452	4
Chicago	16	28	.364	8
Kansas City	14	31	.311	10-1/2

West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Texas	26	17	.605	—
Houston	24	19	.558	2
Los Angeles	22	22	.500	4-1/2
Seattle	21	22	.488	5
Oakland	10	35	.222	17

National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	27	16	.628	—
Miami	22	21	.512	5
New York	21	23	.477	6-1/2
Philadelphia	20	23	.465	7
Washington	18	25	.419	9

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	24	19	.558	—
Pittsburgh	23	20	.535	—
Chicago	19	24	.442	5
Cincinnati	19	24	.442	5
St. Louis	18	26	.409	6-1/2

West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	28	16	.636	—
Arizona	25	19	.568	3
San Francisco	20	23	.465	7-1/2
San Diego	20	23	.465	8
Colorado	19	25	.432	9

ians and won for the third time in four games. Andrew Vaughn also went deep for Chicago.

Mike Clevinger (3-3) tossed six-plus effective innings to beat Cleveland, his original team, for the first time. He gave up two runs and six hits with four walks and five strikeouts.

Tim Anderson, Andrew Benintendi and Yasmani Grandal each had two hits in Chicago's 12-hit attack as the White Sox followed up on 16-hit, 8-3 win on Tuesday.

Josh Bell drove in Cleveland's runs with a double in the first and bases-loaded walk in the seventh. Rookie Peyton Battenfield (0-5) allowed all three of Chicago's homers in his sixth career start and seventh appearance.

Pirates 8, Tigers 0

In Detroit, Rich Hill gave up one hit in six innings, Austin Hedges drove in three runs and Pittsburgh rolled past Detroit.

The 43-year-old Hill (4-3), the oldest active player in the majors, allowed just Matt Vierling's infield single and two walks while striking out seven. A trio of relievers completed the shutout as Pittsburgh won for just the third time in 15 games.

Rodolfo Castro homered and knocked in two runs, while Bryan Reynolds contributed three hits and scored two runs.

Tigers starter Eduardo Rodríguez (4-3), who had allowed just two runs in his previous six starts, gave up four runs and six hits in five innings.

Detroit manager A.J. Hinch was ejected for the first time this season during the fourth inning. He was tossed by home plate umpire Nic Lentz for arguing balls and strikes.

Red Sox 12, Mariners 3

In Boston, Pablo Reyes doubled twice for a career-high four RBIs to lead Boston.

Justin Turner had a two-run homer, Rafael Devers and Kiké Hernández also each drove in two runs and right-hander Brayan Bello (3-1) won on his 24th birthday, allowing one run on three hits in five innings with five walks and seven strikeouts.

Bayern face Leipzig

Dortmund fight to keep Bundesliga title race alive

DUESSELDORF, Germany, May 18, (AP): It's crunch time for Thomas Tuchel and Bayern Munich. Saturday's game against Champions League-chasing Leipzig could help crown Bayern as the Bundesliga champion once again, or put Borussia Dortmund in the driver's seat with one more game to go.

Bayern has a one-point advantage over Dortmund in the standings, so a win over Leipzig would be enough for the title if Dortmund loses to Augsburg a day later. Given Bayern's big 19-goal advantage in goal difference, only a win will realistically do for Dortmund.

Leipzig is a tricky opponent for Bayern and got a 1-1 draw in their last game in January. Third-place Leipzig and coach Marco Rose have won seven of their last eight games in all competitions and know that a win over Bayern would guarantee Champions League qualification for next season.

There are plenty of links between the two clubs, with former Leipzig players Dayot Upamecano in the Bayern defense and Joshua Kimmich in midfield. Former Leipzig coach Julian Nagelsmann may have been replaced

by Tuchel nearly two months ago, but his influence still shapes the way Bayern plays, and Leipzig midfielder Konrad Laimer is reportedly close to agreeing to move to Bayern when his contract expires at the end of the season.

Chasing a record-extending 11th consecutive title, Bayern has got back on form with three straight wins since the 3-1 loss to Mainz last month which briefly handed Dortmund the lead in the standings. Not all has gone smoothly for Bayern this week, though.

SOCCER

Goalkeeper Yann Sommer, himself a stand-in for the injured Manuel Neuer, missed training on Wednesday with what the club called "a stomach complaint," potentially opening the way for third-choice Sven Ulreich to get a game Saturday. The future of Sadio Mané remains unresolved after a largely disappointing season for the Senegal forward.

At first glance, Augsburg may seem an ideal opponent for Dortmund. Likely safe from relegation in 13th,

Augsburg may have little to play for but has raised its game against Germany's top teams all season.

In its last game against Dortmund,



Dortmund's Karim Adeyemi (up), Jude Bellingham (left), Emre Can (right), and Donnyell Malen, celebrate a goal by Bellingham during the German Bundesliga soccer match between Borussia Dortmund and VfL Wolfsburg in Dortmund, Germany. (AP)

Augsburg leveled the score three times before Gio Reyna finally scored the winning goal in a 4-3 victory for Dortmund. Augsburg stunned Bayern in a 1-0 win in September and went down fighting in a dramatic 5-3 loss in March.

This weekend could decide the relegation fight, too.

Anything but a win against Bochum will doom Hertha Berlin to relegation from the Bundesliga, a final humiliating blow after the team spent much of the last decade dreaming of becoming a "big city club" in the Champions League, putting Berlin on par with European capitals like London, Paris and Madrid.

To make matters worse for Hertha, the city of Berlin could be getting a Champions League club next season - Union Berlin. Hertha's cross-city rival could secure a spot in Europe's top competition with a draw against Hoffenheim on Saturday if Freiburg loses to Wolfsburg the day before.

Stuttgart also could be relegated, but only if it loses to Mainz on Sunday and Schalke, Hoffenheim and Bochum all win their games.

Title race over, Spanish league turns focus to six teams in relegation fight

BARCELONA, Spain, May 18, (AP): With the Spanish league title already clinched by Barcelona, the focus now shifts to the drama at the bottom.

Six teams - Valencia, Almeria, Cadiz, Valladolid, Getafe and Espanyol - are within seven points of one another in a fight to see which two will accompany already-relegated Elche to the second division.

With four matches left, Getafe and Espanyol are currently in 18th and 19th place, respectively, the spots that will be relegated at the end of the season.

Cadiz hosts Valladolid on Friday in a direct fight between two teams trying to stave off demotion.

Cadiz and Valladolid are even on points and only one ahead of Getafe. The loser of Friday's game - or both teams if it ends in a draw - would be in danger of falling into the drop zone if Getafe beats last-place Elche on Saturday.

"We know how important this game is," Cadiz coach Sergio González said Thursday. "We are playing at home and have our fans to push us forward. The result of this game can be a turning point for what is left of the season. It will be an intense match, and we have to reduce our errors and go for

the win."

Valladolid, a club owned by Brazil great Ronaldo, has lost four straight under coach Paulo Pezzolano, who took over last month.

"I would be more worried if we weren't creating chances, but we have to score more," Pezzolano said. "We have rivals which are also in trouble and there are three teams below us in the standings, so we have to take advantage of that."

SOCCER

Valencia, in 14th place, can take a big step to ensuring it stays up if it can beat Real Madrid at home on Sunday.

Madrid only has second place to play for after Barcelona wrapped up the title last weekend. Madrid won the Copa del Rey earlier this month but was eliminated from the Champions League semifinals by Manchester City this week.

Almeria is two points above the relegation zone before it hosts Mallorca on Saturday.

Espanyol is four points from safety before visiting Rayo Vallecano on Sunday.



Manchester City's Kyle Walker and Real Madrid's Jose Vinicius Junior (left), battle for the ball during the Champions League semi-final second leg match between Manchester City and Real Madrid, at Etihad Stadium, in Manchester, England. (AP)

Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>

City hammer Real, advance to CL final

Guardiola's march toward treble of trophies feels unstoppable

MANCHESTER, England, May 18, (AP): Manchester City is three games away from making history. And after the stunning rout of Real Madrid in the Champions League semifinals, Pep Guardiola's march toward a treble of trophies feels unstoppable.

"We are there. We can think about it, can visualize it," the City manager said after his team's 4-0 win at Etihad Stadium.

Madrid's undisputed kings of Europe were humbled and, but for the efforts of Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois, the scoreline could have been so much worse for the 14-time champions.

City feels like an irresistible force as it closes in on the Premier League, Champions League and FA Cup titles. It was certainly too much for Madrid to handle as Bernardo Silva scored twice in the first half, Eder Militao scored an own goal after the break and substitute Julian Alvarez struck in time added on to seal a 5-1 aggregate win.

SOCCER

Madrid has fought its way back from the brink on numerous occasions over the past two seasons, but this was too great a challenge.

After overrunning the defending European champions, City will be favored to do the same to Inter Milan in the final in Istanbul on June 10.

A win against Chelsea on Sunday would secure a third straight league title and Manchester United stands in its way in the FA Cup final.

United is the only English team to win the three main trophies in one season - doing so in 1999.

City has already overtaken its Manchester rival as the dominant force in English soccer and can now emulate its greatest achievement.

"We are close and of course we are going to try," Guardiola said.

City is going in search of its first Champions League title, while Guardiola is aiming to win it for a third time as a coach.

At times, it has seemed as though the pressure on Europe's biggest stage was too big for a team that has been serial winners in domestic competition.

While City's quality has rarely been in question over Guardiola's



Manchester City's Erling Haaland (centre), controls the ball, during the Champions League semi-final second leg match between Manchester City and Real Madrid, at Etihad Stadium, in Manchester, England. (AP)

seven years in charge, its temperament in the Champions League has been.

On too many occasions it has fallen short when the heat was on - losing to underdogs such as Monaco, Lyon and Tottenham.

It was in command for almost the entirety of the two-legged semifinal against Madrid last year, but still managed to lose after blowing a two-goal lead in the last few minutes at the Santiago Bernabeu.

That never looked likely on this occasion, however, as City provided further evidence that it is finally ready to lift the one trophy that has eluded it.

"After 10 or 15 minutes I had the feeling that all the pain we had in one season, one year, what happened last

season, was there today," Guardiola said. "It was really tough to lose the way we lose and I think we had to swallow poison. Football always gives you another chance. When the draw was made with Madrid I said 'I want it'."

Carlo Ancelotti had described Madrid as a team with a "special power to stay alive."

By the end of a chastening night in Manchester, he could only congratulate Guardiola.

"We played against an opponent who deserved to win," he said. "They played with more intensity, more quality up front and they took their chances. They were better than us today, we were better last year."

Having been dominated for long

periods by Madrid in the first leg last week, City took control from the start in front of its own fans.

Erling Haaland had two clear chances to score before Bernardo's opening goal - twice seeing headers saved by Courtois.

With the crowd roaring on every City challenge, it felt like a matter of time before the home team would find a breakthrough - and it came in the 23rd minute.

After denying Haaland twice, Courtois could not keep out Bernardo, who raced onto Kevin de Bruyne's pass before firing in at the near post.

The sense of relief was unmistakable - from Guardiola as much as anyone else in the stadium as he turned to the crowd, double fist-

pumped and blew kisses toward the supporters.

Having been passive for the opening 30 minutes, Madrid sprung into life and Toni Kroos hit the bar from around 25 meters.

It was a warning to City and moments later the home team was celebrating a second goal, with Bernardo the scorer again in the 37th.

Ilkay Gundogan burst into the box and when his shot was blocked, Bernardo was the quickest to react, heading the rebound beyond Militao on the line.

Haaland could have killed the game when he came one-on-one with Courtois in the 73rd, but saw his shot diverted onto the bar.

City did not have to wait long for a third, with Militao diverting De

Bruyne's free kick into his own net. The crowd was already in celebratory mood and was given one more goal to cheer when Alvarez burst through and slid a shot past Courtois in stoppage time.

Guardiola won the Champions League twice with Barcelona, but has failed to add to that total with Bayern Munich and City.

This is only his second final since last winning the competition in 2011, having lost to Chelsea in 2021.

"It's a beautiful night for us," said Bernardo. "We knew it was going to be tough, but to beat this Madrid team 4-0 at home it was wonderful. It's a wonderful feeling to be in the final again and hopefully this time we can try to win it."

Celtics home struggles continue

Butler stars as Heat draw first blood in East finals

BOSTON, May 18, (AP): The Miami Heat were in need of a calming presence following a sluggish start to their latest conference finals showdown with the Boston Celtics.

Jimmy Butler provided that and a lot more.

Butler scored 35 points, including 20 after halftime, and the Heat rallied in the second half to beat the Celtics 123-116 in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference finals on Wednesday night.

He said his teammates have given him confidence.

"I'm playing at an incredible level because they are allowing me to do so," Butler said. "They are not putting a limit on my game. They are trusting me with the ball, on the defensive end. I think that's what any basketball player wants."

Miami trailed by nine at the half before turning it around with a franchise playoff-record 46 points in the third and outscoring Boston 66-50 over the final two quarters. It was Butler's fifth game with 30 or more points this postseason and he added seven assists, six steals and five rebounds.

"One of the premier two-way basketball players of this association. ... That's what we needed." Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "Down the stretch Jimmy was able to do everything we needed - as a scorer and as a facilitator."

Bam Adebayo added 20 points and eight rebounds. Kyle Lowry, Caleb Martin, Gabe Vincent and Max Strus all added 15 points apiece. The Heat went 16 of 31 from the 3-point line.

The No. 8-seeded Heat have

opened all three playoff series with road victories. Game 2 is Friday in Boston.

Jayson Tatum led the Celtics with 30 points, but didn't take a shot in the fourth quarter. Jaylen Brown finished with 22 points and nine rebounds. Malcolm Brogdon added 19 points.

BASKETBALL

Boston is just 4-4 at home during this postseason.

"I don't know why," Tatum said of their home struggles. "You've still got to play the game, you've got to make plays, regardless of whether you're home or away."

The Celtics, who are at their best

when they're defending and getting up more shots than their opponents, were 10 of 29 from beyond the arc.

"We lost our offensive purpose," Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla said.

The tip-off of the series marked the third time in four seasons that the Heat and Celtics have met in this round. Boston won last year's matchup in seven games.

Wednesday's opener felt every bit like a continuation of that most recent meeting. Boston dominated inside early on and led by nine at halftime.

Spoelstra said his team was "more intentional" over the final 24 minutes.

Miami took a page out of the Celtics' book and used a 13-1 run to quickly erase that gap, tying the

game at 78 in the third quarter. During the next timeout Mazzulla was captured by broadcast cameras throwing a clipboard in frustration.

Boston couldn't stop the onslaught and Miami then nudged back in front as Butler penetrated to create opportunities for his teammates.

The Heat outscored the Celtics 46-25 in the period and took a 103-91 lead into the fourth, prompting a few boos from the TD Garden crowd.

Boston responded, scoring the first seven points of the final period before a 3-pointer by Vincent ended the run.

Miami led 114-109 with just over three minutes to play when Brogdon was fouled by Butler. But he connected on just 1 of the 2 free throws. Butler was trapped on the next Miami possession before finding Martin for a corner 3.

Tatum travelled, giving the ball back to the Heat. A Miami miss gave the ball back to Boston, but Tatum was called again for travelling.

Miami wound the shot clock down before getting a 3-pointer by Butler to rattle in with 1:03 remaining.

But everything changed in the second half.

"We are just playing really good basketball," Butler said. "More than anything, we are staying together through the good and through the bad."

The Heat are the fifth team to open with road wins in each of their first three series, joining the 2021 Hawks, 1999 Knicks, 1989 Bulls and 1981 Rockets. The Knicks were the only other No. 8 seed to make the conference finals.



Miami Heat forward Jimmy Butler (22) drives to the basket against Boston Celtics guard Malcolm Brogdon (13) in the first half of Game 1 of the NBA basketball Eastern Conference finals playoff series in Boston. (AP)

Rafa pulls out of French Open, expects 2024 to be 'last' year of tennis career

MADRID, May 18, (AP): Rafael Nadal announced Thursday that he is pulling out of the French Open because of a lingering hip injury, and he expects 2024 to be the final season of his career.

The owner of a record 14 championships at the clay-court Grand Slam tournament will miss it for the first time since making his debut there in 2005.



Nadal

Nadal, who turns 37 next month, delivered the news of his withdrawal - and future plans - during a news conference at his tennis academy in Manacor, Spain. He said he does not want to set a date for his return to the tennis tour, but expects it to take months.

And then, the 22-time Grand Slam champion added: "You never know how things will turn out, but my intention is that next year will be my last year."

Play begins at Roland Garros in Paris on May 28. Nadal has a career record of 112-3 across 18 appearances at the French Open, a level of dominance unmatched by any man or woman at any Grand Slam event in the long annals of a sport that dates to the 1800s. When Nadal won the trophy last year at age 36 while dealing with chronic foot pain, he became the oldest champion in tournament history.

He said he is not sure that taking more time off now will give him a real chance of coming back next season in competitive form, but

explained that he knows he can't keep trying to force his body back into match condition now.

"I am going to stop, I am not going to train. I am not ready to train," Nadal said, alternating answers in Spanish and English. "These have been many months with many moments of frustration, and I can handle frustration, but there comes a time when you have to stop."

Nadal's birthday is June 3, when ordinarily he might have been playing his third-round match in Court Philippe Chatrier. Instead, he will be out of action, just as he has been for most of this season.

The Spaniard hasn't competed anywhere since he lost to Mackie McDonald in the second round of the Australian Open on Jan. 18, when his movement clearly was restricted by a bothersome left hip flexor. That was Nadal's earliest Grand Slam exit since 2016.

TENNIS

An MRI exam the next day revealed the extent of the injury, and his manager said at the time that Nadal was expected to need up to two months to fully recover. He initially aimed to return at the Monte Carlo Masters in March on his beloved red clay, but he wasn't able to play there, then subsequently sat out tournament after tournament, decreasing the likelihood that he would be ready for the French Open.

Nadal is just 1-3 this season. He has dropped seven of his past nine matches overall, dating to a fourth-round loss to Frances Tiafoe in the U.S. Open's fourth round last September.