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GCC-CENTRAL ASIA SUMMIT OPENS NEW HORIZONS Hope voiced for strong strategic ties

Roadmap set

JEDDAH, July 20, (KUNA): The Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His **Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal** Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah delivered Kuwait's speech at the GCC and five countries of Central Asia, also known as C-5, summit held in Jeddah on Wednesday.

His Highness the Crown Prince said at the outset, "I would like to convey to all of you greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

He went on to express appreciation to the leadership of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia represented by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, the Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, and to the Saudi government and its generous people for their warm reception and hospitality.

His Highness the Crown Prince added that he was pleased at the participation of Kuwait in the first meeting of the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the leaders of the Central Asian countries, which represents a new building block and a great addition to the path of relations between the two sides, and noted that such cooperation reflects on the

common desire to move forward to develop and strengthen such relations to include broader and more comprehensive cooperation in various fields

His Highness the Crown Prince added that such cooperation would serve the common interests of both sides, and will strengthen and deepen relations.

He also hoped that such meeting would contribute to strengthen and consolidate the strategic partnership relations between the two sides through what was approved in the Joint Ministerial Council meeting on September 7, 2022 and the adoption of the Joint Action Plan (2023-2027).

His Ĥighness the Crown Prince also noted that they look forward to more cooperation in the political, security, economic, cultural, scientific and trade fields, stressing the importance of continuous consultation in order to continue further cooperation in all fields, and to enhance security and stability and achieve prosperity in all our countries.

The Representative of Kuwait Amir added that he is pleased to commend the positions of the Central Asian countries, which are highly appreciated by the GCC countries for their constant and unwavering commitment to just international issues and their continuous cooperation and coordination with the GCC countries to lay the foundations for security and stability in the region.

His Highness the Crown Prince also praised the Central Asian countries for their positions on various Islamic, Arab, regional and international issues, expressing confident in the keenness of the Central Asian countries to continue this path



Kuwait Crown Prince delivers a speech at GCC-Central Asia summit.

KUNA photo

and efforts.

The countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, His Highness the Crown Prince said have a firm belief and a firm conviction that the current circumstances require more work and coordination of efforts at the regional level, which makes it imperative to work together to face the challenges surrounding the region through cooperation between the countries of

the Cooperation Council and the countries of Central Asia. His Highness the Crown Prince considered such work is essential in enhancing the security and stability, including development for the region, progress and the wellbeing.

Continued on Page 4

GloBE takes 15 pct



Millions lost in failure to apply corporate tax

KUWAIT CITY, July 20: At a time when about 138 countries are preparing to apply a tax on multinational companies at the rate of 15 percent of the profits on companies whose annual revenues exceed 750 million Euros (about 157.6 million dinars), after those countries signed the Global Minimum Tax Agreement (GloBE), Kuwait is still tweeting outside the flock, as it is the only Gulf country that has not joined the agreement yet, which would miss Kuwait's opportunity to benefit from revenues of tens of millions of dinars annually, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to the agreement, com-

ment, which would waste tens of millions of dinars on the state treasury annually.

Sources added that Kuwait seeks to support non-oil revenues through activities and measures that diversify sources of income in the future, noting the endeavor to involve the private sector in strategic roles within the framework of ensuring real development in the country.

It is no secret that in Kuwait there are dozens of financially solid groups and companies known for their spread regionally and globally, which makes them able to achieve revenues that exceed the limits set at 750 million Euros. which requires taking proactive and adequate measures to deal with tax developments, especially since other GCC countries have already started preparing to apply the tax, led by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. The sources estimated the number of companies and institutions whose combined revenues exceed 750 million Euros (257.6 million dinars), and multinational companies on which tax applies at 15 percent of profits annually, are no less than 20 companies and institutions, stressing that these companies must take into account the upcoming tax changes, while the state should prepare to adopt the new tax updates and deal with what is happening around the world. The leaders of the 27 European Union countries approved, during a summit in Brussels in December last year, the imposition of a minimum tax of 15 percent on the profits of multinational companies, in a unanimous decision, with the measure to enter into force on December 31. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) had previously revealed the completion of a global agreement for about 136 countries out of a total of 140 targets (which later increased to 138 countries) to impose a minimum tax on profits of multinational companies at 15 percent, as the agreement was scheduled to enter into force last June, while it is currently likely to start at the end of this year.



Protesters scale a wall at the Swedish Embassy in Baghdad Thursday, July 20, 2023. Protesters angered by the burning of a copy of the Holy Quran stormed the embassy early Thursday, breaking into the compound and lighting a small fire. (AP)

Man desecrates Quran in Stockholm

Iraq expels Swedish envoy; embassy attacked

BAGHDAD, July 20, (AP): Protesters angered by the planned burning of a copy of the Holy Quran by an Iraqi man in Sweden stormed the Swedish Embassy in Baghdad Thursday, overrunning the diplomatic compound and starting a fire.

Hours later, Iraq's prime minister cut diplomatic ties with Sweden in protest over the desecration of the Islamic holy book.

Protesters stormed the diplomatic post early Thursday, waving flags and signs showing the influential Iraqi Shiite cleric and political leader Muqtada al-Sadr, and set a small fire. The attack on the embassy came ahead of a planned burning of the Quran in Stockholm by an Iraqi asylum-seeker who had burned a copy of the Islamic holy book in a previous demonstration last month.

Following the incident, the Swedish Embassy announced that it had closed to visitors, without specifying when it would reopen.

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said in a statement after meeting with security officials that Iraqi authorities would prosecute those responsible for the arson as well as referring "negligent security officials" for investigation.

However, the statement also said that the Iraqi government had informed its Swedish counterpart on Wednesday that Iraq would cut off diplomatic relations should the Quran burning go forward.

Hours later, Sudani announced he had ordered the expulsion of the Swedish ambassador from Iraq and the withdrawal of the Iraqi charge d'affaires from Sweden.

The announcement came after two men held an anti-Islam protest on a lawn about 100 meters (300 feet) from the Iraqi Embassy in Stockholm. One of them, identified by Swedish media as Salwan Momika, an Iraqi Christian living in Sweden, stepped on and kicked the Quran, but didn't set it on fire.

Momika also stepped on and kicked an Iraqi flag, as well as photographs of al-Sadr and of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

About 50 people including journalists and a handful of counter-demonstrators who chanted religious slogans watched the demonstration from behind police barricades as plainclothes and uniformed officers stood by.

Following the protest and Sudani's announcement, the head of Iraq's Media and Communications Commission announced it had suspended the license of Swedish communications company Ericsson to operate in Iraq.

Before the planned protest in Stockholm, dozens of men climbed over the fence at the complex containing the Swedish Embassy in Baghdad, Video footage showed men trying to break down a door, setting a fire and standing, some shirtless in the summer heat, inside what appeared to be a room at the embassy, an alarm audible in the background.

Others later performed predawn prayers outside of the embassy.

As dawn broke, police and other security officials gathered at the embassy as firefighters tried to douse the flames from the ladder of a fire truck. Some demonstrators still stood at the site, holding placards showing Sadr's face, apparently left alone by police.

The Swedish Foreign Ministry said in a statement that its staff were safe.

"We condemn all attacks on diplomats and staff from international organizations,' the ministry said. "Attacks on embassies and diplomats constitute a serious violation of the Vienna Convention. Iraqi authorities have the responsibility to protect diplomatic missions and diplomatic staff."

In a statement, Swedish Foreign Minister Tobias Billström called the attacks "completely unacceptable" and said the ministry would summon Iraq's charge d'affaires in Stockholm, slamming Iraqi authorities for "seriously failing" in their responsibility to protect the embassy and its personnel.

The Finnish embassy in Baghdad is adjacent to the Swedish embassy, in an area enclosed by blast walls. Finland's ambassador to Iraq, Matti Lassila, told the Finnish public broadcaster YLE that the staff of the Swedish and Finnish embassies were proactively evacuated Wednesday and were uniniured.

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: The Economist Intelligence Unit indicated in an analysis issued by it that inflation in Kuwait continued at about 3.7 percent on an annual basis last May (it rose to 3.83 percent in June), after it reached this level last March, according to data from the Central Administration for Statistics.

The unit stated that the inflation rate in Kuwait is the highest among the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, noting the lack of data on inflation in the UAE, reports Al-Rai daily.

It expected inflation to continue to pressure real domestic consumption in the near term, which reinforces the unit's expectations that real GDP growth will slow this year to 0.4 percent.

The Economist Intelligence pointed out that with the continued slowdown in consumer price hikes in the Gulf, it seems that Kuwait is facing difficulty in reducing the relatively high rate of inflation, which increased sharply in the wake of the Corona pandemic, due to the very narrow housing market, where the costs of housing services constitute more than one-third of the consumer price basket.

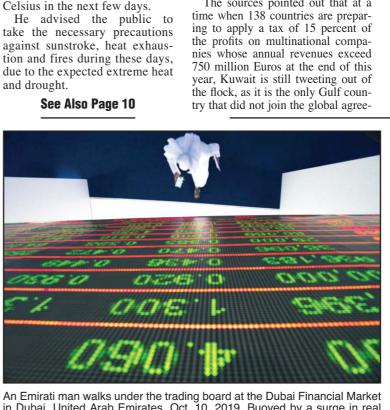
The unit indicated that, in addition to that, the long-term political blockage continues to impede progress in housing construction to meet the requirements of the growing number of residents, which causes a rise in rental and purchase costs.

Heat to worsen

KUWAIT CITY, July 20: Kuwaiti Meteorologist Issa Ramadan expects exacerbation of the heat wave in the coming days, reports Al-Oabas daily.

Ramadan forecasts an unusual heat wave -the hottest days of the year - with temperatures ranging from 48 to 52 degrees Celsius in the next few days.

and drought.



in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Oct. 10, 2019. Buoyed by a surge in real estate activity, the Dubai Financial Market has reached its highest point in nearly eight years and extended year-to-date gains to nearly 25%, though it pulled back to close to 3,986, Thursday, July 20, 2023. (AP)

panies whose revenues exceed 750 million Euros and own subsidiaries or branches and legal entities abroad, and operate in countries that have signed the global minimum tax agreement, are obligated to pay the 15 percent tax annually.

If we know that Kuwait currently collects taxes on all companies, totaling about 3.5 percent annually (zakat and labor support), then the country's failure to join the "GloBE" agreement means that it waives the tax difference of 11.5 percent in favor of other countries. as Kuwaiti companies operating in other countries that signed a 15 percent tax agreement will be obligated to pay this difference in those countries, and the result is the loss of millions in annual revenues for the state treasury.

However, the question is, "What prevents income tax from being applied to multinational corporations locally?

Informed sources stated that Kuwait's failure to join the global minimum tax agreement is tantamount to a waiver for the country to collect taxes on companies whose revenues exceed 750 million Euros (157.6 million dinars) for the benefit of other countries

The sources pointed out that at a

Dubai market up over real estate

DUBAI, July 20, (AP): Buoyed by a surge in real estate activity, the Dubai Financial Market has reached its highest point in nearly eight years and extended year-to-date gains to nearly 25%.

The city-state's bourse peaked at 4,022 on Tuesday before pulling back to 3,986 on Thursday. It's trading at the highest levels since August 2015.

This year the Dubai Financial Market has outperformed the S&P 500, which is up nearly 20%, and the MSCI All Country World Index, a benchmark for global equities, which is up 16%.

Dubai, a global business hub home to 3.5 million people, weathered the pandemic while keeping its vital tourism industry afloat.



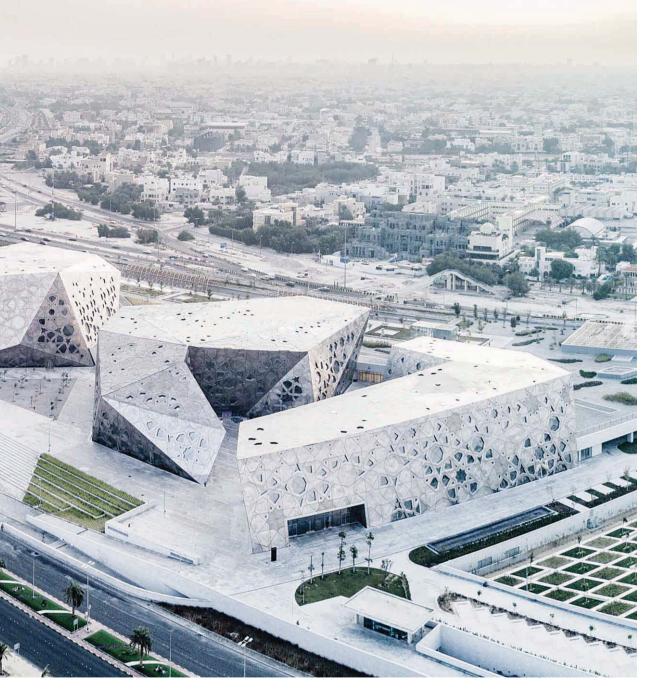
The jewel of Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad's crown AN INTERPLAY OF LIGHT AND SHADOW ... MUSIC, THEATER & FILM

something for everyone

Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre

editor's choice





Bv Andrea Lauria

Informally known as the Kuwait Opera House, The Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre (JACC) is located on the Gulf Road in the capital Kuwait City. JACC is the centerpiece of Kuwait's new national cultural district comprising a Theatre Centre, Music Centre, Conference Centre and National Library for Historical Documents.

All center's buildings are linked and accessed via a landscaped podium which houses the parking and a public park that includes a Musical & Dancing Fountain which shoots water up to 80m height, providing a mesmerizing experience to the public.

JACC was named the Best Cultural Design Project at the prestigious Index Architecture & Design Awards 2018 (IADAs), on 27 March at Dubai World Trade Centre, as part of the annual Index Exhibition. JACC is the largest cultural center and opera house in the Middle East and together with the Al Shaheed Park Museums and Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre, which I have already described in a previous article here on this paper, are part of the Kuwait National Cultural District (also known as the KNCD).

The KNCD is a multibillion-dollar development project in Kuwait that focuses on the arts and culture and is one of the largest cultural investments in the world today. The Kuwait National Cultural District is a member of the Global Cultural Districts Network. The JACC, named after Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, was inaugurated on October 31, 2016 under the auspices of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and with the Emir in attendance.

The Project was procured on a Design & Build basis and completed in 22 months. Dar SSH was appointed by Al Hani Company as the Design Con-sultant. The Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Centre (JACC), that is located on the western shores of the KNCD, showcases the performing arts and creates a world-class theatre quarter in a spacious parkland setting.

Together with the Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Cultural Centre, it forms Kuwait's new national cultural district. Owned by the Amiri Diwan the JACC is a multidisciplinary public space striving to entertain, educate and inspire the people of Kuwait. The center program is open for every generation and sector of society with huge range of events, in music, theatre, film, workshops and spoken word.

The JACC was designed by the Kuwaiti architec-tural studio SSH that has projected many interesting public buildings but all located in Middle East not in EU or other continents. All those buildings are only in the Middle East and the SSH studio is not an international Archi-star, like Jean Nouveau that we have mentioned many times and that has

Continued on Page 3

Weather

Expected weather for the next 24 hours: By Day: Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind to light vari-	light to moderate coastal areas no to light variable v of 08-42 km/h tered clouds will	orthwes wind with and so	terly wind th speeds me scat-
able wind with speeds of 08-42 km/h.	Station Ma Kuwait City	ax Exp 48	Min Rec 36
By Night: Hot to rather hot with	Kuwait Airport	49	29

Abdaly 48 Jahra 49 Salmiyah 45 46 Ahmadi Nuwaisib 49 Wafra 49

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



The jewel

An inside view of the centre.

Prayer Timings

Asr 15:29 Maghrib .. 18:47

Isha 20:16

Fajr 03:29 Sunrise .. 05:01

Zohr 11:54

designed Louvre A.D. and National Museum of Qatar, but the SSH studio project for the JACC is very interesting and I like it.

JACC Centre consists of four constructions, with revolutionary design, composed of geometric forms inspired by Islamic architecture. This decoration creates richly textured, sparkling outer skin of steel encased in titanium and glass, with some varying-density mashrabiya panels.

This both offers climatic protection and generates dramatic public spaces with interplay of light and shadow. Inner structures are concrete, regulating temperature through thermal mass. Over 8,000 square meters of decorative calligraphy integrated into interior cladding features the eponymous Sheikh's sayings promoting culture and development.

The aesthetic outside light effect, mostly made by ti-

he has become a published author of the book: "From the

Renaissance studiolo to the contemporary museum" which

is also his course manual. Lauria's field of research is the

phenomenon of hyper-museums with special attention to

the Arabian countries in comparison with the western world.

Prof. Andrea Lauria (right) is

an Italian museologist gradu-

ated from Rome's Academy

of fine arts. He also holds a History of Art degree from

University di Roma Tre

in Rome. Andrea Lauria

lectures a Masters course in museology at Rome's

Universities Tor Vergata and

American Temple University

(Rome Campus). In 2020



portant public spaces below that benefit from the interplay of light and shadow. Visitors can circulate via air-conditioned lifts and escalators.

The JACC interior is sophisticate as well, the foyers feature decorative calligraphy across the four pavilions, where more than 8,000 sq meters of calligraphy across the four paymons, where hore than 8,000 sq meters of calligraphy is designed into the cladding of the thea-tres, concert halls and libraries. Each Internal building is clad in a palette of stone, patterned glass, golden calligraphic forms and other luxurious interior finishes and textures.

Continued from Page 2

A major interior feature at the complex is a monolithic signature chandelier weighing 22 Tons with 220,000 LEDs which illuminates the entrance foyer of the Theatre building and presents itself in a tiered array of falling glass providing an arresting spectacle for visitors. All the venues inside these buildings employ state-of-theart technologies and software systems for their operation.

These venues hold capacities of around 5700 seats all together. The JACC mission is very ambitious it wants to be a platform for

CONGRATULATIONS

Amir congratulates Colombia president

KUWAIT CITY, July 20, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable to the President of Colombia Gustavo Petro, congratulating him on his

Country's national day. In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished him everlasting health and well-ness, and further progress and prosperity

to his country and people. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable to the President of Colombia Gustavo Petro, congratulating him on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown prince wished him everlasting health and further progress and prosperity for his people and country. His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh

Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable to the President of Colombia Gustavo Petro, congratulating him on his country's National Day.

CONDOLENCES

Kuwait Amir condoles with Algeria president

KUWAIT CITY, July 20, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ah-mad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Wednesday a cable of condolences to Algerian Presi-dent Abdelmadjid Tebboune over the sor-rought need accident occurred in Tamen

dent Abdelmadjid Tebboune over the sor-rowful road accident occurred in Taman-rasset Province, south of Algeria, which left dozens dead and wounded. In the cable, His Highness the Amir prayed to Allah the Almighty to bestow mercy upon the souls of the victims, wishing a rapid recovery to the injured. Earlier, at least 34 people died and 12 were injured when a bus and a car col-lided in Algerian city of Tamanrasset.

Crown Prince

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Wednesday a cable of condolences to Al-gerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune over the sorrowful road accident occurred in Transmussest Province south of Alacric in Tamanrasset Province, south of Algeria, which left dozens dead and wounded.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince prayed to Allah the Almighty to bestow mercy upon the souls of the victims, wishing a rapid recovery to the injured.

Prime Minister

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent Wednesday a cable of condo-lences to Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune over the sorrowful road accident occurred in Tamanrasset Province, south of Algeria.

3

28

32

34

37

30

28

tanium panels, is amazing. The buildings never look the same, they change due to the light, weather conditions and the daytime.

The JACC complex was designed to resemble jewels, reflecting rays of sun lights and I must say it works perfectly. The center's decoration is complex and as I already said the buildings have composite geometric forms, inspired by Islamic traditional decoration that creates a richly textured outer skin of each building, resulting very sophisticated and modern.

The buildings look like big monoliths, not squat but imposing, a space object from outer that has just landed there. The effect is very interesting and intriguing at the same time. The buildings sit like jewels within a larger public park, the buildings all together are a spectacular Landmarks with a strong impact on the territory, changing the coast site of the Kuwait city.

The JACC is not only a strong land-mark complex but at the same time is creating also im-

News In Brief

Schengen support vowed: Kuwaiti Assistant Deputy Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Sadeq Maarafi discussed bilateral ties, and regional and international issues of common interest, with the Spanish Director General for Morocco, Mediterranean and the Middle East at the Foreign Ministry, Alberto Ucelay.

The Kuwaiti embassy in Spain mentioned in a statement on Thursday that Kuwaiti Ambassador to the country Khalifah Al-Khurafi was in attendance of the meeting held at the foreign ministry's headquarters.



Ambassador Maarafi congratulated Spain on presiding over European Union until December, and the two discussed Spain's priorities as chair of the union.

working on easing visa procedures for Kuwaiti nationals wishing to attain the multi-visit entry visa.

Ucelay, on his part, affirmed

Sadeq Maarafi

(KUNA)

Spain's full support to relieving Kuwaitis from the Schengen visa and the serious steps Kuwait took in that regard, and took note of the sturdy relations between the two nations.

KFAS honors students: The Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) has honored outstanding Kuwaiti high school students.

In a press release Tuesday, head of KFAS Dr. Amina Farhan said the annual honoring ceremony comes upon directives of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, chairman of KFAS, in support of Kuwait's youth; the country's pillars of progress and renaissance.

Farhan stressed keenness of KFAS, through its varied programs and centers, on disseminating proper scientific culture and creating an appropriate environment to support science and knowledge, as well as research.

She noted the foundation's belief in youth's ability to achieve the country's foremost ambitions, as they are the foundation of sustainable development. (KUNA)

Residents threatened by criminal-minded singles

Bachelors flood Jahra area

bat the presence of bachelors among fami-

lies were greatly appreciated by the popular

our commitment to follow up the work ac-

cording to the period specified by the com-

owner and his investor, if any, as well as em-

ployees. A report will be issued regarding

the property owner's violation of bachelors

housing, after which a block will be put on the

property, and a letter will be sent to cut off the

electricity supply through the parties partici-

the concerned authorities will be according

He explained that the procedures taken by

1. The Ministry of Electricity and Water

- It checks on the extension of the network,

and then issues a report about the theft of

electric current, and the need for cutting off

(PAM) - It verifies the identity of the work-

ers, allocates a code, and then issues a viola-

(EPA) - It checks the external sewage con-

nections. In case of pollutants next to the

workers who violate the residency law, and

current will not be restored until the bach-

elors are evicted, and all building violations

and violations related to other parties are

removed. It will be returned only after the

owner takes a pledge that he will not repeat

in Jahra Governorate are concentrated in a

number of areas, which, according to the

density of bachelors, are - Waha, Oasr, Old

Jahra, Oyoun, and Qasayem Al-Othman.

It is worth highlighting that bachelors

4. The Ministry of Interior - It seizes

Al-Mutairi said, "In the end, the electrical

property, it issues fines of up to KD 5,000.

tion report against the labor companies. 3. The Environment Public Authority

2. The Public Authority for Manpower

pating in the bachelors' committee.'

to the following:-

power from the property.

refers them for deportation.

the violation again.

Al-Mutairi said, "We therefore confirm

The law will extend to both the property

committees in the governorate.

mittee, which is six months.

KUWAIT CITY, July 20: In a new chapter of the series of the intrusion of bachelors into private housing areas and homes, Jahra area is witnessing an unfamiliar case of bachelors threatening their neighbors after the latter reported them. Also, inspection teams to find bachelors in such areas are being harassed by the owners of rental properties to prevent their eviction, reports Al-Rai daily. Head of the Jahra Municipality's

Emergency Team and a member of the Bachelors Committee Eng. Thuwaini Al-Mutairi affirmed that the team received many complaints from neighbors who stated that they are being threatened by violators in the event that they inform the regulatory authorities, especially those who practice immoral acts.

In an interview, Al-Mutairi explained that Jahra Governorate is one of the large governorates in which expatriate and marginal workers accumulate. The phenomenon of buying houses and converting them into housing for bachelors has increased recently, and with it, the number of complaints has increased as well.

The team is currently dealing with complaints related to five areas affiliated with the governorate. During the field visits carried out by the supervisory team, multiple violations were detected, including conversion of private housing into offices for domestic workers or a den for practicing immoral acts, or conversion of private housing into an international liaison office or a central kitchen or a central food market.

The efforts exerted by the team to com-

educational and cultural exchange; moreover, it functions as an influential entertainment and culture powerhouse and productive space for the region.

The center offers a space for dialogue to share and showcase skills and knowledge, giving younger voices a forum in which to speak. The final JACC's goal is to assist in exploring Kuwait's past, cultivating its present and imagining potential futures. To become a leading social and creative hub for Kuwait and the region but opened to the international events as well.

The opening combined international and local music, ensuring a dynamic diversity that preserves Kuwaiti heritage while maintaining a global perspective. The inauguration ceremony was graced with a performance by renowned opera singer Andrea Bocelli, cementing the center's international standards of excellence and vision for outstanding cultural activity for years to come

Focus on voluntary report

NEW YORK, July 20, (KUNA): Secretary-General of the Kuwaiti Supreme Council for Planning and Development (SCPD) Dr. Khaled Mahdi reviewed Kuwait's second national voluntary report on its response to the Covid-19 pandemic and relevant international cooperation, mainly with World Health Organization (WHO).

Speaking to KUNA about the document late Wednesday, Mahdi said it included the national plan and its harmony with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), given that the national agenda comes first and SDGs are nothing but output of the policies of the development plan.

He added that the report also contained the under-review goals of clean water, electricity, sustainable cities, industry, innovation, governance and companies.

KTS reviews strategies, visions 'sixty years' on

KUWAIT CITY, July 20, (KUNA): Since the establishment of Kuwait Teachers Society (KTS), 60 years ago, it has been the beating heart of teachers and the education process, as well as the right arm of the Ministry of Education in Kuwait.

On the society's 60 year anniversary, Ku-wait News Agency (KUNA) has reviewed KTS visions and strategies to achieve its national goals, especially regarding providing better services and care teachers.

In this context, the society's Chairman Hamad Al-Holi said that the Kuwait Teachers Society went through different historical phases that directly influenced the education process in Kuwait, most notably the Iraqi invasion 1990 where education stopped for about a year and resumed after, adding that COVID-19 epidemic was another challenge that the education process faced.

He said that KTS, as an entity for those entrusted with implementing the educational process in the country, history records its national, educational and societal role in contributing to dealing with the repercussions of COVID-19 in different governmental authorities, such as supporting the National Assembly's decisions, ensuring the continuation of online education while taking in consideration the students? safety



He added that Kuwait is

LOCAL

Kuwait marks 62nd year of **bolstering joint Arab action**

'Kuwait's active role in organization stems from wise leadership vision'

By Mohammad Al-Mutairi

CAIRO, July 20, (KUNA): Kuwait's accession to the Arab League on July 20, 1961, constituted a milestone in its foreign policy, as it fully supported the joint Arab action since then.

Kuwait spared no effort in defending the interests of the Arab nation and their aspirations towards development, security and stability, as well as their political approach, which defends the basic rights of Arabs.

Kuwait's Ambassador to Egypt and its permanent representative to the Arab League, Ghanim Al-Ghanim affirmed that Kuwait will remain politically fair, which is a reflection of its Arab and Gulf affiliation and is respected by the international community.

Leadership vision

Al-Ghanim stated to KUNA on the 62nd anniversary of Kuwait's accession to the Arab League, Kuwait's active role in the organization stems from its wise leadership vision, adding that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah adopt a fair political approach that emphasize Kuwait's Arab and Gulf affiliation.

He also recalled Kuwait's diplomatic role by the efforts made by His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in supporting the joint Arab action, adding that His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah continues these efforts.

He added that Kuwait has contributed a major role in resolving many Arab differences and problems that have passed through the Arab countries, including the Yemeni crisis, the Lebanese crisis and civil war.

He

since

stressed that

wait's acces-

sion to the

Arab League,

it played a pi-

oneering role

in supporting

also

Ku-

pillar.



the Palestinian cause, Al-Ghanim assisting the

Palestinian people and adopting decisions that support this cause. He said that Kuwait was active in all the meetings of the Arab League's councils and organizations, as well to its developmental and social role in the Arab countries, pointing to its hosting the first development summit in 2009. He added that Kuwait hosted and participated in many development conferences to help the Arab countries, whether in Syria, Iraq,

Sudan or Somalia, through its economic and development funds in the Arab countries.

Cooperation

Kuwait did not hesitate to extend cooperation to enhance unity in the reconstruction of Iraq, it also provided assistance to Arab countries, and contributed whether it was economic development projects, or loans through its eco-

nomic and development funds. Kuwait hosted the first Arab economic, development and social sum-

mit in 2009, which sets a new plan that he added. Al-Thawadi

high officials, in separate remarks to KUNA, touted Kuwait's pivotal regional role and dubbed its presence in

> Assistant Secretary of General Arab League Ambassador Saeed Abu Ali spoke of Kuwait's astuteness in representing Arab nations Abu Ali in international events.

The Ambassador recalled Kuwait's six-decade long journey since joining the Arab bloc in 1961, and its cultural, humanitarian, economic and developmental impact.

He further commended its shrewdness in navigating arabarab conflicts and its commitment to Arab issues.

As for Kuwait's stance from Arabs' topmost issue, the Pales-

tinian case. Abu Ali head of Palestine and occupied Arab Lands division, commented that it remains a priority to Kuwaiti leadership and people, saying that their support has been essential to the empowerment of Palestinian people. As for Arab League Assistant

Secretary General for Arab Affairs and National Security, Ambassador Khalil Al-Thawadi, he hailed Kuwait's pioneering role in bolstering joint Arab work. When speaking to KUNA, Al-

Thawadi recounted late Kuwait Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah role as foreign minister and his keenness on Arab consensus in league ministerial meetings.

Kuwait was the first country to host Arab economic developmental summit in 2009, expounded Al-Thawadi, called for by the late Amir stemming from his intent on bolstering economic, social and developmental Arab cooperation.

Ambassador Al-Thawadi also noted Kuwait's humanitarian role and efforts in boosting unity, integration and peaceful resolution of conflicts, saying that Kuwait extends a helping hand to both Arab and African nations.

The bloc's Assistant General Secretary for International Political Affairs, Ambassador Khalid Minzlawi, stated that Kuwait's Arab stances are a true testament to nation's desire for unity and solidarity, and underscored its constructive role in strengthening joint Arab work.

The state of Kuwait had joined the League of Arab states after having announced its independence in 1961.



Continued from Page 1

At the end, His Highness the Crown Prince asked Allah Almighty to protect all of the participants homelands and provide them with security, safety, development and prosperity, and to grant them success.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah returned to the homeland this evening from Saudi Arabia after leading Kuwait delegation to the 18th consultative meeting of the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Central Asian countries (5C) in Jeddah on Wednesday.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to thank him for the warm hospitality offered to him and Kuwait delegation during their participation in the 18th GCC-Central Asia consultative meeting and the GCC-Central Asia Summit.

The meetings, hosted in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, gathered leaders of the six GCC countries and five Central Asian countries.

His Highness the Crown Prince appreciated, in his cable, the great efforts made by the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to host the delegations to the meetings and the outstanding role of the kingdom on the regional and international arenas.

He hailed the outcomes of the meetings which will have positive impacts on the development of the partnership between the countries of both regions.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished the Saudi King everlasting wellbeing and the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia more progress and prosperity. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh

Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to thank him for the warm hospitality offered to him and Kuwait delegation during their participation in the 18th GCC-Central Asia consultative meeting and the GCC-Central Asia Summit.

Historical

The warm hospitality reflected the depth of the historical relationship between the State of Kuwait and the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, His Highness the Crown Prince noted.

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His Highness the Crown Prince wished the Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman everlasting wellbeing, expressing hope for more progress and prosperity for the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Arab Parliament said Thursday that the GCC-Central Asia Summit, recently held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, was deemed "a significant opportunity" to broaden cooperation and notch up further accomplish-

In a press release, the parliament's Speaker Adel Al-Asoumi commended the first-ofits-kind summit between the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Central Asia, which are rich in such natural resources as oil and gas, something that makes bilateral deals and partnerships beneficial to all countries of the region.

He also acclaimed the GCC leaders' farobtedness and fervent en joint blueprints for working with such blocs, citing the strategic dialogue and cooperation plan recently adopted by both sides' foreign ministers in Riyadh for 2023-2027. The plan is based on people-to-people communication and effective partnerships between the business sectors of the GCC and Central Asia countries, the top Arab lawmaker elaborated. Al-Asoumi spoke highly of the constructive efforts and intensive diplomatic mobility of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, mainly the recent Jeddah Summit, in the context of efforts aiming at promoting cooperation and integration with Central Asia. However, he underlined that it is essential to forge more partnerships with major world blocs amidst successive crises pertinent to food and energy, which are predicted to aggravate due to Russia's failure to extend the Black Sea grain deal. Leaders of the six GCC member states and the five Central Asian countries (C5) adopted a joint statement at the conclusion of the GCC-Central Asia Summit on Wednesday, affirming the importance of strengthening cooperation in various areas to promote regional stability. The meeting, chaired by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, gathered the leaders of the GCC and Central Asian countries, and Secretary-General of the GCC Jassem Mohammad Al-Budaiwi. The leaders congratulated Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, on the success of the Hajj season for the year 1444H, and the high level it achieved in serving the pilgrims and providing them with the necessary care, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported, citing the joint statement. "Based on common values, interests, and deep historical ties between the GCC countries and Central Asian countries, the leaders stressed the importance of strengthening political and strategic relations between the two sides at the collective and bilateral levels, and continuing political coordination in order to achieve regional and international security and stability, face challenges, and work to ensure the flexibility of supply chains, transportation and communication, food security, energy security, and water security, pushing for building cooperation relations in developing green and renewable energy sources and technologies, creating business opportunities, supporting investment opportunities, and increasing trade exchange "The leaders praised the cultural diversity, openness and rich history of the countries of the Cooperation Council and Central Asia, and they stressed that tolerance and peaceful coexistence are among the most important values and principles for relations between nations and societies. "In this regard, the leaders welcomed the adoption of (the UN) Security Council Resolution 2686, by which the Council recognised that hate speech, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, gender discrimination and acts of extremism can contribute to the outbreak, escalation and recurrence of conflicts," the statement reads.

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"They expressed concern about the growing rhetoric of racism and Islamophobia, and acts of violence against Muslim minorities and Islamic symbols.

"The leaders praised the results and goals of the Conference of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, which has been held in Kazakhstan since 2003 in order to discuss global guidelines for achieving respect and tolerance among races and religions.

"The leaders praised the results of the Bahrain Dialogue Forum "East and West for Human Coexistence", which was held in 2022 in the Kingdom of Bahrain, under the patronage of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, in cooperation with the Sheikh of Al Azhar and Pope of the Vatican.

"The leaders stressed the importance of strengthening the strategic and political dialogue between the countries of the Cooperation Council and Central Asia, and strengthening this partnership towards new horizons in various fields, including political and security dialogue, economic and investment cooperation, enhancing communication between peoples, and exchanging best practices and expertise in all fields such as education, culture, youth affairs, tourism, media and sports, in accordance with the agreed joint action plan for the period 2023-2027.

"The leaders commended the outcomes of the joint ministerial meeting of the strategic dialogue between the GCC and Central Asian countries, which was held on September 7, 2022, and the technical meetings held between officials and specialists from both sides in the fields of economic cooperation, trade, investment, health, culture, youth and sports.

"The leaders also urged the concerned authorities to take the necessary measures for the immediate implementation of the joint action plan, at the bilateral and multilateral levels, to enhance joint cooperation in various fields.

"In the economic field, the leaders stressed the importance of continuing efforts to enhance trade and economic cooperation and encourage joint investment by strengthening relations between financial and economic institutions and business sectors on both sides to explore areas of cooperation and available opportunities and provide an attractive climate for business, trade, joint investments and economic cooperation, in order to achieve mutual benefit.

"The leaders also called for achieving integration between available opportunities and developing investment fields, discussing development priorities and exchanging experiences in light of the joint action plan.

The leaders affirmed their support for the candidacy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to host Expo 2030 in Riyadh, to exert all efforts to support this nomination, stressing the importance of organising international and regional exhibitions and active participation in them to stimulate economic and cultural exchanges between Central Asia and the GCC region.

"The leaders emphasised the importance of continuing cooperation between the Cooperation Council and Central Asia in international forums and organisations, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, to confront the economic challenges facing the world.

On climate change, the joint statement said, "The leaders praised the pioneering role played by the two sides in confronting the climate change phenomenon and renewed their welcome and support to the United Arab Emirates for hosting the COP28 conference to support international efforts in this regard.'

"As developing countries, the leaders emphasised the principles and provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, especially fairness and the principle of shared responsibilities, taking into account different national circumstances and priorities, and taking into account in the implementation of the two agreements the negative social and economic impacts resulting from response measures to climate change, especially those affecting developing countries that are the most susceptible to these effects.









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Agreements

"COP28 will provide an opportunity to assess these issues and progress in collective efforts to implement these international agreements," according to the statement.

"The leaders stressed the importance of strengthening cooperation in the field of environment and climate change, protecting glaciers and water resources, and attracting more investments to the main sectors of the economies of Central Asian countries to adapt to climate change through integration and cooperation on the risks and consequences of natural disasters between the two sides.

"The leaders stressed the importance of developing connected transportation routes between the two regions, building strong logistical and commercial networks, and developing effective systems that contribute to the exchange of products.

"The leaders agreed to enhance cooperation in the fields of higher education, scientific research and vocational training, encourage cooperation between universities and scientific research centres on both sides, and provide educational opportunities in technical universities, wherever possible, for students from the GCC and Central Asian countries, as well as exchange of experience and expertise through communication between experts and education specialists.

"The leaders expressed their aspirations to enhance cooperation in the health field, exchange experiences among specialised institutions in various health fields, and support global initiatives to address current and future epidemics, health risks, and challenges

"In this context, the leaders highlighted Kazakhstan's initiative to create a special multilateral body in the United Nations - the International Agency for Biosafety - which was announced at the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

"The Agency is intended to contribute to the prevention of biological threats and the exchange of data on dangerous diseases.

"In the field of cultural and humanitarian cooperation, including the media and social fields, the leaders stressed the importance of protecting the common cultural heritage between the two sides, elevating joint cultural and media cooperation, encouraging cultural dialogue between the two sides, and discussing opportunities to develop cooperation in all fields to serve joint interests.

"The leaders emphasised the importance of strengthening cooperation in the field of youth and sports, exchanging experiences, and coordinating electoral positions in regional, continental, and international sports federations. They noted that Qatar will host the 2023 AFC Asian Cup matches.

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LOCAL

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A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Abusers arrows can never pierce castle of Kuwaiti-Saudi relations'

"THE Saudi-Kuwaiti relations are as old as history and whoever thinks that anyone accepts insulting or harming the ruling family or any individual in both countries is mistaken," columnist **Riyad Abdullah Al Mulla** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"We were surprised by the behavior of one of the tweeters who insulted the Saudi Minister of Interior, Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Nayef Al Saud, and this behavior has nothing to do with Kuwaitis.

"It only represents the person who offended,

and the Kuwaiti government has taken the necessary legal measures to deter such tweets. Those who exceed the limits must know his worth and value.

"The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the land of the Two Holy Mosques, and its rulers defended the land of Kuwait and contributed to its liberation from the Iraqi invasion.

Riyad Al-Mulla

"Kuwaitis and Saudis are united by religion, genealogy, tribe and intermarriage, as they are an extension of one geography since ancient times.

"As for the Minister of Interior, Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Nayef Al Saud, it suffices him to be proud for preserving Saudi Arabia's security and internal stability, despite the conspiracies being hatched to undermine it, given that it is the cradle of Islam and the message of tolerance and brotherhood.

"It is no secret that Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud is the head of the Supreme Hajj Committee, and the whole world witnessed a remarkable success for the Hajj in 2023.

"He also previously held several advisory posi-tions, beginning with the Royal Court, then the Office of the Minister of Defense until he became an advisor to the former Minister of Interior, Prince Mohammad bin Nayef Al Saud.

"Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are too great for their close and fraternal relationship to be undermined by a tweet. No one accepts or approves of insulting any Saudi, let alone a prince from the ruling family and a minister of interior.

"Let the law take its course, and refer this case to the competent authorities so that this abuser receives his just punishment.

"Some understand that freedom is to undermine the dignity of others and insult them, and they think that everything is permissible to talk about through the communication means even if it leads to soiling the relations and destabilization of countries.

"Some people, unfortunately, understand democracy in a wrong way, and think everything is permissible, no matter what they say or do, and this is a wrong and deficient understanding, so does this tweeter accept that someone insults his dignity or offends his person, or are things treated with double standards, and the homeland, its security and stability have no value in these accounts.

"We will not accept fishing in murky waters, and this act of harassment and sedition between the two countries.

"As long as the Saudi-Kuwaiti relations are full

occurs (A) and (E) due to eating or drinking contaminated water.

"As for viral hepatitis B, C and D, it occurs as a result of contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person. Hepatitis B and C are the most worrisome and cause about 8,000 new infections every day and often go undetected.

"It is estimated that around 350 million people worldwide suffer from chronic viral hepatitis infection, and more than one million cases of hepatitisrelated die every year, with a new chronic infection every ten seconds, and for this reason, liver health is fundamental to human health.

"Many deaths could be prevented because there are effective hepatitis B vaccines and treatments and a cure for hepatitis C.

"Globally, there are a large number of people with hepatitis, who have not been diagnosed or treated, and most people discover that they have hepatitis B or C after many years of silent infection and do not know the infection until after the seriousness of the disease or cancer.

"In order to eliminate hepatitis and achieve the WHO goals by 2030, there must be a guarantee of primary care services with hepatitis B vaccination, treatment for all pregnant women who have it, vaccination for their children, and hepatitis C prevention by screening blood donor and ensuring safe injection practices.

"A few months ago, the Council of Ministers and Civil Service Commission (CSC) demanded to stop exceptions for filling up supervisory positions in some government sectors," columnist Khalid Al-Arrafa wrote for Al-Anba daily.

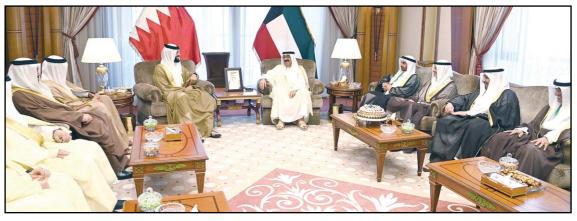
"The demands mentioned at the time include the empowerment of employees by putting them in supervisory positions based on the recommendation of this or that official, without regard for the law stipulating special conditions for occupying such positions.

"There were demands and calls for officials to abide by the law and to give everyone his right, away from parachute appointments that we witness from time to time.

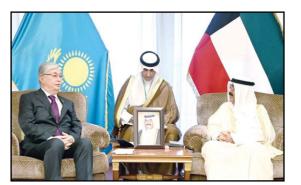
"Administrative reform will not be achieved due to these exceptions and abuses that are unfortunately issued with the blessing of the CSC to some employees through nepotism, without the fulfillment of the conditions for filling up positions like the manager, observer or department head.

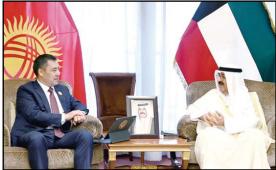
"In its first meeting after the formation of the new government, the CSC responded to these demands and issued the 'expected' decision to stop the exception from conditions for promotion to fill up supervisory positions to ensure justice for all.

"After this reform decision, we hope His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to hold accountable everyone who transgressed the law – whether a minister or an official. He should cancel all decisions that brought benefits to some people under this exception, which destroyed the hopes and ambitions of many qualified people in their field of work."



HH the Amir's Representative receives Bahrain's King Rep in Jeddah.





HH Amir's Rep receives Kazakhstan's president.

HH Amir's Rep receives Kyrgyzstan's president.

HH receives Kazakhstani, Kyrgyzstani leaders in Jeddah

HH the Amir's Rep receives Bahrain's King Rep

JEDDAH, July 20, (KUNA): The Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Wednesday Bahrain King Hamad bin Issa Al-Khalifa's Representative Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al-Khalifa.

During the meeting, His Highness the Crown Prince conveyed greetings on behalf of His Highness the Amir to Bahraini King and to the Bahraini leadership.

The meeting was also attended by Deputy Prime Minister, Oil Minister and Acting Finance Minister Dr. Saad Al-Barrak, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Office Director Jamal Al-Theyab, His Highness the Crown Prince Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Mazen Al-Issa, Minister of Foreign Affairs Assistant for GCC Affairs Ambassador Salem Al-Zamanan, and Kuwait Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Sheikh Sabah Nasser Al-Sabah.

The Representative of His Highness the Amir headed the Kuwaiti delegation in the 18th GCC consultative summit and the meeting between GCC states and Central Asian countries, in Jeddah.

Meanwhile, the Rep. of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad received the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

During the meeting, HH the Crown Prince conveyed greetings on behalf of His Highness the Amir to Kazakhstan leadership.

KUNA photos

The meeting also highlighted bilateral relations and ways to bolster them in various areas.

The two sides also delved into the latest development in the region and international arena.

Also, the HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad received the President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Japarov.

During the meeting, HH the Crown Prince conveyed greetings on behalf of His Highness the Amir to the Kyrgyzstani leadership, discussed bilateral ties, and latest regional and international developments.

2 Africans trying to pump fake dollars in local market nabbed

Prison inmate dies on way to hospital

KUWAIT CITY, July 20: Two Africans who attempted to pump counterfeit dollars into the local market have been arrested and handed over the

KGAC denies confiscation of food items

Firemen rescue residents of house

KUWAIT CITY, July 20: The Public Relations and Media Department of the Direc- the issue when a video clip showing the torate-General of Fire Department (DGFD) confiscation of a huge quantity of food

KGAC released its official statement on

of affection, respect and brotherhood, and no matter what happens, the arrows of the abusers will not penetrate the castle of relations, and Kuwait and the Kingdom are greater than heedless negligence, ignorance, and the abuse of a sharp tongue, and I remind everyone that these means of communication are not intersection and convergence.'

Also:

"The world celebrates World Hepatitis Day on July 28 of each year to raise awareness of hepatitis, strengthen national and international efforts to combat hepatitis, and encourage the need for a global response to combat this disease," columnist Dr. Hind **Al-Shumer** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"This day was chosen because it coincides with the birthday of Dr. Baruch Samuel Blumberg, the Nobel Prize winner in medicine, who is credited with discovering the hepatitis B virus and developing a test for its diagnosis and an anti-vaccine.

The World Health Organization has defined the slogan for this day as "one life, one liver", as hepatitis C can destroy life and the liver, especially since the liver silently performs more than 500 vital functions every day to keep a person alive, but infection with viral hepatitis also remains silent. Symptoms do not appear until the disease has progressed.

"Among the most important gaps that should be filled in order to achieve the goals of eliminating the disease in the world by 2030 is the level of coverage of diagnostic testing and treatment, as work must be done to raise that coverage for early diagnosis and treatment of cases.

"Viruses are the most common cause of hepatitis in the world, but other infections, toxic substances such as alcohol, some medications, and autoimmune diseases can be the cause of hepatitis.

"Viral hepatitis is the seventh leading cause of death worldwide, and it is the only infectious disease in which deaths are increasing.

"There are 5 main viruses for viral hepatitis, namely: (A, B, C, D, E), and viral hepatitis usually

"The most important feature that distinguishes a member of the current National Assembly is not his role and power in legislation and oversight, but his ability to market bills!" columnist Dr Hamad Al-Jadaei wrote for Al-Rai daily.

"Yes... His ability to adopt a draft law and market it to his fellow parliamentarians, the government and citizens. After the success of the marketing process, buying queues multiply, propaganda spreads and we say: 'Congratulations on passing the law'.

"Another belief which is not new to me is that Assembly member Dr Abdulaziz Al-Saqabi is one of the smartest representatives of the nation who is able to market draft laws, mobilize supporters for them, and communicate information easily to everyone, due to his skill in persuasion and presenting issues in a full, undiminished and smooth manner.

"Therefore, we saw how the passage of the Housing Cities Law succeeded with distinction and with honors as it obtained 62 votes although the marketing period was short.

'I know that the Assembly did not pluck a star from the sky. It did not invent the wheel, and that the Housing Cities Law is not the only solution to the delay in development and the decline of the State at all levels. It seems that the beginning is promising in light of the agreement to find development solutions.

"The most important aspect is the ability of some lawmakers to market laws, and involve public oversight in the process of marketing and monitoring. This is a point that counts for the current Assembly.

"Finally, we hope that the implementation of the Housing Cities Law will begin soon, and that it will not be a dead letter. We also hope that the lawmakers will stick to monitoring the implementation of this law, because it guarantees the immortalization of the current Assembly in the history of the nation's assemblies, and whoever adopts an important and beneficial law for Kuwait.'

- Compiled by Mai Elsoukary

'Pay outstanding GTD dues before leaving Kuwait'

KUWAIT CITY, July 20: The General Traffic Department said since the issuance of the decision by the Ministry of Interior not to allow Gulf-registered vehicles to leave the country without paying traffic fines, the GTD is said to have collected nearly 38 thousand dinars since the implementation of the decision two weeks ago, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The daily added, 21 GCC citizens were barred from leaving the country and told to check with the Department of Violations Investigation of the General Traffic Department and that until outstanding fines imposed against them are paid, they are not allowed to leave the country with their vehicles.

The sources said that the deci-

sion to collect traffic violations issued by the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled, was implemented two weeks ago under the supervision of the Director-General of the General Traffic Department, Major General Youssef Al-Khada following the establishment of the automatic link between the General Administration of Information Systems and the General Administration of Traffic of the Ministry of Interior and the General Administration of Customs.

The daily added, the customs officials at the border crossings do not allow any vehicle to leave except after paying the fines, pointing out that this decision is one of the most important traffic decisions issued dur-

ing the recent period after the State Treasury, had earlier dropped fines because of the failure to collect them from vehicles which had already left the country.

The sources added Major General Al-Khadda has ordered the establishment of sections to collect traffic fines at the border crossing points around the clock.

On the other hand, the security and traffic campaigns carried out by the traffic departments in the six governorates during the past week resulted in issuing 35,000 traffic violations, arresting 46 reckless motorists, referring 64 vehicles and 54 motorcycles to the ministry garage, and referring 31 juveniles to the Juvenile Prosecution, after they were caught driving vehicles without driving licenses.

Criminal Investigation Department, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily added, the suspects were arrested after receiving a tip-off from a police agent and the suspects were subsequently picked up from their apartment in Hawalli.

The daily added, armed with a search and arrest warrant issued by the Public Prosecution the apartment was raided and the suspects were caught red-handed in possession of a quantity of counterfeit dollars, equipment and special dyes used in counterfeiting currency.

Prisoner dies: A security

source said an unidentified prisoner who was rushed to the Farwaniya Hospital after he suddenly fell ill, reportedly died on the way, reports Al-Rai daily.

The security source said the hospital investigator has ordered the referral of the corpse to the forensic medicine department to find out the causes of death.

Drugs found on man: An unidentified person was taken by an ambulance to the Jahra Hospital by paramedics after he was found fast asleep inside his car in a suburb of Al-Qasr, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily added, police patrols and paramedics rushed to the spot after several people called the Operations Department of the Ministry of Interior in the belief the man had passed away because several attempts had failed to wake him up.

The securitymen then inspected the vehicle and found seven sachets of hashish, one cigarette filled with hashigh powder, 10 small sachets of chemicals, two sachets (big and small) of marijuana, rose paper, tools for use, a sensitive scale, empty bags, and a sum of money.

Police are waiting for the man to regain consciousness to interrogate him and hand him over to the concerned authorities.

stated that after a report was received by the Central Operations Department, Wednesday evening, that a fire broke out in a house in Waha and that some people were trapped inside, firefighting teams from the Jahra and Jahra Al-Harfi centers rushed to the house and put out the fire, reports Al-Rai daily.

The firemen also rescued the people who were trapped inside the house and handed them over to the emergency medical personnel.

KGAC denies report: Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC) has vehemently denied the alleged confiscation of large quantity of food supplies at an undisclosed border checkpoint recently, reports Al-Rai daily.

products went viral on various social media platforms. It clarified that there were several confiscation operations, not just one as hinted in the viral video. It also affirmed that all the confiscated items were handed over to the Ministry of Commerce, which will then take the necessary measures.

56K citations issued: The operations and traffic sector of the General Traffic Department from July 8 to July 14, issued more than 56,000 traffic violations and arrested 78 motorists for committing serious traffic offenses and juveniles for driving without license, 38 for possessing and abusing narcotics, and impounded about 150 vehicles and motorcycles for various reasons, reports Al-Anba daily.



Management and Staff of **AQ Global & Al Qabandi United Company**

> extend their heartfelt condolences to

Mathew Thomas

(CEO of Al Qabandi United Company) on the sad demise of his father



A C Thomas (17/8/1934 - 19/7/2023)

Condolences also extended to his wife Litty Mathew and brother Cherian Thomas

Funeral on Saturday 22nd July at Pune, India

May his soul Rest in Peace

Kuwait's June trade surplus with Japan down 33.4 Pct

Kuwait's trade surplus with Ja-pan narrowed 33.4 percent from a year earlier to JPY 67.9 billion (ÚSD 487 million) in June, down for the third consecutive month due to weak exports, government data showed on Thursday. But Kuwait stayed in black ink with Japan for 15 years and five months, as exports offset imports in value, the Finance Ministry said in a preliminary report. Overall Kuwaiti exports to the world's third-biggest economy plunged 22.7 percent year-on-year to JPY 93.0 billion (USD 667 million), down for the second straight month. Imports from Japan jumped 36.4 per-cent to JPY 25.1 billion (USD 180 million), up for the 14th month in a row. Middle East's trade surplus

with Japan narrowed 47.8 per-cent to JPY 606.9 billion (USD 4.4 billion) last month, with Ja-

Market Movements 20-07-2023

			Change	Closing pts					Change	Closing pts	
PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100	+0.75	45,426.58		UAE	-	DFM	-0.04	3,986.36	
PHILIPPINES	-	PSEi	+1.09	6,613.50		JAPAN	-	Nikkei	-1.23	32,490.52	
SAUDI	-	Tadawul	+0.03	11,755.94	V	EGYPT	-	EGX 30	-0.17	17,578.67	

pan-bound exports from the re-gion sliding 35.4 percent from a year earlier. Crude oil, refined products, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and other natural resources, which accounted for 94.7 percent of the region's total exports to Japan, plunged 35.5 percent. The re-

gion's overall imports from Japan jumped 30.0 percent on demand for automobiles and machinery. (KUNA)

Nokia profits fall as clients shun investments

Wireless and fixed-network equipment maker Nokia on fixed-network Thursday reported a fall in second quarter profit as clients especially in North America postponed investments due to a

slowdown in economic growth and rising financing costs. The Espoo, Finland-based company reported net profit of 414 million euros (\$464 million) for the April-June period, down 29% from 585 million euros a year earlier. Net income attributable to shareholders was 415 million euros, down from 582 million euros the previous year.

Nokia's sales were down 3% at 5.7 billion euros. Among other network prod-ucts, Nokia is one of the world's

main suppliers of 5G, the latest generation of broadband technology, along with Sweden's Ericsson, China's Huawei and

South Korea's Samsung. "Earlier in the year I high-lighted that we were starting to

see signs of macroeconomic challenges along with inventory digestion impacting customer spending and this has intensi-fied through the second quarter," CEO Pekka Lundmark said in a statement, pointing particularly to "significant decline in major North American operators' investments." (AP)

Business

Kuwait Airways partners Plusgrade to give passengers access to Cabin upgrades and more ways to acquire Oasis Club Miles

MONTREAL, July 20, (PR Newswire): Plusgrade, the leading provider of ancillary revenue solutions for the global travel industry, announces a multi-year partnership with Kuwait Airways, a distinguished national carrier in the Middle East and Africa (MEA), giving passengers access to the "Just Upgrade" service. Points, Plusgrade's loyalty business unit, will also power benefits for Oasis Club loyalty program members offering more choice and convenience in how miles balances are boosted to enhance their travel experience.

Through this partnership, Kuwait Airways passengers have access to the "Just Upgrade" service which allows passengers to enjoy an upgraded cabin experience by moving from Economy Class to Business Class, or from Business Class to Royal and First Class. Passengers can gain access to premium luxury services like priority check-in, boarding and lounge access, specially curated dining from global cuisines, by bidding on an upgrade up to twentyfour hours before their flight.

"We know that choice and great experiences matter to travelers. That's why we're incredibly proud to partner with Kuwait Airways and deliver leading solu-tions that make for a best-in-class passenger experience," said Ken Harris, Founder and CEO of Plusgrade. "By offering this expanded suite of tools powered by Plusgrade, Kuwait Airways is creating an enhanced end-to-end journey for their customers - starting at booking and continuing through to arrival at their destination. We are thrilled to help enhance this journey.

Kuwait Airways also benefits from a seamless integration with Points, Plusgrade's loyalty business unit, offering Oasis Club members the ability to buy miles. Iembers will now have the opportunity to make an immediate lump-sum purchase to boost their balance and reach reward goals sooner, while giving Kuwait Airways the ability to increase their ancillary revenue and member engagement.

"Uncompromising customer experience is what distinguishes Kuwait Airways and our passengers have come to trust us to deliver seamless travel experiences,' says Meshal Al Mutairi, Director Customer Services at Kuwait Airways. "We pay great attention to the comfort and needs of our valued customers and aim to offer the best services to make the journey enjoyable. We are pleased to expand our loyalty program offerings to give Oasis Club members even more ways to acquire their miles that will create memorable travel experiences.

Kuwait Airways passengers can learn more about "Just Upgrade" here, and Oa-

sis Club Members can buy miles here (log-in required).

Kuwait Airways Company (KAC), the national carrier of State of Kuwait is an entity incorporated and existing under the laws of State of Kuwait. Set up in 1954, KAC has a rich past and has been for a long time, a preferred carrier for travel out of the region operating from Kuwait International Airport. Currently KAC operates flights to 40+ routes across the Middle East, Indian Sub-Continent, South Asia, Africa, Europe, UK and the USA. Kuwait Airways has been awarded as the 'World's Most Improved Airline' for 2023 according to global aviation rating company 'Skytrax'

Plusgrade powers the global travel industry with its portfolio of leading ancillary revenue solutions. Over 200 airline, hospitality, cruise, passenger rail, and financial services companies trust Plusgrade to create new, meaningful revenue streams through incredible customer experiences. As an ancillary revenue powerhouse, Plusgrade has generated billions of dollars in new revenue opportunities across its platform for its partners, while creating enhanced travel experiences for millions of their passengers and guests. Plusgrade was founded in 2009 with headquarters in Montreal and has offices around the world.

Issuance first part of \$3b eyed

Masdar launches 1st US\$750 million 10-year 'Green Bond'

ABU DHABI, UAE, July 20, (PR Newswire): Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company PJSC - Masdar announced the successful completion of its first green bond issuance for US\$750 million 10-year senior unsecured Notes today. There was exceptionally strong appetite from regional and international investors with the orderbook peaking at US\$ 4.2bn, i.e. oversubscription of 5.6x. Pricing tightened 35bps between launch and final terms, with a final landing spread of 115bps over US Treasuries and a coupon of 4.875%. Allocation was finalized with a split of 87.5% to international investors and 12.5% to MENA investors.

The debut green bond demonstrates investor confidence in the financial strength of Masdar, which has credit ratings of A2 (Moody's) and A+ (Fitch), and its strong sustainability credentials. In line with Masdar's Green Finance Framework, net proceeds from this bond and future offerings will be used to invest exclusively in 'dark green' renewable energy projects, many of which will be in developing economies and climate-vulnerable countries that have a critical need for investment. This bond is the first part of a program to raise up to US\$3 billion of bonds to meet Masdar's equity funding commitments on new renewable energy projects at home and overseas, as it seeks to grow its global portfolio to 100GW of capacity by 2030. Proceeds from all bond offerings under the program will be deployed towards the greenest projects in the renewables sector, namely solar, wind, renewable power transmission and distribution infrastructure, and battery storage assets, and strict ESG criteria will apply to restrict the eligibility of projects. HE Dr Sultan Al Jaber, UAE Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, Chairman of Masdar and COP28 President-Designate, said, "It is vital to make finance more available, accessible and affordable for developing economies if we have any chance of meeting climate goals to supercharge sustainable development. Ahead of the UAE hosting the UN climate change conference, COP28, we must champion initiatives that advance climate finance and decarbonization. Today, the successful issuance of Masdar green bonds will support these twin aims, by helping to provide funding towards renewable energy projects where they are needed most. Mohamed Jameel Al Ramahi, Masdar's Chief Executive Officer. said, "The success of this debut green bond issuance is testament to the pioneering spirit of all the people who have worked incredibly hard over the last 17 years to grow Masdar into one of the world's leading renewable energy companies. We are thankful for the trust that the financial community has placed in us and we look forward to the involvement of many top class investors in our journey towards delivering renewable energy and accelerating the net-zero transi-

Financial Officer, commented, "The proceeds from our inaugural bond offering will be deployed in developing new renewable energy projects around the world. These projects will make a major contribution towards mitigating climate change, but they will also make a real difference to the local communities they serve, and that makes us incredibly proud. We remain committed to maintaining a prudent approach to funding our ambitious growth plans, which includes maintaining our investment grade credit ratings from Fitch and Moody's.'

The bond was rated A2 by Moody's and A+ by Fitch, in line

tion around the globe."

Niall Hannigan, Masdar's Chief

with the corporate credit ratings of the company, and was priced at a coupon rate of 4.875% with maturity on 25 July 2033. The issuance was arranged and offered through a syndicate of joint lead managers and bookrunners comprising of BNP Paribas, Citi, First Abu Dhabi Bank, HSBC, SMBC Nikko, Société Générale and Standard Chartered. Masdar's Green Finance Framework, established in February 2023, was updated in May 2023 to reflect changes to the Green Loan Principles. Moody's has issued a Second Party Opinion on the Green Finance Framework. Established in 2006, Masdar is the UAE's clean energy powerhouse. It is active in over 40 countries and has invested in a portfolio of renewable energy projects with a combined capacity of around 20GW. Masdar aims to grow this to at least 100GW by 2030. The company is also targeting green hydrogen production of 1 million tonnes per annum by the same year. Contacts: For more information please visit: http://www.masdar.ae and connect: facebook.com/masdar. ae and twitter.com/masdar About Masdar Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (Masdar) is the UAE's clean energy champion and one of the largest companies of its kind in the world, advancing the development and deployment of renewable energy and green hydrogen technologies to address global sustainability challenges. Established in 2006, Masdar is today active in over 40 countries, helping them to achieve their clean energy objectives and advance sustainable development. Masdar is jointly owned by Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), Mubadala Investment Company (Mubadala), and Abu Dhabi National Energy Company (TAQA), and under this ownership the company is targeting a renewable energy portfolio capacity of at least 100 gigawatts (GW) by 2030 and an annual green hydrogen production capacity of up to 1 million tonnes by the same year.





Hana Bank

A currency trader watches monitors at the foreign exchange dealing room of the KEB Hana Bank headquarters in Seoul, South Korea, Thursday, July 20, 2023. Asian shares were mixed Thursday after Japan reported weaker than expected trade data for June, with imports falling nearly 13% from a year earlier. (AP)

Asian shares mixed as Japan reports weaker than expected trade data

NEW YORK, July 20, (AP): Stocks were slipping Thursday following a mixed set of profit reports, forcing a cooldown for Wall Street's torrid rally.

The S&P 500 was 0.4% lower in afternoon trading, coming off its highest close since early April 2022 and its seventh gain in the last eight days. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 264 points, or 0.8%, at 35,323, as of 12:35 p.m. Eastern time. The Nasdaq composite was 1.5% lower and on track for its worst drop in six weeks.

Two of the most popular stocks, Netflix and Tesla, helped weigh on the market after the companies reported how much profit they earned during the spring.

Tesla tumbled 7.7% despite reporting stronger profit and revenue than expected. Analysts said investors may be concerned about how profitable the electric vehicle maker will be after cutting prices. Planned factory downtime during the summer for upgrades could also weigh on its upcoming results.

Because Tesla is one of the most valuable companies on Wall Street, its stock movements carry extra weight on

the S&P 500 and other indexes. Netflix sank 9.3% despite also re-

porting stronger profit than expected. One important measure for the company, how much revenue it makes from paid memberships on average, fell during the quarter from a year earlier.

Tesla and Netflix are two of the first huge tech-oriented companies to report their profits for the spring, and a lot is rid-ing on the results. Big Tech stocks have rallied hard this year and been the primary reason for the S&P 500's big gains. Netflix is still up 47% for the year so far, and Tesla has more than doubled.

If big tech stocks don't produce the profits to justify the big moves, it could put the rally at jeopardy. Other huge winners from early this year also slid, weighing on the market. Nvidia fell 2.5%, though it remains 134% higher for the year so far.

Across the rest of Wall Street, companies reported a mixed set of results.

Zions Bancorp. rose 10.4% after reporting stronger profit and revenue for the quarter than expected. It also said customers added \$2 billion in deposits, or 3.2%, over the last three months. which it called a "solid' number.

Truist Financial sank 6% after reporting weaker revenue than expected. It also said average deposits decreased 2.1% from earlier this year, though its profit topped expectations.

Banks have been under heavy scrutiny since three failed earlier this year under the heavy weight of high interest rates. They all buckled under the pressure of customers suddenly pulling out their deposits all at once.

The biggest loss in the S&P 500 came from Discover Financial, which slid 15.9%. Its results for the latest quarter fell short of forecasts, and it disclosed it was working with regulators to resolve an accounting error dating back to 2007 that misclassified some credit card accounts. It also said it was pausing buybacks of its stock while it conducts an internal review.

Doing the most work to limit the S&P 500's losses was Johnson & Johnson. It rose 6.5% after reporting profit and revenue that both topped expectations for the latest quarter. It also raised forecasts for financial results for the full year.

Europe

France's CAC 40 gained 0.3% in early trading to 7,345.07. Germany's DAX rose 0.2% to 16,143.18. Britain's FTSE 100 added 0.6% to 7,636.32.

Asia

Asian shares were mixed Thursday after Japan reported weaker than expected trade data for June, with imports falling nearly 13% from a year earlier.

Shares rose in Sydney and Hong Kong but fell in Shanghai, Tokyo and Seoul. U.S. futures slipped and oil prices were little changed.

Japan logged a trade surplus in June for the first time in nearly two years as imports sank, largely due to lower oil prices. Exports rose only 1.5% from a year earlier despite sharp increases in shipments of vehicles as supply chain problems eased. Economists say they anticipate weaker exports in coming months as demand in other major economies slows.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 declined 1.2% to 32,490.52. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 added less than 0.1% to 7,326.00. South Korea's Kospi edged down 0.1% to 2,604.61. Hong Kong's Hang Seng was virtually flat at 18,954.78, while the Shanghai Composite shed 0.7% to 3,175.81.

Oil

In other trading Thursday, benchmark U.S. crude shed 7 cents to \$75.22 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude, the international standard, fell 8 cents to \$79.38 a barrel.

Currencies

The U.S. dollar fell to 139.54 Japanese yen from 139.68 yen. The euro cost \$1.1207, up from \$1.1204.

Canadian govt recruiting high-skilled foreigners in the US to move to Canada instead

TORONTO, July 20, (AP): The Canadian government is recruiting high-skilled foreigners working in the United States to move to Canada instead, and the program has been so successful that it met its target of 10,000 applicants in just two days

The government this week launched a special work permit for foreign workers who already have obtained an H-1B visa in the U.S., who number nearly 600,000 and come mostly from India and China. The program's 10,000 quota was filled in the first two days of the week, a spokesman for Canadian Immigration Minister Sean Fraser said Wednesday.

"We even had a whole campaign to promote this and we had to put an end to that," spokesman Jeremy Bellefeuille said

It is unusual for a country to so explicitly target the visa holders of another country. Bellefeuille said the Canadian program was a trial run, and that the minister would now consider next steps.

Each year, up to 85,000 people are selected for H-1B visas in the U.S., a mainstay for technology giants such as Amazon.com Inc., Google parent Alphabet Inc., Facebook parent Meta Platforms Inc. and International Business Machines Corp

The H-1B visa program allows U.S. companies to embloy foreign workers in specialized occupations in sectors like technology, engineering and medicine. Usually, they're issued for three years and renewable. Most of the nearly 600,000 H-1B visa holders in the U.S. are from India and China.

If they are fired or let go from the company in the U.S. that sponsored them they have to find a job and be sponsored within 60 days.

Fraser promoted the Canadian work permit aimed at

America H-1B visa holders at the Collision tech conference in Toronto last month. The conference attracts technology workers from around the world.

The moves come as a wave of layoffs have hit the tech sector. Companies like Meta, Amazon and Google have made cuts.

The Canadian work permit includes study or work permit options for the accompanying family members of U.S. H-1B visa holders. It became available July 16 and was scheduled to remain in effect for one year, or until immigration authorities received 10,000 applications.

INVESTMENT STRATEGY & RESEARCH

Oil Market Monthly Report ------ July 2023

Oil at 12-week high, breaches USD 80/b mark on tight supplies...

Crude oil prices reached the highest level since the last week of April-2023 after seeing consistent gains since the end of June-2023. The gains came initially on the back of tighter supplies as Saudi Arabia's additional voluntary cuts came into force coupled with cuts announced by Russia and Algeria. Further support came from optimism on the demand front after inflation in the US came in weaker-than-expected and to some extent economic sops announced in China. Nevertheless, a slowing Chinese economy with continued fall in exports and imports as well as higher inventories weighed on prices partially offsetting the overall gains.

Consumer inflation in the US declined for the twelfth consecutive month and came in at 3.0% during June-2023 supporting crude demand growth expectation during the second half of the year. The softer inflation also affected USD that reached a 15-month low against a basket of currencies further supporting oil prices as weaker USD makes crude oil cheaper for importers. With the declining inflationary pressure, oil watchers are optimistic on rate cuts later this year or a single rate hike vs. previous expectations of two hikes. The trend in Europe, however, continues to point to further rate hikes by central banks.

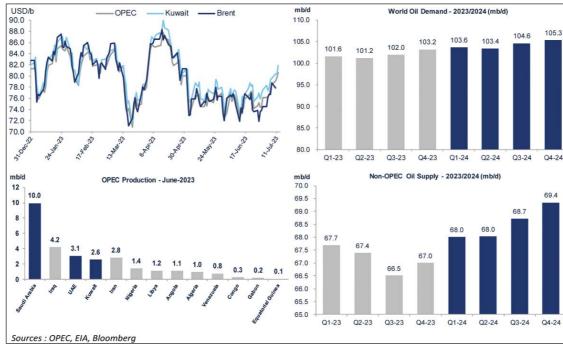
This was also reflected in the latest business activity surveys that showed a slump in June-2023 in Europe and China. PMI reports from S&P Global showed manufacturing activity in the Euro zone declined faster-than-expected led by persistent policy tightening by the ECB coupled with a steep decline in the UK. In Asia, China was a bright spot with marginal growth while Japan and South Korea showed a decline.

On the supply side, Saudi Arabia announced it would extend the 1 mb/d additional cuts to August-2023 aimed at stabilizing and bringing a balance to the oil market. Russia joined with another 0.5 mb/d of cuts while Algeria announced cuts of 20 tb/d bringing the total pledged cuts by OPEC+ to 5.2 mb/d. Meanwhile, the US EIA has forecasted record production in the US this year although oil rig count in the US continues to stay well below pre-pandemic levels. The latest weekly report from Baker Hughes showed oil rig count in the US declining for the 10th time in 11 weeks to reach 537 after declining by 3 for the week ended 14-July-2023.

On the production front, OPEC crude oil production increased for the first time in three months, albeit marginally, during June-2023. OPEC production averaged at 28.2 mb/d, according to OPEC secondary data, registering an increase of 91 tb/d from previous month. The increase was led by higher production mainly in Iran and Iraq, while declines in Angola and Libya partially offset the overall growth. Production in Saudi Arabia was flattish at 10 mb/d. Crude oil production in the US also remained flattish at 12.3 mb/d after sliding by 100 tb/d from the previous week.

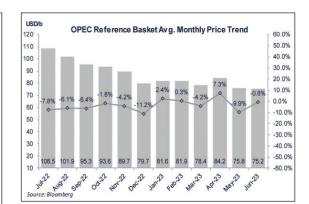
Oil Prices

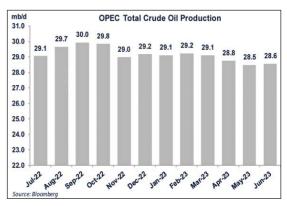
After reaching multi-month low levels last month and the biggest monthly decline in prices this year in May-2023, crude oil future prices showed consistent gains since the last week of June-2023 and breached the USD 80/b mark on 12-July-2023 to reach USD 80.11/b. Prices surged around 11.2% since the last week of June-2023 resulting in the first monthly gain in crude oil prices during the month this year. Nevertheless, in terms of quarterly performance, prices declined for the fourth straight quarter by 6.11% during Q2-2023. The recent gain in prices was mainly attributed to expectations of higher demand owing to slowing inflation numbers in the US as well as crude oil production cuts announced mainly by Saudi Arabia and Russia. However, factors like slowing economic growth especially in Europe, lower-than-expected growth in China as well as higher inventories reported last week resulted in downward pressure on prices. In its monthly report, the IEA said it expects crude oil demand to reach a record level this year, although the pace of growth would be smaller-than-expected. The agency, however, slashed its oil demand forecast by 220 tb/d from last month's forecast and now expects demand to grow by 2.2 mb/d this year. The IEA also highlighted a slowing industrial activity in the OECD region, particularly in Europe, that is expected to dent overall demand growth during the year. Meanwhile, average crude oil prices continued to decline during June-2023 due to depressed prices for the bulk of the month only to see gains towards the last week of the month. OPEC crude oil basked averaged at a multi-month low of USD 75.19/b registering a m-o-m decline of 0.8%. The fall in average Brent spot prices was slightly higher at 1.4% at an average of USD 74.7/b while average Kuwait crude grade witnessed a similar decline of 1.3% and averaged at USD 76.4/b. In terms of forecast, the EIA marginally lowered its forecast for Brent crude by for 2023 to USD 79.34 per barrel from its previous forecast of USD 79.54 per barrel. The forecast for 2024 was kept unchanged at USD 83.5/b.

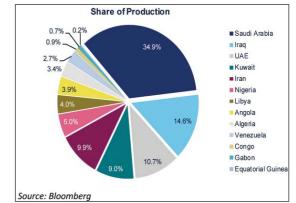


Average Crude Oil Prices, USD/b	May-2023	Jun-2023	Change (USD)	YTD Avg. 2022	YTD Avg. 2023
OPEC Reference Basket	75.8	75.2	(0.6)	105.4	79.3
Arab Light	77.7	77.2	(0.5)	106.0	81.2
Basrah Light	73.3	73.0	(0.3)	103.8	76.4
Bonny Light	75.6	74.2	(1.5)	109.3	79.8
Djeno	68.4	67.3	(1.1)	100.4	72.2
Es Sider	75.3	74.2	(1.1)	107.9	78.7
Girassol	77.2	76.3	(0.9)	109.9	80.9
Iran Heavy	76.5	75.3	(1.1)	105.1	79.6
Kuwait Export	77.4	76.4	(1.0)	106.2	80.7
Merey	56.2	57.4	1.2	81.4	59.4
Murban	75.7	75.5	(0.1)	104.3	79.9
Rabi	75.4	74.3	(1.1)	107.4	79.2
Saharan Blend	76.4	75.2	(1.2)	111.1	80.6
Zafiro	76.8	75.3	(1.5)	109.7	79.9
Other Crudes					
Brent	75.8	74.7	(1.1)	107.9	79.6
Dubai	75.1	74.7	(0.4)	101.9	78.9
Isthmus	65.8	66.3	0.5	100.2	67.7
LLS	73.7	72.6	(1.1)	103.8	77.3
Mars	71.1	70.7	(0.4)	99.2	73.7
Minas	73.7	72.6	(1.1)	102.8	77.8
Urals	55.2	56.6	1.4	86.7	54.2
WTI	71.6	70.3	(1.3)	101.9	74.8
Differentials					
Brent/WTI	4.2	4.4	0.2	5.9	4.9
Brent/LLS	2.1	2.1	0.0	4.1	2.4
Brent/Dubai	0.7	0.0	(0.7)	5.9	0.7
Source: OPEC Monthly Oil Market Report - July-2023					

World Oil Demand - 2022/2023, mb/d	2022	Q1-23	Q2-23	Q3-23	Q4-23	2023	Y-o-Y Growth	% Chg.
Americas	25.01	24.58	25.14	25.51	25.09	25.08	0.07	0.28
of which US	20.43	20.12	20.52	20.75	20.37	20.44	0.01	0.04
Europe	13.50	13.06	13.34	14.07	13.37	13.46	(0.04)	(0.31)
Asia Pacific	7.43	7.86	7.05	7.27	7.69	7.47	0.03	0.44
Total OECD	45.95	45.49	45.52	46.85	46.16	46.01	0.06	0.13
China	14.85	15.63	15.96	15.38	16.11	15.77	0.92	6.19
India	5.14	5.40	5.41	5.21	5.50	5.38	0.24	4.75
Other Asia	9.02	9.40	9.65	9.14	9.24	9.35	0.33	3.67
Latin America	6.44	6.60	6.52	6.71	6.68	6.63	0.19	3.02
Middle East	8.29	8.63	8.47	8.86	8.73	8.67	0.38	4.55
Africa	4.40	4.69	4.32	4.43	4.88	4.58	0.18	4.09
Russia	3.56	3.68	3.45	3.59	3.87	3.65	0.09	2.49
Other Eurasia	1.15	1.24	1.16	1.02	1.22	1.16	0.01	1.16
Other Europe	0.77	0.84	0.76	0.75	0.83	0.80	0.03	3.61
Total Non-OECD	53.62	56.12	55.70	55.11	57.05	55.99	2.38	4.43
Total World	99.56	101.61	101.22	101.95	103.21	102	2.44	2.45







to be relatively smaller at 0.26 mb/d to reach an average of 46.27 mb/d in 2024. The biggest increase in the OECD region is expected to come from the US with a forecasted growth of 0.14 mb/d to reach an average demand of 20.58 mb/d. Growth in Europe is expected to reach 0.06 mb/d to an average of 13.52 mb/d while OECD Asia Pacific is expected to see the smallest growth in the region at 0.02 mb/d to an average of 7.49 mb/d.

World Oil Supply

Global liquids production recorded growth for the first time in four months during June-2023. According to preliminary data, global oil supply increased by 0.6 mb/d to reach an average of 101.2 mb/d. The increase during the month was led by a growth in production in both non-OPEC and OPEC producers. Non-OPEC liquids production (including OPEC NGLs) increased by 0.5 mb/d during June-2023 to average at 73.0 mb/d mainly led by higher production in OECD Americas and Other Eurasia that more than offset a fall in production in Russia. OPEC production also witnessed a marginal growth of around 91 tb/d resulting in a market share of 27.9% Non-OPEC liquids supply forecast for 2023 was kept unchanged at a growth of 1.4 mb/d. However, there were adjustments at the country level with supply forecasts for US and Mexico seeing an upward revision of 25 tb/d and 17 tb/d while forecasts for UK and Canada were revised downwards by 21 tb/d and 25 tb/d, respectively. OPEC's supply forecast for 2024 showed a growth of 1.4 mb/d for non-OPEC liquids led by higher production in the US, Canada, Guyana, Brazil, Norway and Kazakhstan partially offset by a fall in production in Mexico and Azerbaijan. The US is expected to see the biggest supply growth next year by 0.68 mb/d to reach average liquids supply of 20.97 mb/d. Latin America is expected to follow with a supply growth of 0.31 mb/d to an average of 7.03 mb/d. Total OECD supply is expected to increase by 0.94 mb/d while non-OECD supply is expected to increase by 0.4 mb/d in 2024.

World Oil Demand

World oil demand growth estimates for 2023 was upgraded by 0.1 mb/d by the OPEC in its latest monthly report. The OPEC now expects demand to grow by 2.4 mb/d this year to reach 102 mb/d. The upward revision was made to demand data for China for Q2-2023 during April-2023 and May-2023. OECD demand expectation was also revised upward with OECD Americas expected to see growth led by better-than-expected growth in the US in Q2-2023 while OECD Europe demand was raised for Q1-2023. In the non-OECD region, demand estimates for Latin America also underwent a slight upgrade. Data from Bloomberg showed steady demand in the road transportation sector in the US and China with the former seeing higher demand led by holiday driving while China witnessed stable demand recently.

The OPEC also published its first forecast for oil market in 2024. OPEC expects a bigger demand growth next year by 2.2 mb/d to reach 104.25 mb/d led by a broad-based growth across key regions globally. The non-OECD region is expected to be the key driver of growth during the year with an expected growth of almost 1.99 mb/d to reach 57.98 mb/d. China is expected to see the biggest y-o-y growth in 2024 at 0.58 mb/d to reach average demand of 16.35 mb/d during the year. The Middle East and Other Asia regions are expected to follow with demand growths of 0.38 mb/d and 0.31 mb/d, respectively, while demand growth in India is expected to reach 0.22 mb/d to an average of 5.6 mb/d. In terms of product category, non-OECD demand is expected to be driven by recovery in demand for jet fuel further supported by steady demand growth for gasoline and industrial fuel.

The demand growth in the OECD region is expected

Q1-24 Q2-24 Q3-24 Q4-24 World Oil Demand - 2023/2024, mb/d 2023 2024 Y-o-Y Grow % Chg. 24.76 20.12 25.31 20.66 25.71 20.91 25.26 20.58 25.08 25.25 0.18 0.72 0.70 of which US 20.44 20.51 0.14 13.11 7.89 13.41 7.70 13.52 7.49 Europe Asia Pacifi 13.46 13.40 14.14 0.06 0.41 0.29 7.47 7.07 7.30 0.02 **45.77** 16.20 **0.56** 3.68 **Total OECD** 46.01 45.77 47.16 46.36 46.27 0.26 16.42 16.35 0.58 15.77 16.00 16.78 China 5.63 9.66 5.60 9.66 4.09 3.31 India 5.38 5.65 5.44 5.69 0.22 Other Asia 9.35 9.90 9.50 0.31 9.6 6.63 8.67 6.79 8.91 6.71 8.91 6.93 9.41 6.84 8.97 6.82 9.05 0.19 0.38 2.86 4.38 Latin America Middle East 4.58 3.65 4.80 3.75 4.51 3.56 5.01 3.94 4.73 3.75 3.27 2.75 Africa 4.60 0.15 0.10 Russia 3.75 1.27 0.86 1.28 0.84 0.04 0.01 3.81 1.73 1.20 0.77 1.21 0.81 Other Eurasia 1.16 1.08 0.77 Other Europe 0.80 **Total Non-OECD** 55.99 57.87 57.62 57.48 58.96 57.98 1.99 3.55 Total World 102.00 103.64 103.39 104.63 105.31 104.25 2.25 2.20 Source: OPEC Monthly Oil Market Report - July-2023

Non-OPEC Oil Supply - 2022/2023, mb/d	2022	Q1-23	Q2-23	Q3-23	Q4-23	2023	Y-o-Y Growth	% Chg
Americas	26.84	27.88	27.95	28.22	28.42	28.12	1.28	4.77
of which US	19.21	20.08	20.29	20.34	20.45	20.29	1.08	5.63
Europe	3.57	3.66	3.63	3.80	3.94	3.76	0.18	5.17
Asia Pacific	0.48	0.45	0.45	0.48	0.47	0.46	(0.01)	(2.83)
Total OECD	30.89	32.00	32.03	32.50	32.84	32.34	1.45	4.69
China	4.48	4.63	4.63	4.50	4.50	4.56	0.09	1.91
India	0.77	0.76	0.77	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.00	0.32
Other Asia	2.3	2.31	2.31	2.33	2.36	2.33	0.03	1.20
Latin America	6.34	6.69	6.71	6.70	6.79	6.72	0.38	6.06
Middle East	3.29	3.27	3.29	3.29	3.30	3.29	0.00	0.02
Africa	1.29	1.25	1.28	1.32	1.31	1.29	0.00	0.00
Russia	11.03	11.2	10.83	9.55	9.57	10.28	(0.75)	(6.82)
Other Eurasia	2.83	3.00	2.96	2.95	2.98	2.97	0.14	4.99
Other Europe	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.10	0.11	0.00	(0.85)
Total Non-OECD	32.44	33.23	32.89	31.54	31.69	32.33	(0.11)	(0.34)
Total Non-OPEC Production	63.34	65.23	64.92	64.04	64.53	64.68	1.34	2.11
Processing gains	2.40	2.47	2.47	2.47	2.47	2.47	0.07	2.96
Total Non-OPEC Supply	65.73	67.69	67.39	66.51	67	67.14	1.41	2.15
OPEC NGLs and non-conventionals	5.39	-	-	-	-	5.44	0.05	0.93
OPEC Crude Oil Production	28.85	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total World Supply	99.97	-		-	-	-	-	-

Source: OPEC Monthly Oil Market Report - July-2023

Production ('000 b/d)	May-23	Jun-23	Ch	ange	Capacity	Spare Capacity
Total OPEC-13	28,490	28,570	80	0.28%	34,100	5,530
Saudi Arabia	9,960	9,960	0	0.0%	12,000	2,040
Iraq	4,140	4,180	40	1.0%	4,800	620
UAE	3,130	3,070	-60	-1.9%	4,200	1,130
Kuwait	2,550	2,570	20	0.8%	2,820	250
Iran	2,890	2,830	-60	-2.1%	3,830	1,000
Nigeria	1,380	1,420	40	2.9%	1,600	180
Libya	1,120	1,150	30	2.7%	1,200	50
Angola	1,110	1,110	0	0.0%	1,200	90
Algeria	970	960	-10	-1.0%	1,060	100
Venezuela	740	780	40	5.4%	750	-30
Congo	250	260	10	4.0%	300	40
Gabon	200	210	10	5.0%	220	10
Equatorial Guinea	50	70	20	40.0%	120	50
Total OPEC-12	24,350	24,390	40	0.16%	29,300	4,910

OPEC Oil Production & Spare Capacity

After seeing declines for the previous three consecutive months, OPEC crude oil production saw marginal growth during June-2023. According to Bloomberg data, production during the month stood at 28.6 mb/d in June-2023 as compared to 28.5 mb/d during May-2023, registering a growth of 80 tb/d or 0.16% m-o-m. By contrast, OPEC secondary sources showed a slightly bigger production growth of 91 tb/d to reach an average production of 28.2 mb/d during June-2023 as compared to 28.1 mb/d during the previous month. The increase in output during the month mainly reflected a growth in production mainly in Iraq, Nigeria and Venezuela based on data from OPEC and Bloomberg. OPEC secondary sources showed a sharp growth in production in Iran by 54 tb/d (Bloomberg data showed a decline) while production in Angola and Algeria declined by 46 tb/d and 16 tb/d, respectively.

Oil production in Saudi Arabia remained almost flat at 10 mb/d during June-2023. The Kingdom is expected to implement additional production cuts of 1 mb/d during July-2023 and August-2023 that would result in production going to a multi-year low levels at around 9 mb/d, according to Ministry of Energy. The Kingdom also hinted that the additional cuts could be extended beyond August-2023.

The increase in Iran oil production during June-2023 came after reports showing higher exports from the country. A report from S&P Global said that this could be a result of US relaxing sanctions enforcement on the country. A similar action towards Venezuela was also highlighted by S&P with the OPEC member also reporting an increase in production during June-2023.

Iraq witnessed one of the biggest growth in production in OPEC during June-2023. The country produced at an average rate of 4.2 mb/d registering a m-o-m increase of 54 tb/d, as per OPEC secondary sources. Iraq also recently signed a long-delayed USD 27 Bn energy deal with TotalEnergies aimed at increasing the country's oil and gas output in the coming years. As per the deal, the oil production capacity at Basra's Ratawi field is planned to increase by 120 tb/d in two years followed by further increase to 210 tb/d within four years. The country plans to increase production capacity to 6 mb/d by offering concession agreements with global oil companies.

BUSINESS

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Broadcom's \$69b VMware purchase approved

Computer chip and software maker Broadcom's \$69 billion plan to buy cloud technology company VMware cleared another hurdle Wednesday after Britain's competition regulator gave the deal provisional clearance

The Competition and Markets Authority said its investigation found the deal "would not substantially reduce competition" in the supply of hardware com-

ponents for computer servers in the U.K. The deal also would be unlikely to harm innovation, the regulator said

Thousands of British businesses and public bodies, including major banks, big retailers, telecom operators and government departments, rely on Broadcom gear and VMware software, the regulator said. Both companies are based in California. The CMA, which said it's the

biggest transaction it has ever investigated, will now seek feedback before issuing its final re-port Sept. 12. Broadcom is paying \$61 billion in cash and stock for VMware and taking on \$8 billion of its debt.

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm and top antitrust enforcer, cleared the deal last week after Broadcom made concessions to address its concerns about competition. (AP)

Turkey's finance chief heralds \$50.7b deals with UAE

Turkey and the United Arab Emirates have signed deals worth \$50.7 billion as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan rounded off a three-country tour of the

"Today we have witnessed the signings of several strategic agreements and (memoranda of understandings) worth a total of \$50.7 billion to further cement ties between the UAE and Turkey," Finance Minister Mehmet Simsek

tweeted late Wednesday. The agreements involve export financing, earthquake bonds, en-

ergy, defense and other sectors. Erdogan embarked on a tour of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE on Tuesday, seeking trade

and investment opportunities for Turkey's floundering economy. Inflation in Turkey was 38% last month, down from a high of 85% in October, while the budget deficit widened to \$8.37 billion

in June, seven times the level of a year earlier.

Ankara has repaired ties with Riyadh and Abu Dhabi over the last two years following a decadelong split with the Arab states.

Timothy Ash, an emerging markets analyst at London's BlueBay Asset Management, said the deals represented a "new strategic relationship between Turkey and the Gulf states." (AP)

Bid to offset tensions with China

Gulf.

Yellen visits Vietnam, seeking to build US ties and supply chains

HANOI, July 20, (AP): The U.S. considers building strong economic and security ties with Vietnam a priority, U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said Thursday as she met with Vietnamese officials in a visit aimed at fortifying America's relations across Asia.

Yellen arrived in Vietnam after visits to Beijing and to India, where she attended financial meetings of the Group of 20 major industrial economies.

"The United States considers Vietnam a key partner in advancing a free and open Indo-Pacific," Yellen told Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, according to remarks provided by the U.S. Treasury Department.

A "free and open Indo-Pacific" refers to the latest iteration of broad U.S. diplomacy aimed at cultivating stronger ties with other countries in the region to counter China's growing sway among its neighbors.

"Vietnam is also a close economic partner, with our two-way trade reaching record highs last year and the United States serving as Vietnam's larg-est export market," Yellen said. "It is a priority for our administration to deepen our economic and security ties with Vietnam in the months and years to come.

Yellen briefly sat atop a bright red electric scooter during a visit to a factory in Hanoi's lush green suburbs, where Selex Motors, a five-year-old Vietnamese startup, makes EV scooters and batteries.

Climate change poses an existential threat to the world but also provides a "key economic opportunity" and way to build "greater resilience into our economies," she said, describing the facility as "impressive."

Yellen said the U.S. recognized the importance of diversifying supply chains after experiencing the disruptions brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. "And then, when Russia invaded Ukraine, many countries saw what the implications could be of being overly dependent - in Europe's case for natural gas and oil - on a country that could use it for geopolitical ends," she said.

She said the U.S. was actively trying to promote green resilience in supply chains. That doesn't mean ending trading relationships with China, she said, reiterating comments she has voiced before. "But we do partner with more countries. And we see Vietnam as an excellent partner," she said.

Yellen said the U.S. is committed to mobilizing \$15 billion to support Vietnam's adoption of renewable energy as a part of the Just Energy Transition Partnership or JETP - a financial promise made by the Group of Seven advanced economies to help the country phase out its reliance on fossil fuels. Such projects have offered similar incentives to South Africa and Indonesia.

Speaking earlier to a group of business women and economists, Yellen said she was encouraged by growing investments in Vietnam in industries including computer chips and renewable energy.

Yellen's visit is part of concerted U.S. efforts to balance China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific. Earlier this year, Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Vietnam weeks after the 50th anniversary of the U.S. troop withdrawal that marked the end of America's direct military involvement in Vietnam. He pledged to boost relations to new levels.

Diplomatic relations between the two countries were only restored in 1995. Since then, bilateral trade has grown, reaching a high of \$138 billion in goods trade last year.

"We have worked closely to address the legacies of the war," Yellen said. China's border is less than 60 miles (96 kilometers) from Hanoi and Vietnam, like many of China's neighbors, has had maritime and territorial disputes with Beijing in the South China Sea. The two sides fought a brief war in 1979. But China is Vietnam's biggest trading partner.

Yellen also met Thursday with the governor of Vietnam's central bank, Nguyen Thi Hong, and announced a new economic policy dialogue between the State Bank of Vietnam and the U.S. Treasury Department.

She thanked Nguyen for the "close cooperation" between the U.S. and the State Bank of Vietnam to address American concerns over Vietnam's currency practices. She added that the U.S. would remain supportive of Vietnam's growth and that this would be beneficial for both Vietnamese and American people.

Vietnam has quickly become a major export production hub for global manufacturers like South Korea's LG and Samsung Electronics, suppliers to Apple, Inc. and auto makers like Honda and Toyota.

Issuance first part of \$3b eyed

China says it will work with the US on 'climate change'

Xi tells Kissinger that China-US ties are at a crossroad

BEIJING, July 20, (AP): China is willing to work with Washington on reducing global warming as long as its political demands are met, the country's vice president told U.S. climate envoy John Kerry on Wednesday.

Vice President Han Zheng told Kerry that addressing climate change was "an important aspect of China-U.S. cooperation," but was predicated on mutual respect, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. He said it must proceed on the basis of U.S. attendance to core issues that concern both parties, fully engaging and exchanging ideas.' Ties between the countries have hit a historic low amid disputes over tariffs, access to technology, human rights, China's territorial claims in the South China Sea and threats against self-governing Taiwan. Kerry said he had "very detailed meetings with a lot to catch up on" during his three days of talks, following China's suspension of most contacts with President Joe Biden's administration last August, including over efforts to address global warming. China was displaying its anger over then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's trip to Taiwan, the self-governing island democracy China claims as its own territory, to be annexed by force if necessary. Kerry, a former secretary of state and presidential candidate, said there "are a lot of things that we very clearly agreed on after all this time," but limited his comments at a news conference mainly to climate issues. Climate "doesn't wait for these things. It is not something that you can just say, OK stop, while we're doing something else and we'll come back to you. It's going to continue," Kerry said. 'The climate crisis is a universal threat to humankind and we all have a responsibility to deal with it as rapidly as we can," he said. Kerry discussed climate issues with his Chinese counterpart, Xie Zhenhua, and told China's top diplomat, Wang Yi, on Tuesday that the Biden administration is "very committed" to stabilizing relations between the world's two biggest economies, as the countries seek to restart high-level contacts. China has chafed at U.S. criticism of its aggressive assertion of its claims in the South China Sea and of rights abuses against Muslim and Buddhist minorities, and at U.S. travel sanctions imposed on officials ranging from the Beijingappointed leader of Hong Kong to the country's defense minister. Contacts have only slowly been restored and China continues to refuse to restart dialogue between the People's Liberation Army, the party's military branch, and the U.S. Department of Defense. Kerry is the third senior Biden administration official to travel in recent weeks to China for meetings with their counterparts following Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen. In the latest challenge to bilateral relations, China is criticizing an upcoming stopover in the United States by Taiwan's vice president and the frontrunner in next year's presidential election, William Lai. On Wednesday, the director of the U.S. de facto embassy in Taiwan, Sandra Oudkirk, said there



Masdar launches 1st US\$750 million 10-year 'Green Bond'

ABU DHABI, UAE, July 20, (PR Newswire): Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company PJSC -Masdar announced the successful completion of its first green bond issuance for US\$750 million 10-year senior unsecured Notes today.

There was exceptionally strong appetite from regional and international investors with the orderbook peaking at US\$ 4.2bn, i.e. oversubscription of 5.6x. Pricing tightened 35bps between launch and final terms, with a final landing spread of 115bps over US Treasuries and a coupon of 4.875%. Allocation was finalized with a split of 87.5% to international investors and 12.5% to MENA investors.

The debut green bond demonstrates investor confidence in the financial strength of Masdar, which has credit ratings of A2 (Moody's) and A+ (Fitch),

community has placed in us and we look forward to the involvement of many top class investors in our journey towards delivering renewable energy and accelerating the net-zero transition around the globe."

Niall Hannigan, Masdar's Chief Financial Officer, commented, "The proceeds from our inaugural bond offering will be deployed in developing new renewable energy projects around the world. These projects will make a major contribution towards mitigating climate change, but they will also make a real difference to the local communities they serve, and that makes us incredibly proud. We remain committed to maintaining a prudent approach to funding our ambitious growth plans, which includes maintaining our investment grade credit ratings from Fitch and Moody's."

The bond was rated A2 by

In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry, (left), meets with Chinese Vice President Han Zheng, (right), in Beijing, Wednesday, July 19, 2023. China is willing to work with Washington on reducing global warming as long as its political demands are met, the country's vice president told U.S. climate envoy John Kerry on Wednesday. (AP)

China doesn't want a trade war with US but will retaliate against further curbs, ambassador says

WASHINGTON, July 20, (AP): China does not want a trade war with the United States but will retaliate against any further U.S. restrictions on technology and trade, the Chinese ambassador to the U.S. said.

Ambassador Xie Feng criticized U.S. curbs on the sale of microchips and chipmaking equipment to China that were imposed last year by the Biden administration. Beijing has described the measure as part of an effort to "contain" China.

"China does not shy away from competition, but the definition of competition by the U.S. side I think is not fair," Xie said Wednesday at the Aspen Security Forum, a security and foreign policy conference in Aspen, Colorado. 'The United States is trying to win by keeping China out," he said, referring to measures to curb U.S. technology sales to Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei over security concerns.

"This is like restricting the other side to wear outdated swimwear in a swimming contest while you yourself (are) wearing a Speedo," he said.

is "absolutely no reason for (China) to use the transit as a pretext for any sort of provocative action. And we certainly hope that they don't.'

The U.S. is a key Taiwanese ally but maintains only unofficial relations with the island in deference to Beijing.

China and the U.S. are the world's two worst climate polluters and dialogue between them after a nearly yearlong hiatus is considered crucial to addressing the threat of higher temperatures and more extreme weather.

The U.S. and China are hoping for further talks on limiting the production of heat-trapping carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses before the U.N. COP 28 negotiations to be held in Dubai in November and December, Kerry said.

Still, tensions in the overall relationship were never far from the discussions

Kerry told Wang he appreciated the opportunity to "change our relationship for the better" and that Biden is

China earlier this month imposed export curbs on two key metals used in computer chips and solar cells, a measure widely seen as retaliation for the U.S. restrictions on microchips. Earlier this year, Beijing restricted sales of products from Micron Inc., the biggest U.S. producer of memory chips.

"Definitely it's not our hope to have a tit for tat," Xie said. "We don't want a trade war, technological war. We want to say goodbye to the Iron Curtain, as well as the Silicon Curtain."

Xie's comments come as Washington and Beijing are trying to patch up their relationship, which has hit new lows in recent months over a slew of issues including a suspected Chinese spy balloon that flew over U.S. territory and tensions over trade, technology, human rights and China's claim to Taiwan and much of the South China Sea.

As part of efforts to mend ties, three top U.S. officials visited Beijing in recent weeks. John Kerry, the U.S. special envoy on climate, concluded talks on Wednesday with Chinese officials on ways to combat climate change and

"very committed to stability within this relationship and also to achieve efforts together that can make a significant difference to the world."

Biden "values his relationship with President Xi (Jinping), and I think President Xi values his relationship with President Biden, and I know he looks forward to being able to move forward and change the dynamic," Kerry said.

Kerry later paid a courtesy call on newly appointed Premier Li Qiang, the party's second-ranking official, who told him China and the U.S. should cooperate more closely on the "extreme-ly large challenge" posed by global warming.

Kerry responded that "working and showing the rest of the world how we can cooperate and begin to address this with the urgency it requires is incredible.

He pointed to previous agreements on reducing the output of methane, a major contributor to global warming,

restore high-level cooperation between the two countries.

He was preceded earlier this month by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen. Last month, Secretary of State Antony Blinken traveled to China on a visit focused on reopening communication channels between the two countries and reviving stalled talks between their militaries.

Xie said China is "eager" to have a "stable, healthy relationship" with the U.S. He said immediate "concrete" improvements could include increasing the number of passenger flights between China and the U.S. - which were heavily curtailed during the pandemic - and renewing the countries' cooperation agreement on science and technology.

On the issue of the Ukraine war, Xie reiterated Chinese officials' talking points that Beijing respects countries sovereignty and territorial integrity but also acknowledges "legitimate and reasonable security concerns." China says it is neutral in the conflict, but in practice it has shown Russia support by organizing frequent state visits and joint military drills with Moscow.

as well as transitioning away from coal as a power source and addressing de-

Chinese leader Xi Jinping told former top U.S. diplomat Henry Kissinger on Thursday that relations between the two countries are at a crossroads and both sides need to "make new decisions" that could result in stable ties and "joint success and prosperity."

The 100-year-old Kissinger is revered in China for having engineered the opening of relations between the ruling Communist Party and Washington under former President Richard Nixon during the Cold War in the early 1970s.

Xi, who is head of state, party general secretary and commander of the world's largest standing military, met with Kissinger in the relatively informal setting of Beijing's park-like Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, with Chinese senior diplomat Wang Yi also in attendance.

and its strong sustainability credentials.

In line with Masdar's Green Finance Framework, net proceeds from this bond and future offerings will be used to invest exclusively in 'dark green' renewable energy projects, many of which will be in developing economies and climate-vulnerable countries that have a critical need for investment.

This bond is the first part of a program to raise up to US\$3 billion of bonds to meet Masdar's equity funding commitments on new renewable energy projects at home and overseas, as it seeks to grow its global portfolio to 100GW of capacity by 2030.

Proceeds from all bond offerings under the program will be deployed towards the greenest projects in the renewables sector, namely solar, wind, renewable power transmission and distribution infrastructure, and battery storage assets, and strict ESG criteria will apply to restrict the eligibility of projects.

HE Dr Sultan Al Jaber, UAE Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, Chairman of Masdar and COP28 President-Designate, said, "It is vital to make finance more available, accessible and affordable for developing economies if we have any chance of meeting climate goals to supercharge sustainable development.

Ahead of the UAE hosting the UN climate change conference, COP28, we must champion initiatives that advance climate finance and decarbonization. Today, the successful issuance of Masdar green bonds will support these twin aims, by helping to provide funding towards renewable energy projects where they are needed most.

Mohamed Jameel Al Ramahi, Masdar's Chief Executive Officer, said, "The success of this debut green bond issuance is testament to the pioneering spirit of all the people who have worked incredibly hard over the last 17 years to grow Masdar into one of the world's leading renewable energy companies. We are thankful for the trust that the financial

Moody's and A+ by Fitch, in line with the corporate credit ratings of the company, and was priced at a coupon rate of 4.875% with maturity on 25 July 2033.

The issuance was arranged and offered through a syndicate of joint lead managers and bookrunners comprising of BNP Paribas, Citi, First Abu Dhabi Bank, HSBC, SMBC Nikko, Société Générale and Standard Chartered.

Green Masdar's Finance Framework, established in February 2023, was updated in May 2023 to reflect changes to the Green Loan Principles. Moody's has issued a Second Party Opinion on the Green Finance Framework.

Established in 2006, Masdar is the UAE's clean energy powerhouse. It is active in over 40 countries and has invested in a portfolio of renewable energy projects with a combined capacity of around 20GW. Masdar aims to grow this to at least 100GW by 2030. The company is also targeting green hydrogen production of 1 million tonnes per annum by the same year.

Contacts: For more information please visit: http://www. masdar.ae and connect: facebook. com/masdar.ae and twitter.com/ masdar

About Masdar Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (Masdar) is the UAE's clean energy champion and one of the largest companies of its kind in the world, advancing the development and deployment of renewable energy and green hydrogen technologies to address global sustainability challenges. Established in 2006, Masdar is today active in over 40 countries, helping them to achieve their clean energy objectives and advance sustainable development. Masdar is jointly owned by Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), Mubadala Investment Company (Mubadala), and Abu Dhabi National Energy Company (TAQA), and under this ownership the company is targeting a renewable energy portfolio capacity of at least 100 gigawatts (GW) by 2030 and an annual green hydrogen production capacity of up to 1 million tonnes by the same year.

forestation.

BUSINESS

The Conversation

Reduce abuse of free returns and lower costs without losing quality

Retailers alter customer behavior for more sustainable returns

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

B ack-to-school sales are underway, and people across the US will be shopping online to fill up backpacks, lockers and closets - and they'll be taking advan-

Making it easy for customers to return items at no cost started as a retail strategy

to entice more people to shop online. But it's getting expensive, for both retailers and the planet. In 2022, retail returns added up to more than US\$800 billion in lost sales. The

transportation, labor, and logistics involved raised retailers' costs even higher. Product returns also increase pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and waste in landfills, where many returned products now end up.

So how can retailers fix this problem and still provide quality customer service? We conduct research in reverse logistics, focusing primarily on the intersection of retail returns and customer behavior. Here are some insights that can help reduce the abuse of free returns and lower costs without losing quality.

Where a product is returned makes a difference. Items returned to the store can be restocked an average of 12 to 16 days faster than those that are mailed. Mailed returns also cost companies more: The difference between the most expensive shipped returns and least expensive in-store returns is \$5 to \$6 per item. That adds up quickly.

Studies show that customers may be willing to change their return behavior - with a little help.

Behavioral nudges are a technique used in decision-making to steer a person toward a specific behavior. Putting candy at eye-level at the grocery store checkout counter to encourage impulse purchases is an example, or making employee participation in a 401(k) savings program the default option. Another type of nudge involves providing more information.

If you've ever shopped online and seen statements like "10 out of 10 customers recommend this product" or "Only 2 items left in stock," you have experienced the use of information to influence your decision. Nudges emphasizing sustainability may also appeal to customers and have a positive impact on return behavior.

In a recent survey, 94% of merchants said customers were concerned about sus-

'Start to save early'

By Christopher Faires and Robert Overstreet Iowa State University

tainability, according to a report from Happy Returns, a logistics firm that works with retailers.

However, a much lower percentage of customers actually make sustainable return decisions. That suggests that customers do not fully understand the environmental impact of their return choices - and it offers a way for retailers to help.

Our research found that when customers were given information about the environmental impact of the different return options, they were nearly 17 times more likely to choose an in-store return rather than returning an item by mail. Nudges like this offer a simple and inexpensive way for retailers to alter customer behavior in favor of sustainability.

Some customers request to return an item but then wait weeks before mailing it. It's known as customer procrastination, and it also has a cost. The longer these products remain unprocessed, the more value they can lose.

Difficult

High-priced electronics, such as laptops and tablets, have short product life cycles and lose value quickly, sometimes at a rate of 1% per week. Seasonal items, such as back-to-school supplies or winter coats, become more difficult to resell if retailers get them back on shelves after demand has bottomed out. A returned item's resale value determines its destination: It can end up back on store shelves, sold to liquidators for pennies on the dollar or sent to a landfill.

A home pickup service for time-sensitive returns could reduce delays in a way that is also useful to the customer. A small number of pickup vehicles collecting returns from customers could avoid multiple shipments, reducing total miles traveled and cutting vehicle emissions, while also avoiding the need for each return to be individually packaged.

Our research found that a pickup service could help retailers collect returns faster and reduce product value loss, particularly for high-priced products and products that lose value quickly, such as consumer electronics.

While several retailers have stopped offering free returns or changed their return policies over the past year, our research suggests that changes affecting all customers might not be the best choice.

Broad policy changes that affect everyone might involve limiting the number of returns per customer, charging a fee for returns or shortening the window for returns. An alternative is a targeted return policy that applies only to people who abuse the system. For example, retailers can restrict free returns for people who repeatedly buy more items than they intend to keep, knowing they can return the rest. We conducted two studies to explore how customers would view changes to a retailer's return policies.

In the first study, 460 participants were significantly more likely to speak negatively about the retailer - a fictitious company, in this case - when the retailer's returns policy change applied to everyone and affected everyone equally.

Our follow-up study asked 100 online customers about their thoughts regarding generalized versus targeted policy changes. When the return policy change targeted customers who abused returns, 44% of the participants expressed positive emotions, and only 13% expressed negative emotions.

Those positive emotions included comments like, "I would feel proud of the company for taking action against people who try to cheat the system." Such responses indicated that participants understood that cheaters were increasing the price paid by everyone.

But when the return policy change applied to everyone, 64% of the participants expressed negative emotions. Nearly half indicated they would speak negatively about the policy change to family and friends, and 42% said they would shop at another store.

Retailers can also change the online shopping experience before the customer makes a purchase to avoid the need for returns.

One way is to obtain detailed customer feedback on returns and use that to provide better product descriptions to customers. Another is to avoid incentivizing the wrong behavior. Well-intentioned free shipping on orders over a set dollar amount could encourage customers to overpurchase and later return products.

Posting videos of items for sale can help buyers spot problems that photos might hide. Virtual fitting rooms that use an avatar of the customer to try on clothes virtually can help customers choose the right size the first time.

There is no doubt that managing retail returns is a difficult task. To make the process more sustainable, retailers need to help customers make choices that limit the need for a return or that minimize the impact of a return on the environment and, of course, the retailer's bottom line. (AP)

Saving for 'retirement' just got more complex

By Liz Weston NerdWallet

The Secure Act 2.0 legislation that passed late last year added new retirement savings options but also has a few potential catches for unsuspecting savers. Understanding these possible pitfalls may help you make better decisions, or at least be prepared for what's to come.

In my last column, I covered one set of these changes: new exceptions to the 10% federal penalty for tapping retirement money early. For this column, I'll cover what you need to know about Secure 2.0's changes to catchup contributions and company matches for workplace plans.

Catch-up provision

Catch-up provisions have long allowed older workers to put more

more: \$10,000 or 150% of the standard catch-up contribution limit. The \$10,000 will be adjusted annually for inflation. At age 64, the lower catch-up contribution limit again applies.

Higher earners who make these catch-up contributions must use the plan's Roth option. Lower earners must be given the option to do so. (The \$145,000 income limit will be adjusted annually for inflation, so we don't know yet what the exact cut-off amount will be when this takes effect.)

The higher limits could be helpful for those who can take advantage of them. However, many people's incomes are on the decline by the time they hit their 60s and they may not have the extra cash to contribute. A 2018 data analysis by ProPublica and the Urban Institute found that more than half of workers who enter their 50s with steady, fulltime employment are pushed out of those jobs before they're ready to retire - and the vast majority never recover financially. And certainly no one should put off saving for retirement thinking they can catch up later, warns certified public accountant and financial planner Marianela Collado, who serves on the American Institute of CPAs' personal financial planning executive committee. "Nothing could make up for the power of starting to save early on in your career," Collado says.

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif., July 20: Chipotle Mexican Grill (NYSE: CMG) has announced it has signed its first-ever development agreement to open restaurants in the Middle East and accelerate its international expansion efforts. In partnership with leading international franchise retail operator Alshaya Group, the Company will initially open new restaurants in Dubai and Kuwait early next year before expanding further across the region.

"Leveraging Alshaya's market expertise will enable us to quickly gain access to these vibrant economies," said Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Brian Niccol. "We are excited to offer guests in the Middle East our responsibly sourced, classicallycooked real food, and look forward to furthering our purpose to cultivate a better world in this new territory."

Mohammed Alshava, Executive



To open restaurants in Kuwait and UAE in 2024

Chipotle speeds up int'l expansion

with its Alshaya Group partnership

money into retirement plans. In 2023, for example, people 50 and older can contribute an additional \$7,500 to 401(k)s and 403(b)s, on top of the standard \$22,500 deferral limit for all employees in those plans.

Contributions that go into a plan's pre-tax option are deductible. But starting next year, people who earn \$145,000 or more will no longer get a tax deduction for their catch-up contributions to workplace retirement plans. They'll be required instead to contribute the money to the plan's Roth option. (People earning less than \$145,000 may have the option, but not the requirement, to put catch-up contributions into the Roth.)

Withdrawals from Roths are tax-free in retirement, which can be a huge boon to many savers, says Colleen Carcone, director of wealth planning strategies at financial services firm TIAA. Contributing to a Roth is often recommended for younger workers who expect to be in the same or higher tax bracket in retirement.

But many people's tax brackets drop once they retire. Roth contributions can make less sense for older workers who may be paying a higher tax rate on their contributions than they'd avoid on their withdrawals.

Many financial planners still recommend putting at least some money into a Roth so retirees can better control their tax bill in retirement, Carcone says.

However, losing the tax deduction could discourage people from making catch-up contributions, says economist Olivia S. Mitchell, executive director of the Pension Research Council, which researches retirement security issues.

And there's another issue: Not all workplace plans have a Roth option. If an employer doesn't add a Roth option, no one will be able to make catch-up contributions, Collado says.

Last-minute catch-ups

Beginning in 2025, workers ages 60 through 63 can make even larger catch-up contributions to workplace retirement plans. The maximum will be whichever is

Company matches

Secure 2.0 continues the socalled "Rothification" of retirement plans by giving employers the option of putting matching funds in workers' Roth accounts. Currently, matching funds are

contributed to pre-tax accounts, so they don't add to a worker's taxable income. Matching funds contributed to a Roth account, by contrast, would be considered taxable income for the employee.

This won't be mandatory for anybody. Employers won't be required to offer this option, and employees won't be required to take it if it is offered, Collado says. If you do opt for Roth matching funds, though, you should be prepared to pay a higher tax bill.

Again, paying taxes now can make sense if you expect to be in a higher tax bracket in retirement - and you're prepared to cough up the extra money.

Takeaways

Roths have a number of advantages, and many people will welcome the opportunity to save this way, but Roth contributions aren't right for every saver. The Secure 2.0 changes have added enough complexity that people should consider getting expert advice about whether they're saving enough and in the right ways, Carcone says.

"It's just important for individuals to make sure that they're meeting and speaking with their financial advisor," Carcone says. (AP) Chairman of Alshaya Group said: "In announcing this exclusive partnership across the Middle East, we are proud to be Chipotle's first and only franchise partner, as we continue to enhance our portfolio by bringing world leading brands to our customers across our markets."

Chipotle's existing international portfolio of owned and operated restaurants includes 33 locations in Canada; 15 in the United Kingdom with three more opening this summer; six locations in France; and two in Germany. In North America, the Company currently owns and operates over 3,200 restaurants and is targeting 8 to 10% growth per year for the foreseeable future with at least 80% including a Chipotlane. Chipotle plans to open more than 255 new restaurants this year, with a long-term target of 7,000 locations in North America.

Opportunities

Chipotle's newly formed business development group, led by Chief Business Development Officer Nate Lawton, is exploring opportunities for growth via outside partnerships. Information on submitting a proposal can be found at Chipotle Mexican Grill, Inc. (NYSE: CMG) is cultivating a better world by serving responsibly sourced, classically-cooked, real food with wholesome ingredients without artificial colors, flavors or preservatives. Chipotle had over 3,200 restaurants as of March 31, 2023, in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France and Germany. Chipotle is ranked on the Fortune 500, and is recognized on the 2023 list for Fortune's Most Admired Companies and Time Magazine's Most Influential Companies. With over 100,000 employees passionate about providing a great guest experience, Chipotle is a longtime leader and innovator in the food industry. Chipotle is committed to making its food more accessible to everyone while continuing to be a brand with a demonstrated purpose as it leads the way in digital, technology and sustainable business practices.

Alshaya Group is a dynamic family-owned enterprise, first established in Kuwait in 1890. With a consistent record of growth and innovation, Alshaya Group is one of the world's leading brand franchise operators, offering an unparalleled choice of well-loved international brands to customers,

Alshaya Group's portfolio extends across MENA, Türkiye and Europe,

Tourists practice packrafting along the Verdon Gorge in southern France, Monday, June 19, 2023. Human-caused climate change is lengthening droughts in southern France, meaning the reservoirs are increasingly drained to lower levels to maintain the power generation and water supply needed for nearby towns and cities. (AP)

Droughts worsen

French tourism businesses are wary of 'customers drying up'

SAINTE-CROIX du VERDON, France, July 20, (AP): At the pristine southern French lake of Sainte-Croix-du-Verdon, tourists in pedal boats and on white water rafts - and the businesses that welcome them have been buoyed by generous rainfall and good water management this spring.

After a prolonged drought last summer, then another in the winter that followed, the once cracked lakebeds are now abundantly watered. Dams are releasing water into reservoirs on a consistent schedule for activities in the lake.

But tour operators are still wary. "Rafting and kayaking is great, but if tomorrow there is not enough water in the river, we will have to reinvent ourselves," said Antoine Coudray of Secret River Tours, that operates in the gorges of Verdon.

The artificial lake of Sainte-Croix, a bustling tourist attraction, is one of three reservoirs in the area built for 16 hydroelectric dams. The dams supply the southeastern region of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur with 35% of its electricity needs.

Human-caused climate change is lengthening droughts in southern France, meaning the reservoirs are increasingly drained to lower levels to maintain the power generation and water supply needed for nearby towns and cities. It's concerning those in the tourism industry, who are working out how to keep their lakeside businesses afloat in the long term if water levels remain low or unpredictable.

The three reservoir lakes in the area - Serre Ponçon, Castillon and Sainte-

with thousands of stores, cafes, restaurants and leisure destinations, as well as a large scale online and digital business.

Operating in multiple sectors including Fashion, Food, Health & Beauty, Pharmacy, Home FurnishCroix - quickly became a draw for nature lovers after their construction in the middle of the 20th century. They're known for their crisp, clear waters in undisturbed valleys surrounded by tall mountains. The region attracts over 4.6 million visitors a year, the bulk of whom flock to the cool lakes during the summer months.

Water levels in the reservoirs are set and managed by national energy giant EDF, which operates the dams.

Keep

Last year, the low water levels from a lack of snow and rain in the spring meant the company was forced to draw on the reservoirs to keep hydroelectric power going and water pipes in southern France flowing for drinking and agriculture.

Then it kept getting worse. By August, France's government warned the country was in the midst of its fourth heat wave that year, further dwindling water supplies that evaporated in the blazing temperatures.

For many in the tourism industry, last year's low water levels came as a shock.

"In 35 years of working here, I've never seen a year like last year. We were not at all prepared," said Jean-Claude Fraizy who runs a canoe and kayak rental base on the Castillon lake. His leisure center's sales figures were down by 60% last year.

"If there is no water, there is no desire to come to the lake," he said.

More shocks could follow. A 32-day long dry spell over winter - the longest in recorded history - means reservoirs still haven't fully recovered for this

ings and Leisure & Entertainment, Alshaya Group colleagues are united by a commitment to authentically deliver great customer service and brand experiences.

Fresh, modern and relevant, Alshaya's constantly evolving portfolio summer.

Paul Marquis, founder of meteorology service E-Meteo, said the winter saw 40% less snowfall, keeping water levels below average despite recent rain.

The Serre-Poncon lake reached just 755 meters (2,480 feet) over winter, prompting EDF to hold back its hydroelectric production so that the water level would have a chance of returning to the optimal level of 780 meters (2,560 feet) in time for the summer season, Marquis said.

Marquis added that groundwater in the region will also not replenish fast enough, "meaning that we could see water restrictions come in to place during the summer."

Touring companies are already preparing.

"These days we have to be conscious that there will be less and less water in the river for us, so we have to know how to adapt," said Coudray. He's introduced "drought-proof" packrafting into the region over the past of couple of years, where the inflatable bottom allows it to float in much shallower waters in the Gorges du Verdon.

Guillaume Requena, a tour guide at the company Aquabond Rafting, said they have started to offer tubing, another activity that works on lower water levels as they can float along the surface.

Wary of the spring rains being a temporary blip in the longer-term trend toward drier conditions, Requena knows tour companies need to find a longer term solution and try to ensure that water levels in the reservoirs can be maintained.

reflects the choices and lifestyle of its customers. From flagship stores and restaurants in prestige malls, through to local coffee shops, drivethrus and online, Alshaya Group brings customers the brands they love in the places they want to be. The Conversation

Heat waves becoming supercharged as climate changes

As heat records fall, how hot is too hot for human body?

By W. Larry Kenney, Daniel Vecellio, Rachel Cottle, and S. Tony Wolf Penn State

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

Extreme heat has been breaking precords across Europe, Asia and North America, with millions of people sweltering in heat and humidity well above "normal" for days on end.

Death Valley hit a temperature of 128 degrees Fahrenheit (53.3 degrees Celsius) on July 16, 2023 - not quite the world's hottest day on record, but close. Phoenix broke a record heat streak with 19 straight days with temperatures above 110 F (43.3 C), and had more in the forecast, accompanied by several nights that never got below 90 F (32.2 C). Globally, Earth likely had its hottest week on modern record in early July.

Heat waves are becoming supercharged as the climate changes - lasting longer, becoming more frequent and getting just plain hotter.

One question a lot of people are asking is: "When will it get too hot for normal daily activity as we know it, even for young, healthy adults?"

The answer goes beyond the temperature you see on the thermometer. It's also about humidity. Our research is designed to come up with the combination of the two, measured as "wet-bulb temperature." Together, heat and humidity put people at greatly increased risk, and the combination gets dangerous at lower levels than scientists previously believed.

Limits of human adaptability

Scientists and other observers have become alarmed about the increasing frequency of extreme heat paired with high humidity.

People often point to a study published in 2010 that theorized that a wet-bulb temperature of 95 F (35 C) - equal to a temperature of 95 F at 100% humidity, or 115 F at 50% humidity - would be the upper limit of safety, beyond which the human body can no longer cool itself by evaporating sweat from the surface of the body to maintain a stable body core temperature.

It was not until recently that this limit was tested on humans in laboratory settings. The results of these tests show an even greater cause for concern

PSU H.E.A.T. project

To answer the question of "how hot is too hot?" we brought young, healthy men and women into the Noll Laboratory at Penn State University to experience heat stress in a con-

trolled environmental chamber. These experiments provide insight into which combinations of temperature and humidity begin to become harmful for even the healthiest humans. Each participant swallowed a small telemetry pill that continuously monitored their deep body or core temperature. They then sat in an environmental chamber, moving just enough to simulate the minimal activities of daily living, such as showering, cooking and eating. Researchers slowly increased either the temperature in the chamber or the humidity in hundreds of separate experiments and monitored when the subject's core temperature started to rise.

Below those limits, the body is able to maintain a relatively stable core temperature over long periods of time. Above those limits, core temperature rises continuously and the risk of heat-related illnesses with prolonged exposures is increased.

When the body overheats, the heart has to work harder to pump blood flow to the skin to dissipate the heat, and when you're also sweating, that decreases body fluids. In the direst case, prolonged exposure can result in heat stroke, a life-threatening problem that requires immediate and rapid cooling and medical treatment.

Our studies on young healthy men and women show that this upper environmental limit is even lower than the theorized 35 C. It occurs at a wetbulb temperature of about 87 F (31 C) across a range of environments above 50% relative humidity. That would equal 87 F at 100% humidity or 100 F (38 C) at 60% humidity.

Dry vs. humid environments

Current heat waves around the globe are exceeding those critical environmental limits, and approaching, if not exceeding, even the theorized 95 F (35 C) wet-bulb limits.

In the Middle East, Asaluyeh, Iran, recorded an extremely dangerous maximum wet-bulb temperature of 92.7 F (33.7 C) on July 16, 2023. India and Pakistan have both reached hazardous levels in recent years, as well.

In hot, dry environments, the critical environmental limits aren't defined by wet-bulb temperatures, because almost all the sweat the body produces evaporates, which cools the body. However, the amount humans can sweat is limited, and we also gain more heat from the higher air temperatures.

Keep in mind that these cutoffs are based solely on keeping your body temperature from rising excessively. Even lower temperatures and humidity can place stress on the heart and other body systems

A recent paper from our laboratory showed that heart rate begins to increase well before our core temperature does, as we pump blood to the skin. And while eclipsing these limits does not necessarily present a worst-case scenario, prolonged exposure may become dire for vulnerable populations such as the elderly and those with chronic diseases.

Our experimental focus has now turned to testing older men and women, since even healthy aging makes people less heat-tolerant. The increased prevalence of heart disease, respiratory problems and other health problems, as well as certain medications, can put them at even higher risk of harm. People over the age of 65 comprise some 80% to 90% of heat wave casualties.

GDF-15 a central factor in resistance of tumors to immunotherapy: study

CatalYm publishes preclinical data

MUNICH, July 20: CatalYm has announced the publication of preclinical data in Nature Communications under the title "Tumor-derived GDF-15 blocks LFA-1 dependent T cell recruitment and suppresses responses to anti-PD-1 treatment". The study reveals a central role of GDF-15 in the resistance of tumors to current immunotherapy. These findings further highlight the therapeutic significance of CatalYm's proprietary anti-GDF-15 antibody candidate, visugromab, currently in advanced Phase 2 clinical studies.

This foundational research, which was performed together with founder Wischhusen and collaborators, Jörg is the first to describe a mechanistic link between tumor-produced Growth Differentiation Factor-15 (GDF-15) and the LFA-1/ICAM-1 cell adhesion axis. The interaction between LFA-1/ ICAM-1 is a critical step in the infiltration of T cells into the tumor microenvironment. This is essential for the extravasation of T cells from the blood vessels into the surrounding tissue. GDF-15 is primarily known for its function in feto-maternal tolerance, an immunosuppressive mechanism that protects the fetus from the mother's immune system.

The researchers demonstrated that GDF-15 blocks LFA-1-dependent T cell recruitment into the tumor microenvironment, a prerequisite for responses to anti-PD-1/-L1 treatment but also other immunotherapeutic strategies. Conversely, the blockade of GDF-15 with antibodies like the anti-GDF-15 antibody visugromab improved T cell infiltration into tumors. Combined with a PD-1 inhibitor, it increased tumor clearance and survival with a synergistic effect. In line with these findings, serum analysis of melanoma patients showed that response to anti-PD-1 negatively correlates with GDF-15 serum lev-

Growing

Therefore, GDF-15 serum levels may be a predictive biomarker for the response to anti-PD-1 therapy and overall survival in these patients. These findings further underscore the immunosuppressive role of GDF-15 in the tumor and contribute to the growing body of data supporting GDF-15-neutralizing therapy as a promisng app resistant or refractory to anti-PD-1/-L1 treatment "Our publication is the first to demonstrate the effect of tumor-derived GDF-15 on the LFA-1/ICAM-1 axis. As this axis orchestrates cell-cell-interactions that are essential for immunemediated tumor control, GDF-15 likely contributes to immune escape across many different tumors and therapies,' said Prof. Dr. Jörg Wischhusen, Co-Founder of CatalYm and Professor at the Julius-Maximilians-University Würzburg, who is the senior author of the publication.

SAN CARLOS, Calif, July 20: Integrated Biosciences, a biotechnology company combining synthetic biology and machine learning to target aging, in collaboration with researchers at the University of California Santa Barbara, has announced a drug discovery platform that enables precise control of the integrated stress response (ISR), a biological pathway that is activated by cells in response to a wide variety of pathological and aging-associated conditions. A new publication, "Optogenetic control of the integrated stress response reveals proportional encoding and the stress memory landscape," authored by company founders and featured on the cover of describes a technique that triggers the ISR virtu-ally using light and demonstrates how the accumulation of stress over time shifts a cell's reaction from adaptation to apoptosis (programmed cell death).

"In a very real way, our platform puts cells into a virtual reality, making them experience stress in the absence of physical stressors," said Maxwell Wilson, Ph.D., a co-founder of Integrated Biosciences and Assistant Professor of Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology at the University of California Santa Barbara. "This work is an important advance because it relies on a light-activated switch to control the ISR, which is key to aging, rather than using the chemical poisons that are common in this field of research. Our synthetic biology platform enables previously impossible drug discovery because it avoids inducing the collateral damage caused by chemical poisons, enabling us to observe direct effects of drug candidates on the cell's stress response and perform fast and accurate target deconvolution."

Integrated Biosciences' "cellular virtual reality" system adapts optogenetics, a research method pioneered by neuroscientists to activate specific neurons by wiring them to fire



Integrated Biosciences has developed novel tools to manipulate the integrated stress response (ISR), a key hallmark of aging. The team is using optogenetics to activate the ISR in a "cellular virtual reality" system and has shown that manipulating the duration and intensity of this activation influences the cell's response. This platform can be combined with AI to identify anti-aging drug candidates.

tegrated Biosciences' platform, neuroglioma and osteosarcoma cancer cells were genetically modified such that their ISR could respond to light. The research found that duration and intensity both dictate a cell's reaction to the virtual-reality stress, and that the accumulation of stress over time plays an important role in how the cell responds. Transient stress leads to an adaptive response that protects a cell from damage, but prolonged activation of the ISR leads to cell death. As the ISR represents a key hallmark of aging, these findings inform the cell fate decisions that cells make as they age.

Integrated develops tools to manipulate ISR

'Synthetic biology platform' enables

aging-linked stress response control

The Cell Systems paper represents the second major publication associated with Integrated Biosciences. A Nature Aging paper, "Discovering small-molecule senolytics with deep neural networks," published in May demonstrated how artificial intelligence (AI) can anti-aging compounds that selectively eliminate senescent "zombie" cells. These compounds have shown promise in their ability to treat age-related diseases such as fibrosis, neurodegeneration, and cancer, but have faced challenges in clinical studies. The Nature Aging paper identified three drug candidates that have comparable efficacy and superior medicinal chemistry properties than those of the most promising senolytics currently under investigation.

By combining cutting-edge technologies described in these two publications - AI-driven small-molecule drug discovery and precise synthetic control of aging-associated pathways - Integrated Biosciences is generating unprecedented types of data regarding the activities and properties of their anti-aging drug candidates, substantially derisking future clinical trials that tar-

That combination of temperature and humidity at which the person's core temperature starts to continuously rise is called the "critical environmental limit."

How to stay safe

Staying well hydrated and seeking areas in which to cool down - even for short periods - are important in high heat.

While more cities in the United States are expanding cooling centers to help people escape the heat, there will still be many people who will experience these dangerous conditions with no way to cool themselves.

Even those with access to air conditioning might not turn it on because of the high cost of energy - a common occurrence in Phoenix - or because of large-scale power outages during heat waves or wildfires, as is becoming more common in the western US. (AP)

"Unraveling the details of the underlying biologic pathways is crucial to develop effective therapeutic approaches that can reverse tumor-mediated immunosuppression resulting in drug resistance, one of the major in response to flashes of light. In In-

challenges in cancer medicine. We are committed to rapidly advancing our Phase 2 evaluation of visugromab on our mission to expand the treatment horizon for current and future immunotherapies," added Dr. Christine Schuberth-Wagner, Chief Scientific Officer at CatalYm. The published data adds further

valuable mechanistic understanding to the clinical findings from CalaYm's GDFather (GDF-15 Antibody-mediaTed Human Effector Cell Relocation) trials with visugromab in combination with the anti-PD-1 inhibitor nivolumab in patients with advanced solid tumors. The Phase 1 (NCT04725474) study results an-

be used to discover novel senolytics, nounced in September 2022 showed an excellent safety and tolerability profile as well as significant clinical benefit in last-line tumor patients that were anti-PD-1/-L1 relapsed or refractory. Interim data from the Phase 2 (NCT04725474) trial recently presented at ASCO continue to demonstrate a very good safety and tolerability profile and promising early responses in major cancer indications, including non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC), bladder cancer and hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC). Mature data readouts for efficacy and safety data of the core Phase 2a program as well as main biomarker-correlations

are expected to become available by

get age-related diseases. (AP)

late 2023

The GDFATHER-2a trial (GDF-15 Antibody-mediaTed Human Effector Cell Relocation Phase 2) (NCT04725474) is an ongoing Phase 2a trial with several cohorts investigating the effect of visugromab (CTL-002) as monotherapy and/or in combination with a PD-1 checkpoint inhibitor in patients in various advanced-stage, relapse/refractory solid tumor types and a biomarker-selected cohort. The study can enroll > 200 patients in Simon-2-stage designs and a biomarker-evaluation directed cohort to confirm certain response rates and potential biomarker-based responder patient selection. (AP)



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Martial arts legend's 50th death anniversary commemorated

Fans of Bruce Lee fondly remember his life philosophy

HONG KONG, July 20, (AP): Fans of late martial arts legend Bruce Lee, who broke negative stereotypes around Asian men in films, gathered in Hong Kong this week to commemorate their idol's death half a century ago, remembering his legacy and his life philosophy on persistence.

Lee, who was born in San Francisco but raised in the Asian financial hub, was famous for his martial arts talent and his fight against racist portrayals of Asians on big and small screens in the 1960s and 70s. He died at the height of his fame due to an allergic reaction to painkillers when he was 32.

The 50th anniversary of Lee's death on Thursday drew fans to exhibitions in Hong Kong on his life and career. They also laid flowers at his statue at the Avenue of Stars, a tourist attraction modeled on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on the Kowloon shore of Victoria Harbor.

A government-run museum organized a camp for students to learn about Lee's legacy by introducing them to Jeet Kune Do, the martial arts style that Lee invented and practiced. The museum also screened his films.

Many of Lee's supporters said his philosophy inspired them since they were young, even though many only learned about him and his works after his death.

Sophie Uekawa, a translator, said she was initially attracted to Lee's muscular body and smooth moves on TV. But she was later impressed by his words, including about how unhappy circumstances eventually pass. When Uekawa was bullied by schoolmates in secondary school, Lee's quotes helped her endure feelings of helplessness.

Variety

"It can be said that he is my savior," Uekawa said.

Lee began his career as a child actor in the 1940s and started learning Chinese kung fu when he was 13. He moved back to the US in 1959 and studied philosophy at the University of Washington.

The superstar fought hard against racist stereotypes in the US entertainment industry where Asian men were often portrayed as servants, unskilled workers or evil geniuses in Hollywood

Lee eventually went back to Hong Kong and made hits like "The Big Boss" and "Fist of Fury." His last film, "Enter the Dragon," was released six days after his death and became his most popular movie. He was one of the first Asian actors to attain Hollywood megastardom and fanned a kung fu craze that swept the world.

Tribute

On Thursday, W Wong, the chairperson of a Bruce Lee fan club in Hong Kong, was touched to see fans from different countries including Britain and Korea gathering at Lee's statue to pay tribute to him.

But Wong said demographics of the club established nearly three decades ago are changing as members grow older and that it has only

"We face problems in passing on our work," Wong said, although the group still has some 600 members.

An instructor at a martial arts institute in Hong Kong's Jordan district says more than half of the studio's Jeet Kune Do students came to learn the martial arts style because of Lee.

Teacher Ricky Fong said adaptability is important in Jeet Kune Do and life and pointed to one of Lee's most famous sayings: "Be water, my friend." The phrase was frequently used by protesters in Hong Kong's 2019 pro-democracy movement to describe their guerrilla strategy of moving fluidly across the city.

One of Fong's students, Adrian Li, said he admired Lee's martial arts skills and philosophy. He added that Lee's eagerness to keep learning has influenced him deeply.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: An investigation into Tupac Shakur's unsolved killing has been revived. It took nearly three decades, but a new twist came when authorities in Nevada served a search warrant this week in connection with the rap star's shooting death, they confirmed Tuesday.

Here's what to know about one of the most infamous fatal shootings in hip-hop history:

Las Vegas police served a search warrant in connection to the killing of Shakur, who was gunned down Sept. 7, 1996.

The warrant was executed Monday in the nearby city of Henderson. It's unclear what they were looking for or where they searched.

Citing the ongoing investigation, a police spokesperson said he couldn't provide further details on the latest development in the case, including whether a suspect has been identified.

The 25-year-old rapper was traveling in a black BMW driven by Death Row Records founder **Marion "Suge" Knight** in a convoy of about 10 cars, apparently headed to a nightclub, after watching Mike **Tyson** knock out **Bruce Seldon** in a championship fight at the MGM Grand

After the fight, Shakur, Knight and associates were involved in a fight at the hotel.



Film

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico:

American model Gigi Hadid and a friend went ahead with a vacation in the Cayman Islands after local authorities arrested the pair for marijuana possession and later released them.

Hadid, who arrived on a private aircraft from the US, was arrested after Customs and Border Control agents searched her luggage and found a small amount of cannabis. the agency said in a statement Tuesday.

Officials identified her as Jelena Noura Hadid, which is the 28-year-old model's legal name.

RIDAY-SATURDAY, JULY 21-22, 2023

Hadid and her friend arrived in the Cayman Islands on July 10 and pleaded guilty on July 12 to importing a controlled drug and a drug utensil. They were fined more than \$1,200, with no conviction recorded, authorities said. "All's well that ends well," Hadid posted Tuesday on Insta-

gram, along with a photo of her and a friend at the beach. A representative told The Asso-

ciated Press that Hadid had bought the marijuana legally in New York City with a medical license, and that her record remains clear.

The Cayman Islands legalized medical marijuana in May 2017, but recreational use remains illegal. Local laws dictate a prison sentence of up to a year and/or a fine for possession of up to 12 grams of marijuana for a first offense. (AP)

SANTA FE, NM: The former weapons supervisor on the set of the movie "Rust" won't have to take a drug test as she confronts felony charges of evidence tampering and involuntary manslaughter in the on-set shooting death of a cinematographer by actor Alec Baldwin.

A New Mexico district court judge on Wednesday dismissed a request from prosecutors to test Hannah Gutierrez-Reed for illegal drugs, calling it "an ambush" against her defense lawyers.

Prosecutors say Gutierrez-Reed passed narcotics to another person to avoid legal consequences in the immediate aftermath of the fatal shooting in October 2021, while contending in court documents that the armorer was likely hungover on the day a live bullet was placed into the gun Baldwin used.

Film a celebratory homage to Mattel doll and her history

Barbie's life in plastic looks fantastic

By Jocelyn Noveck

For someone who's 11.5 inches tall and weighs un-der 8 ounces, poor Barbie's had to carry an awfully heavy load over the years on that slender, plastic back of hers.

Welcomed as a trailblazer in 1959 - An adult doll! With actual breasts! - she was nonetheless branded an anti-feminist a decade later when women's rights marchers chanted "I Am Not a Barbie Doll," referring to her unrealistic body type (and perhaps ignoring the fact that she was single, a homeowner and a career woman).

As years went by, Barbie had her hits (adopting a more inclusive body type, running for president) and misses (exclaiming "Math class is TOUGH!" - ouch). Through it all, this lightning rod in tiny pink heels remained uniquely talented at reinventing herself.

Which is why it makes sense that now, writer-director Greta Gerwig takes Barbie in more than one direction - in every direction, really - in her brash, clever, idea-packed (if ultimately TOO packed) and most of all, eye-poppingly lovely "Barbie," the brand's first live action movie.

Is it a celebratory homage to Barbie and her history? Yes. Also a cutting critique, and biting satire? Yes, too. The film is co-produced by Mattel, and they must have felt skittish about some elements - perhaps not Will Ferrell's reliably buffoonish Mattel CEO, but a far more serious scene where a young girl accuses Barbie of making girls feel bad about themselves. The movie's also about gender dynamics, mothers and daughters, insidious sexism ... and more.

But the neatest trick is how "Barbie," starring a pitch-perfect Margot Robbie - and after a minute you'll never be able to imagine anyone else doing it - can simultaneously and smoothly both mock and admire its source material. Gerwig deftly threads that needle, even if the film sags in its second half under the weight of its many ideas and some less-than-developed character arcs.

In any case, boy - or should we say, girl - life in

Defense attorney Jason Bowles said the drug use allegations are unsubstantiated and undocumented.

It's still unclear how several live rounds of ammunition got on set. Prosecutors say they have some evidence to support the theory that Gutierrez-Reed may be responsible for the introduction of

Hadid

plastic looks fantastic.

A head-spinning opening credits sequence begins with a Barbie history lesson, narrated by Helen Mirren. Then it's off to Barbie Land, where Barbie lives in her flamingo-pink Dreamhouse, surrounded by other Barbies in theirs.

Other Barbies? Well, we know how many Barbie versions exist on store shelves, and Gerwig and her writing (and life) partner Noah Baumbach take this one step further: If they're all Barbies, that means "Barbie" is all of them. There's no one Barbie - although Robbie, who plays Stereotypical Barbie (and also produced the film), is the focal point.

And every day's perfect for Stereotypical Barbie, who wakes in her heart-shaped bed, waves to neighbor Barbies, and heads to the shower, which is dry (there's no actual water, wind, sun or gravity in Barbie Land.) Her day's outfit awaits, perhaps a Chanel number, protected by shiny plastic as in a Barbie box. Then she swoops down her hot pink slide to the poolwith-no-water. The sky above is painted blue, the mountains purple. Gerwig was inspired by old soundstage musicals. Architectural Digest even did a piece on the house.

Menace

Equally stunning is "Beach" - a place, and also the name of Ken's career. (Sorry Ken, we should have mentioned you before the 11th paragraph, but we had so much to say about Barbie). The beach is also apparently where Ken lives, because, have you ever heard of Ken's house? In any case, a very blond Ryan Gosling gleefully chews the scenery - or, inhales it and is never better than when conveying Ken's forced enthusiasm with an edge of desperation plus a sprinkle of menace. Also, when dancing.

Speaking of dancing, one night at Barbie's "giant blowout party," she suddenly starts thinking about death. The next morning she has bad breath, and OMG, her famously arched feet go flat! Also gravity happens, so she falls off her house.

After consulting with Weird Barbie (Kate McKin-

non - who else?) Barbie heads to LA to solve a tear in the boundary between Real World and Barbie Land, singing the Indigo Girls' "Closer to Fine," her signa-ture road song. (The film's high-powered soundtrack features Dua Lipa, Nicki Minaj, ĤAIM, Lizzo, Billie Eilish, and many others.) There, she and Ken encounter a world with a wrinkle: Men have the upper hand. No all-female Supreme Court here! Hmm, thinks Ken.

On the run from Mattel, Barbie encounters Gloria (America Ferrera), mother of tween Sasha, who has mixed feelings about Barbie, not to mention Mom. In her spare time, Gloria sketches ideas for new Barbies - as in Thoughts of Impending Death Barbie (not to be confused with Depression Barbie.) Gloria helps rescue Barbie and also proves of crucial help when they later discover that Ken and the other Kens - Simu Liu, Kingsley Ben-Adir and others - are up to no good.

There's so much more, and we're over our word limit - which may just be the feeling Gerwig had when trying to fit her ideas under two hours. And all her actors: It would've been great to see more Issa Rae as President Barbie, Emerald Fennell as pregnant, discontinued Midge, and Michael Cera as Allan-whocan-wear-Ken's-clothes. In any case, the snappy pace starts to lag.

Not to discount Ferrera's eloquent monologue, in which Gloria educates newly conscious Barbie about the landmines women face trying to navigate social rules that don't seem to apply to men, like how to be a mom and also a professional, the need to be "thin" but call it "healthy," and other things

And if, Gloria concludes, all this is true for a doll just trying to represent a woman ... what does that mean for the rest of us? Which is, perhaps, the essential Barbie dilemma - she's always been judged by rather impossible standards.

Nevertheless, she persists. All 11.5 inches of her. And now she's Movie Star Barbie.

"Barbie," a Warner Bros. Pictures release, has been rated PG-13 "for suggestive references and brief language." Running time: 114 minutes. Three stars out of four. (AP)



the rounds.

Wednesday's hearing, held online, was the first for a recently filed felony charge against Gutierrez-Reed of tampering with evidence in the shooting, which killed cinematographer Halyna Hutchins and wounded director Joel Souza.

State District Court Judge

Mary Marlowe Sommer advised Gutierrez-Reed of her legal rights on the evidence-tampering charge, which carries a possible penalty of up to 18 months in prison. Gutierrez-Reed did not enter a plea. An involuntary manslaugh-

ter charge against Baldwin was

dropped in April. The actor was

pointing a gun at Hutchins when

it went off, killing her. Baldwin has said the gun fired accidentally after he followed instructions to aim it toward Hutchins, who was behind the camera.

Evidentiary hearings may take place as soon as August to determine whether the case against Gutierrez-Reed advances toward trial. (AP)

NEWS/FEATURES

People & Places

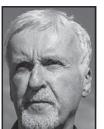
People

'Inspired generations' Titanic expert killed in sub remembered

LOS ANGELES, July 20, (AP): Almost a month after he died in a submersible implosion on his way to see the Titanic wreck, a French explorer was remembered Wednesday by filmmaker James Cameron and others as someone whose deep-sea exploits inspired generations of ocean lovers and brought a greater understanding of the famous ship.

Paul-Henri Nargeolet, 77, died when the Titan submersible descended into deep North Atlantic waters on June 18 to explore the Titanic - something Nargeolet had done dozens of times before. Investigators believe the submersible, owned by a private company, imploded during the descent, killing everyone aboard.

The event, which was streamed live on Facebook, began with a video montage of Nargeolet and his ac-



complishments that showed him embarking on the first archeological mission to the site more than three decades ago. The presentation included his work to recover "the Big Piece," a 17-ton section of the Titanic's shell plating recovered in 1998.

The video said Nargeolet 'inspired generations of ocean lovers, divers and explorers over the world." It also showed Nargeolet manning watercraft

Cameron

over the years and ended with him staring at the sea from the beach. Jessica Sanders, president of RMS Titanic Inc., then stepped to a podium decorated with pictures of Nargeolet and tearfully recounted his accomplishments, his legacy and his "devilish smile."

Sanders, speaking in English and using a French interpreter, said about 80% of the artifacts in the company's collection were recovered by Nargeolet.

"PH was a giant of a man, and an inspiration in and of himself," Sanders said. "To listen to him tell a story was to be in the story itself."

Cameron, who directed the movie "Titanic," spoke remotely to say he and Nargeolet were drawn together by their shared interest in the wreck site. He said he was "honored to be considered as a peer" by Nargeolet.

Adventure

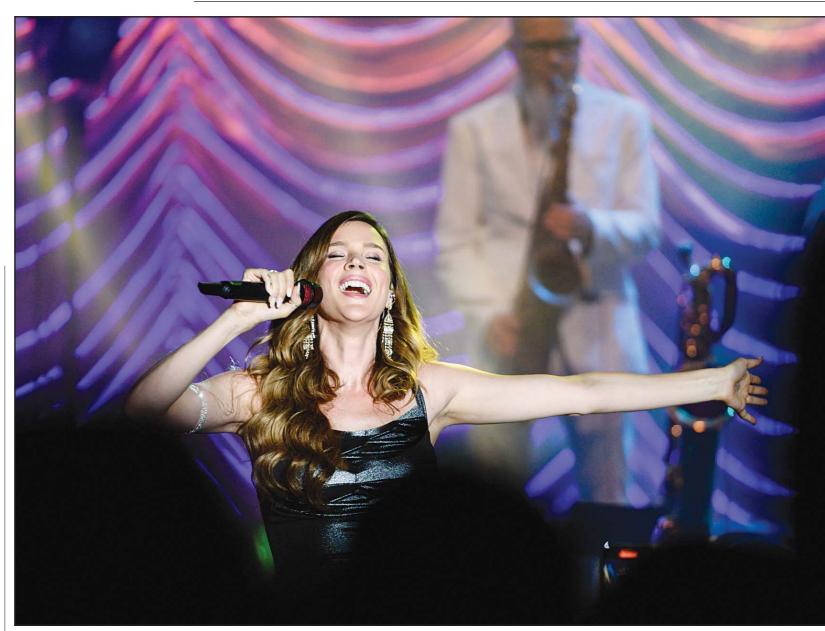
"He became over the years, a friend. He lived a large life, a life full of adventure," Cameron said. "We took about all the things we could do. It seemed

there were so many dives, so many adventures ahead," he continued. "For me the greater risk to humanity is to not go. The explorer's call is to go to the edge and go beyond. ... And humanity is better off for it.

Rory Golden, a deep-sea explorer who describes himself as the first Irish diver to visit the Titanic site, said he met Nargeolet three years ago and bonded quickly over their shared love of the wreck. They would swap stories about their various adventures and what they had learned on them.

"Like me, he loved being on the water and mess-ing around in small boats," Golden said. "We laughed. We laughed a lot. PH never lost that inquisitive mind that made him so special ... He was constantly seeking knowledge about the Titanic. He always had time for others, especially the next generation of explorers."

Some mourners referred to Nargeolet by his nick-name, "Mr. Titanic." Nargeolet's contributions to worldwide understanding of the Titanic wreck are without peer, said Malte Fiebing-Petersen, president of the German Titanic Society. 'A lot of the knowledge we have of the wreck site today is based on PH's work," Fiebing-Petersen said. Hundreds watched the memorial online, with several welcoming the chance for lovers of the Titanic to gather and mourn the loss of Nargeolet. "I take comfort from the thought that he is now where he always was drawn to. A place which he loved. How fitting for this great explorer," Alexander Korthus said in the chat.



English singer, songwriter Joss Stone performs during her concert at Veszpremfest festival in Veszprem, Hungary, Saturday night, July 15. (AP)



Rita Ora poses for a portrait to promote her new album 'You & I' on April 26, 2023, at The Bowery Hotel in New

A 'personal letter' to fans Ora bets on herself with 'You & I'

NEW YORK, July 20, (AP): It's hard to imagine a paparazzi-followed, international pop star losing confidence, but that was Rita Ora.

Music

"I think, as humans, we always tend to doubt ourselves. And so, I think over the course of my last album... a lot happened," said the 32-year-old singer, who recently married, changed record labels and became busier with more TV gigs. "I lost a bit of confidence.

Now, the multi-hyphenated entertainer is betting on herself with her new album, "You & I," out now, which she says is a "personal letter" to her fans. She partly credits her newlywed husband, filmmaker Taika Waititi, with regaining her musical mojo.

The deeply personal album has only one collaboration, Fatboy Slim, on "Praising You" which hit No. 1 on Billboard's dance/mix show airplay chart - a rework of his 1998 hit, "Praise You.'

The "Anywhere" artist released two other singles: "You Only Love Me" and her current single, "Don't Think Twice." Her "Thor: Love and Thunder" husband deployed his directorial skills for the latter's music video. Joining that trio of singles are the radio-friendly tune the infectious, four-on-the-floor "Unfeel It" as well as

of Albanians as the war-torn region fell. Growing up in Notting Hill, she attended the Sylvia Young Theatre School and later signed with Jay-Z's Roc Nation. Her 2012 "Ora" album launched a successful debut career with hits like "R.I.P.," "How We Do (Party)," and "Hot Right Now." She would later sue the company, believing she wasn't a priority.

Currently, Ora is prepping a deluxe version of "You & I" loaded with starstudded features (which she's keeping under wraps), and will continue judging duties on "The Voice: Australia." She also appears in "Wonderwell," the final film by Star Wars actress Carrie Fisher, released last month.

"Amazing tribute. My heart hurts, taking some comfort that he died doing what he loved most," John Lamoreau said.

Nargeolet was the director of underwater research for RMS Titanic Inc., an Atlanta-based company that owns the salvage rights for the world's most famous shipwreck. His memorial service took place a day after the company opened an exhibit in Paris showcasing thousands of artifacts from the Titanic's debris field.

"Many of the artifacts on display were recovered by or recovered under the supervision of Paul-Henri Nargeolet and his dedicated team. An intrepid explorer with an indomitable pioneering spirit, PH fearlessly ventured into the depths of the ocean to unravel its mysteries and educate the public," the company said in a social media post.

The company said on its website that Nargeolet will be "always in our hearts and thoughts" and was "a true explorer of his time."

Nargeolet was a former French navy officer who has been remembered by friends as one of the world's great undersea explorers.

Also killed in the implosion were pilot Stockton Rush, founder of OceanGate Inc., the company that owned the submersible; two members of a prominent Pakistani family, Shahzada Dawood and his son Suleman Dawood; and British adventurer Hamish Hardıng

The implosion remains under investigation by multiple authorities, including the U.S. Coast Guard. The Coast Guard has convened a Marine Board of Investigation, its highest level of investigation, and has said it will hold a public hearing in the future.

OceanGate, which was based in Everett, Washington, announced earlier this month that it suspended all operations. Its website was shuttered on Wednesday save for a single page acknowledging the suspension of operations.

Also:

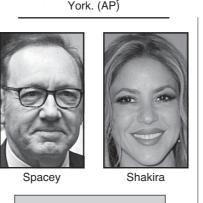
JUNEAU, Alaska: An Alaska man inadvertently filmed his own drowning on a glacial lake with a GoPro camera mounted on his helmet, but authorities who recovered the camera have not yet found his body, officials said Tuesday.

Alaska State Troopers said teams would continue to search Mendenhall Lake for the body of Paul Rodriguez Jr., 43, of Juneau.

Troopers said a helmet with a camera attached to it that was confirmed to have belonged to Rodriguez was recording on July 11 when his kayak overturned and he went into the water.

"The recording continued showing that the kayak overturned due to a strong current coming from the glacier," Troopers spokesperson Tim DeSpain said by email.

DeSpain said the helmet was found on the lakeshore. He said it was turned in to troopers on Mondav.



Variety

BARCELONA, Spain: Pop star Shakira

is facing more trouble from Spain's tax office after a court near Barcelona said Thursday that it had agreed to open an investigation into a second case of alleged tax fraud by the Colombian singer.

Shakira is already set to face trial at a date to be determined for allegedly failing to pay 14.5 million euros (\$13.9 million) in taxes on income earned between 2012 and 2014. The entertainer

has denied any wrongdoing. Now, a Spanish judge has agreed with state prosecutors to probe two possible cases of tax fraud by Shakira from 2018. The court said it had no information on

how much money was in question. Both cases are being handled by a court in the town of Esplugues de Llobre-

gat, near Barcelona. The first case that is set to go to trial

hinges on where Shakira lived during 2012-14. Prosecutors in Barcelona have alleged the Grammy winner spent more than half of that period in **Spain** and should have paid taxes in the country, even though her official residence was in the Bahamas.

Shakira, whose full name is Shakira Isabel Mebarak Ripoll, has been linked to Spain since she started dating the nowretired soccer player Gerard Pique. The couple, who have two children, lived together in Barcelona until last year, when they ended their 11-year relationship.

Spain has cracked down on soccer stars like Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo over the past decade for not paying their full due in taxes. They were found guilty of evasion but both avoided prison time thanks to a provision that allows a judge to waive sentences under two years in length for first-time offenders. (AP)

LONDON: It was no coincidence that three of Kevin Spacey's four accusers described similar grabbing incidents, a prosecutor said Wednesday in her closing argument at his sexual assault trial.

Prosecutor Christine Agnew said the interactions with the Hollywood star that left the men feeling "small, diminished and worthless" were similar not because

The whole album is not just about him," she said. "But it definitely has a lot to do with my connections with my family and my friends... and everything that inspires me." "You & I" marks Ora's third studio

release following 2018's "Phoenix." The 12-track project boasts credits from executive producer Oak Felder (Alicia Keys, Usher, Ariana Grande), along with Rollo (David Guetta, BTS) and Keith Sorrells (John Legend, Demi Lovato).

It also signifies a personal milestone for Ora; she owns this album's master recordings - advice she says she received from icon Prince - and co-wrote every song, something she'd never done, by converting diary entries into songs.

"There are the artists who sort of take the reins of their creativity to kind of help tell their story a little bit better, and Rita definitely is one of those,? said Felder. "Rita's life is a (expletive) movie... so emotionally dramatic and so emotionally entertaining and such a fulfilling thing that she has been able to live, and so I think that's why it's really easy for her to get to the studio

the men had conspired - they didn't know each other - but because it was, as she said earlier in the case, Spacey's trademark move.

"There comes a stage when so many people are saying the same thing," Agnew told a London jury. "It just becomes,



Fans gather in front of the statue of martial artist Bruce Lee to commemorate the 50th anniversary of his death in Hong Kong, July 20. (AP) - Details Page 11

her ballad title track.

"You & I' is actually the song I wrote the day after I got married. And it was crazy because I was so hung over... my brain was like mush, recalled Ora, who has appeared in nearly a dozen feature films. "I basically wanted to write the ultimate love song... there's a lot of references of classic love songs.'

Dedicate

There are also introspective records lavered beneath the drums and synths. She dedicates "Shape of Me" to her mother, a breast cancer survivor, and reveals pursing therapy in the bouncy, self-reflective "Girl in the Mirror."

"Your voice - like your soul, like your spirit - experiences things and it changes it... When I hear Rita sing, I can hear those experiences," said the Grammy-nominated producer Felder. "I think the pressure of having gone through everything that she's gone through, the fact that this project was so important to her and so important to her career really, really, really informed how complex and how deep her vocals felt on the record. There is a rare sampling of artists that I have worked with where that is the case."

Creating pop smashes like "Let You Love Me," "Poison" and "Body on Me," Ora was born in Kosovo (formerly Yugoslavia) before her family fled to London due to the persecution

I'd suggest, overwhelming."

Spacey seized brief moments for an "opportunity grab" and was able to get away with the assaults for years, because he was a celebrity who took advantage of his power, Agnew said.

The two-time Oscar winner long had

But at this moment, she's focused on her first creative love, hoping it's a reflection of her endurance, during what she defines as her latest "era," a perspective weaved into her self-empowering, "Look at Me Now."

"When you get home and it's quiet and you're lying down in bed like everyone else, you ask yourself all these questions and self-doubts," reflected Ora. "I wanted people to listen to that and think there is a light on the other side, if you just really kind of keep at it and not give up.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: The Grammy-winning rock band Greta Van Fleet is back with a "Starcatcher," a strong album that shows the quartet's maturity and embraces a more prog rock and psychedelic flavor. The first single, the sprawling, Woodstock-y "Meeting the Master," made the top 40 of Billboard's Hot Rock & Alternative Songs chart. Producer Dave Cobb took the guys back to their roots as a live band. A few days after the release, Greta Van Fleet kick off a new tour in Nashville at the Bridgestone Arena and will make stops at Madison Square Garden in New York and The Forum in Los Angeles and London's OVO Arena Wembley.

benefited from a "trinity of protection:" knowing that men he attacked would not complain; if they did, he knew they wouldn't be believed; if they were believed, he knew authorities wouldn't take action because of his status, Agnew said.

That changed after allegations in the US arose in 2017 during the height of the #MeToo movement when a fellow American actor accused Spacey of sexual misconduct decades earlier.

Other allegations followed and eventually led the four men to independently complain to police in the UK about incidents between 2001 and 2013, mostly during the period Spacey was artistic director at the Old Vic Theatre in London.

Spacey, 63, has pleaded not guilty to nine charges, including multiple counts of sexual and indecent assault and one count of causing a person to engage in activity without consent. He had faced 13 charges until Wednesday when the judge removed four counts that duplicated the same allegations under an older statute.

The defense is scheduled to present its closing arguments on Thursday in Southwark Crown Court in London.

The actor testified over two days and denied sexually assaulting three men.

The defense has cast doubt on the accounts of the accusers and suggested they were looking to get rich. (AP)

to push the process and be like, 'I'm going to write about this.

SCIENCE

Health

Misperceptions alarming

Nearly 80% doctors link nicotine to lung cancer

NEW YORK, July 20, (AP): A significant majority of doctors across the globe mistakenly attributes the negative health consequences of smoking to nicotine, directly jeopardizing advancements made in helping smokers quit, a survey funded by a Foundation for a Smoke-Free World grant has found.

Sermo, an independent platform and leader in actionable healthcare professional insights, surveyed more than 15,000 doctors online in 11 countries (China, Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, South Africa, United Kingdom, and the United States).

While an average of 87% of doctors at least moderately agree helping patients quit smoking is a priority, it is troubling that on average 74% mistakenly believe nicotine causes a range of illnesses from lung cancer to COPD.



These results raise serious concerns about doctors' ability to equip patients who smoke with the most accurate and effective advice on how to quit. This misperception could account for the fact that on average only about half of the doctors (55% on average) recommend over the counter nicotine replacement therapy to aid patients with smoking reduction or cessation.

'It is imperative that doctors get the proper training to learn the facts about nicotine and tobacco harm reduction

Rose options that can help their smoking patients quit," said Dr. Muhammad Ahmed, Director of Health

and Science Research, Foundation for a Smoke-Free World. "With more than 7 million smokers dying annually from smoking-related diseases worldwide, many lives can be saved if doctors become more knowledgeable about the cessation tools available.

Dr. Jed Rose, President and CEO of Rose Research Center (RRC) and co-inventor of the nicotine patch, said, "Patients look to doctors for trusted health advice. Therefore, it is vital that doctors provide accurate, current advice to smokers about the health risks of smoking cigarettes compared to using products that deliver nicotine without combustion.

RRC is a research facility based in Raleigh, NC that specializes in tobacco dependence research, including research on smokers, addiction, smoking cessation, tobacco harm reduction and the use of other tobacco products. RRC is a Foundation for a Smoke-Free World grantee.

Consequences

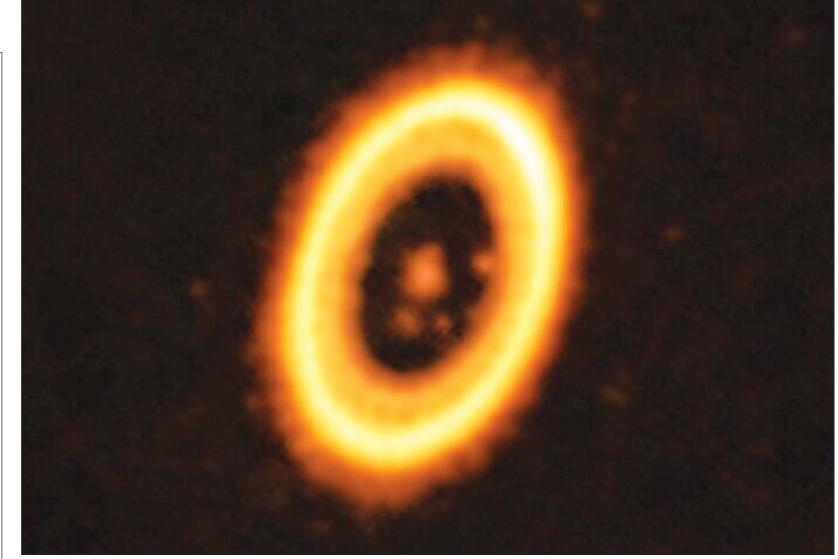
Even though there is near unanimity in the healthcare community that combustion, more than nicotine, is what leads to the negative health consequences from smoking, the Doctors' Survey uncovered that:

Although these misperceptions are alarming, on average 81% of the physicians surveyed are at least moderately interested in training focused on smoking cessation and tobacco harm reduction.

The survey, which was conducted in 2022, also found that while doctors' conversations with patients who smoke focus on the health benefits of cutting down or quitting (73% on average, globally) and the health risks of continuing (73% on average, globally), a comparatively small number of physi-cians - just over half (56% on average, globally) on average - recommend cutting down on the amount of smokable tobacco products and less than half of doctors (48% on average, globally) help patients develop a plan to quit.

The Foundation for a Smoke-Free World invites researchers to submit proposals to further analyze the Doctors' Survey findings and propose programs that would help improve doctors' fluency about smoking cessation and tobacco harm reduction.

The Foundation for a Smoke-Free World is an independent, US nonprofit 501(c)(3) grantmaking organization with the purpose of improving global health by ending smoking in this generation. The Foundation supports its mission through three broad categories of work: Health and Science Research; Agricultural Diversification; and Industry Transformation. Funded by annual gifts from PMI Global Services Inc. ("PMI"), the Foundation is independent from PMI and operates in a manner that ensures its independence from any commercial entity.



This image, taken with the Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array (ALMA), shows the young planetary system PDS 70, located nearly 400 light-years away from Earth. Astronomers have discovered what could be two planets sharing the same orbit around their star. (AP)

Two planets sharing same orbit around their star?

Astronomers reported Wednesday the discovery of what could be two planets sharing the same orbit around their star.

They said it's the strongest evidence yet of this bi-zarre cosmic pairing, long suspected but never proven. Using a telescope in Chile, the Spanish-led team

spotted a cloud of debris in the same orbit as an already confirmed planet circling this star, 370 light-years away in the constellation Centaurus. They

suspect it's either a planet in formation or remnants of a planet that once was.

Asteroids are known to accompany planets around their star - for example, Jupiter and its so-called Trojan asteroids. But planets in the same orbit "have so far been like unicorns," noted study co-author Jorge Lillo-Box of Madrid's Center for As-

trobiology. "They are allowed to exist by theory, but no one

has ever detected them," he said in a statement. The scientists said they will need to wait until 2026 in order to properly track the two objects around the star known as PDS 70.

The confirmed planet with the suspected tagalong takes 119 years to complete a lap. A gas giant, it's three times the size of Jupiter. Another gas giant is known to circle this star, albeit from a much greater distance. (AP)



Professor Mark Rees, of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and director of the Louisiana Public Archeology Lab, holds a San Patrice, variety Hope, that dates from around 12,000 to 11,500 years ago, in Kisatchie Na-tional Forest, La., Wednesday, June 7, 2023. This summer, archaeologists have been gingerly digging up the ground at the site in Vernon Parish to unearth and preserve the evidence of prehistoric occupation. (AP)

Gene boosts immune memory

Asymptomatic COVID tied to gene variant

By Jill Hollenbach, University of California, San Francisco and Danillo Augusto, University of North Carolitna - Charlotte

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

The Research Brief is a short take about interesting academic work.

Feline virus mutation caused far fewer cat 'deaths' than claimed

NICOSIA, Cyprus, July 20, (AP): The head of the Cyprus veterinarians association on Wednesday dismissed as greatly exaggerated the claims that a local mutation of a feline virus has killed as many as 300.000 cats

tory. According to Byzantine leg-end, Saint Helen introduced cats to Cyprus to control venomous snakes plaguing the island when she was on her way back to Con-stantinople after completing her quest to find the cross on which Jesus Christ was crucified.

A Cypriot cat activists who goes

by the name Marina Niaou and who

on the small Mediterranean island. The director of the Pancyprian Veterinary Association, Nektaria loannou Arsenoglou, said the group's survey of 35 veterinary clinics indicate an island-wide total of only about 8,000 deaths. Arsenoglou said numbers that have been presented by local animal activists and amplified by foreign media outlets "simply don't add up." Arsenoglou told The Associated Press on Wednesday that the local mutation of a feline coronavirus that causes Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP) is nearly always lethal if left untreated, but that medication can nurse cats back to health in approximately 85% of cases. Spread through contact with cat feces, neither the virus or its mutation can be passed on to humans. Specific medication that can treat both the so-called "wet" and "dry" forms of the illness is very expensive, although Arsenoglou said she was "optimistic" that the government would soon be able secure more medicine.

The Conversation



Also:

WASHINGTON: First lady Jill Biden on Wednesday welcomed a new proposal to have Medicare pay for navigation services for cancer patients, saying it will make "an enormous difference in people's lives.

She joined other Biden administration officials on a conference call to discuss a proposal by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to pay for "principal illness navigation services," which help patients make decisions about treatment for cancer and other serious illnesses and overcome barriers to quality care.

Biden spoke about her sister Jan, who underwent six weeks of stem cell transplant therapy several years ago to treat lymphoma. Biden said an advocate helped her sister "every step of the way

She said making these services more widely available is something that she and her husband, Joe Biden, worked on before he was elected president and then made a priority after he took office.

The first lady frequently visits cancer centers around the United States as part of a Biden administration initiative called the Cancer Moonshot, which has a goal of preventing more than 4 million cancer deaths by 2047 and improving the experience of people affected by the disease, including patients.

"Since we began this work, I've consistently heard one thing: these navigation programs are so successful, but since they aren't generally paid for, most medical practices can't afford to provide them," Biden said.

The Bidens also lost a son, Beau, to brain cancer in 2015.

If finalized, the proposed rule would allow Medicare to pay for navigation services. The change would take effect on Jan. 1. Members of the public will have until Sept. 11 to comment on the rule.

NEW YORK: Even though they're in opposing dugouts this week, New York Mets pitcher **Carlos Carrasco** and Chicago White Sox reliever Liam Hendriks are part of the same inspiring club.

Fellow cancer survivors, they teamed up Wednesday to host pediatric cancer patients from Cohen Children's Medical Center at Citi Field as part of Carrasco's program called Cookie's Kids

"It was really nice," Carrasco told MLB.com. "He came over and he wanted to do this. There's a lot of people who can see that (and realize) if we can make it, they can make it, too.'

The kids were shown around the ballpark and given access to normally off-limits areas such as the dugout and bullpen. They met with Hendriks and Carrasco to hear their encouraging stories of beating cancer.

The children also received lunch, giveaways and tickets to a future Mets game.

"The one thing I always try and stress is, you're not alone," Hendriks said. "Reach out, talk to people. Don't be worried about talking to a therapist. Don't be worried about talking to people about it. You remove the stigma of the word 'cancer. The more you talk about it, the lighter you start feeling. It takes that weight off of you.

The 34-year-old Hendriks returned to the mound in late May after missing the start of the season while recovering from stage 4 non-Hodgkin lymphoma. The three-time All-Star from Australia has been on the injured list since June 11 with right elbow inflammation.

Carrasco, 36, was diagnosed with leukemia in May 2019 and missed three months that season before returning to pitch for Cleveland.

Discovery

Archaeologists save artifacts: Long buried under the woods of west central Louisiana, stone tools, spearpoints and other evidence of people living in the area as long as 12,000 years ago have become more exposed and vulnerable, due to hurricanes, flooding and looters.

This summer, archaeologists have been gingerly digging up the ground at the Vernon Parish site in the Kisatchie National Forest. They have been sifting through dirt to unearth and preserve the evidence of prehistoric occupation of the area. The site appears to have been continu-

ously occupied throughout prehistory, as evidenced by a wide range of stone tools and pottery dating to each Native American cultural era up to European contact," the US Forest Service said in an news release.

"Between the looting and the hurricane damage we were really in danger of los-ing this site over time," Forest Service archaeologist Matthew Helmer said during a media tour of the site in June.

It's a welcome opportunity for Mark Rees, a professor of archaeology at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and director of the Louisiana Public Archaeology Lab. (AP)

Bison attacks visitors: A bison severely injured a Minnesota woman in Theodore Roosevelt National Park, the National Park Service said in a statement on Tuesday

Park officials reported she was in serious but stable condition after suffering "significant injuries to her abdomen and foot.

The woman was taken to a Fargo hospital after being transported by ambulance to a hospital in Dickinson, about 30 miles (48.28 kilometers) east of Painted Canyon, a colorful Badlands vista popular with motorists, where she was injured at a trailhead.

The attack is under investigation; exact details are unknown. Park Superin-tendent Angie Richman did not immediately respond to an email requesting information.

On Monday, a bison charged and gored a 47-year-old Phoenix woman in Yellowstone National Park. She sustained significant injuries to her chest and abdomen and was taken by helicopter to an Idaho Falls hospital. (AP)

Police search for lion: German authorities warned people in Berlin's southern suburbs on Thursday to watch out for a potentially dangerous animal, suspected to be a lioness, that was on the loose.

Police in Brandenburg state, which surrounds the capital, issued a warning in the

A common genetic variant explains why some people are asymptomatic after being infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, according to our recently published study in the journal Nature.

Early in the pandemic, we were intrigued that many people did not develop COVID-19 symptoms while still testing positive for it. Because asymptomatic people are unlikely to seek medical help, we knew that collecting DNA samples to study the role of genetics in asymptomatic infections would be difficult. So instead, we took advantage of existing genetic data stored in the Be The Match US bone marrow donor registry.

We invited volunteers registered as donors to track their experience with COVID-19 via a smartphone app developed by the COVID-19 Citizen Science Study. This allowed us to analyze the genetics of nearly 30,000 people without collecting biological samples and to identify COVID-19 positive individuals who never became sick.

Immunity

We were particularly interested in analyzing the variation of human leukocyte antigen, or HLA, genes. These key components of the immune system encode for proteins that display the viral particles that T cells - a group of immune system cells critical for fighting infections - recognize. Be-cause HLA molecules are important in the immune response to pathogens and are highly variable among people, we thought they might play a role in COVID-19.

We found that 1,428 unvaccinated individuals reported a positive COV-ID-19 test, of whom 136 reported no COVID-19 symptoms. Our analysis identified a common variant of an HLA gene called HLA-B*15:01 that is associated with asymptomatic infection. This variant is present in about 10% of the population with European ancestry. We found that people carrying the

variant were more than twice as likely to remain asymptomatic after being infected with COVID-19, and those carrying two copies of this variant were more than eight times more likely to

early morning hours of an "escaped wild animal" and asked people in and around Kleinmachnow, Teltow and Stahnsdorf - just outside Berlin's city limits - not to leave their houses and to bring their pets indoors.

southern areas of Berlin and an alert was sent on an official warning app that the animal was suspected to be a lioness. A vet and two hunters were participating in a search for the creature, which also in-

It's unclear how many feral cats live in Cyprus, where they are generally beloved and have a long his-

not have any symptoms.

Next, we used cells from people with the HLA variant who donated blood several years before the pandemic to see whether they had preexisting immunity to the virus that causes COV-ID-19. We found that people who had never been exposed to COVID-19 had memory T cells that worked against a specific particle of the virus, enabling them to elicit a very effective immune response against COVID-19. We also found that, when bound to HLA, this viral particle looks very similar to fragments of seasonal coronaviruses recognized by T cells.

Symptoms

Our findings suggest that preexposure to seasonal cold viruses allowed people with HLA-B*15:01 to develop a very effective immune memory that helped them to quickly kill the virus before they developed symptoms

Identifying the genetic factors associated with how the disease progresses after infection provides the basis for



maintains a feral cat colony complained to the AP that authorities have been dragging their feet in searching out cheap medication to tackle the spread of the virus. The mutation came to the attention of veterinarians as well as the

island's multitude of cat caregivers in January this year, with cases continuing to rise steadily until midspring when they started to level off, Arsenoglou said.

She said the veterinary association has assembled a task force to monitor the spread of the mutation and inform fellow vets and activists of the latest developments.

The feline coronavirus has been around since 1963. Previous epidemics, including one in Greece more than two decades ago, eventually fizzled out without the use of any medication, Arsenoglou said.

Measures have already been enacted to prevent the export of the mutation through mandatory medical check-ups of all felines destined for adoption abroad.

understanding why people respond differently to the virus that causes COV-ID-19 as well as other viral illnesses. Focusing on asymptomatic infections also sheds light on the early stages of infection and how the immune system fights against COVID-19.

Most existing vaccines protect against severe COVID-19 symptoms. Therefore, identifying the viral fragments that mediate asymptomatic infection, such as the one we discovered, can help develop more specific vaccines or therapies for COVID-19.

Although the genetic association we identified is strong, the immune system is very complex. It remains unclear what other mechanisms regulate asymptomatic infections, or why not everyone carrying this specific variant remains without symptoms.

We want to know if the genetic variant we identified is shared by individuals from different ancestries. This will help us understand which genetic variants are important among those in these groups with asymptomatic COVID-19.

volved helicopters. Police had no immediate information on who owned it.

Two men reported seeing a big cat running after a wild boar, the latter common in and around Berlin, police spokesperson Daniel Keip told local public broadcaster

"The two gentlemen recorded a smartphone video, and even experienced police officers had to confirm that it is probably a lioness," he said, adding that there were various reported sightings. (AP)

The warning was later extended to

Helmer



14

SPORTS

Rice makes debut as Arsenal dominate MLS All-Stars

Wrexham open US tour with loss to Chelsea

WASHINGTON, July 20, (AP): If this was the reception for Declan Rice in the U.S. capital, imagine this season in London.

Arsenal's new midfield star came on as a second-half substitute and helped finish off a 5-0 victory over the MLS All-Stars on Wednesday night. Gabriel Jesus, Leandro Trossard, Jorginho, Gabriel Martinelli and Kai Havertz all scored - but those weren't the only highlights for the many red-clad Arsenal supporters in the crowd at Audi Field.

Rice moved from West Ham to the Gunners for a British-record transfer fee last weekend, reported to be 105 million pounds (\$138 million). The crowd roared when he came in just over an hour into the match, and cheered again when he possessed the ball.

U.S. national team forward Folarin Balogun, whose days at Arsenal could be numbered, also came on for the London club at the same time as Rice.

By then, the Gunners had a 3-0 lead. The MLS has defeated the likes of Chelsea and Bayern Munich in the past in this format, which generally results in competitive games with more defending than some other All-Star events. The MLS team - which did not include recent Miami addition Lionel Messi - received four yellow cards before halftime.

SOCCER

Jesus opened the scoring with a beautiful chip in the fifth minute. His shot from outside the penalty area sailed past goalkeeper Roman Burki of St. Louis and bounced in off the left post.

Trossard doubled the lead in the 23rd with another goal from outside the penalty area, a bit more toward the middle - and struck harder - than Jesus' shot.

Trossard was shaken up early in the second half and was replaced by a substitute.

In the first minute after halftime, St. Louis defender Tim Parker was called for a handball in the penalty area, and Jorginho made it 3-0. Martinelli and Havertz scored late to make it a five-goal margin.

Havertz is another newcomer to Arsenal, having been signed away from Chelsea. U.S. defender Auston Trusty was in the game at the end for Arsenal along with Balogun.

Preparing for its Premier League opener against Nottingham Forest on Aug. 12, Arsenal plays friendlies against Manchester United on Saturday at East Rutherford, New Jersey, and vs. Barcelona on July 26 at Inglewood, California. Sue Martin had the summer mapped out for her family from St. Augustine,

Florida. Then along came word that Chelsea and Wrexham would play a preseason

friendly on U.S. soil. Reynolds and co-owner Rob McElhenney have taken Wrexham from a struggling fifth-tier side to a fan favorite, largely through the globally-streamed docuseries "Welcome to Wrexham." The Red Dragons opened a four-game preseason U.S. tour with a 5-0 loss to Chelsea, which got two goals from Ian Maatsen and one each from Conor Gallagher, Christopher Nkunku and Ben Chilwell. The game drew 50,596 to Kenan Memo11-year-old son Logan from St. Petersburg, Florida, saw Chelsea play last year in Orlando. They didn't flinch at making a longer trek. As a bonus, this one included Wrexham.

Martin's family of four sported gear supporting both Chelsea and Wrexham. Pregame festivities on the humid night were spread around campus.

Matseen scored in the third and 42d minutes, the second goal on a shot from the top of penalty area. Gallagher added a goal in the 80th, Nkunku in the 90th and Chilwell in the third minute of stoppage time.

Wretham, which opened the preseason last weekend with a 4-2 win over Wales' Bala Town. plays at LA Galaxy II on Saturday against the Manchester United youth academy on July 25 at San Diego at at Philadelphia Union II on July 29. Wretham opens

'Don't really care where they're born'

Women's World Cup 'team' from Philippines have American flavor

DUNEDIN, New Zealand, July 20, (AP): For a nation more than 7,000 miles (11,265 kilometers) from the United States, the Philippines boasts a women's national soccer team with a decidedly American feel. Of the 23 names on its Women's World Cup roster, 18 belong to U.S.-born women.

One of them, defender Hali Long,

was born in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, and raised in a Filipino, or Pinoy, household.

"To be able to represent my heritage, just to have that opportunity to bring it back home for (the) people who brought me up, is such an honor," Long said Thursday.

Despite growing up in the U.S., she said, "Under our roof, it was purely

reportedly offered one worth more

Barkley's only comment after

not getting a deal was a tweet: "It

is what it is." During "The Money Matters"

podcast recorded on July 11 - six

days before the deadline - Barkley

had hoped he would be able to get

a new contract, noting his leverage

would be to hold out, a move that

he felt would hurt the team and his

teammates. He felt it would show

everyone how valuable he was to

the team after rushing for a career-

high 1,312 yards as well as 10

knows that's not something I want

to do," Barkley said. "But is it

something that crossed my mind, I

never thought I would ever do that.

But now I'm at a point where it's

like, 'Jesus, I might have to take

it to this level.' Am I prepared

and willing to take it to the level.

I don't know. That's something I

gotta sit down. I gotta sit down and

talk to my family. I gotta sit down

and talk to my team, gotta really

strategize about this. Can't just go

off emotions."

"Anybody who knows me

touchdowns last season.

than \$12 million annually.

Pinoy, and I knew nothing different." That, she said, was her "deciding factor" in her choice to play for the Philippines.

"It's just who I was, without question," said Long, who played her college soccer at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

For Philippines head coach Alen Stajcic, it doesn't matter how many American-born players are on the team.

rial Stadium.

The match was a must-see event and the first of its kind in this college town. Chelsea, coming off a miserable 13thplace finish in the Premier League, was the 2021 European champion, Wrexham, the oldest club from Wales, earned promotion to English soccer's fourth tier.

Chelsea's Marc Cucurella (left),

and Wrexham's Ollie Palmer vie for

the ball during the second half of a

club friendly soccer match in Cha-

pel Hill, N.C. (AP)

the League 2 season at home against the MK Dons on Aug. 5.

Chelsea, under new manager Mauricio Pochettino, faces Brighton on Saturday at Philadelphia, Newcastle on July 26 in Atlanta, Fulham on July 30 at Landover, Maryland, and Borussia Dortmund on Aug. 2 at Chicago. The Blues open the Premier League at home against Liverpool on Aug. 13.

Mahrez set to become latest star to move to Saudi Arabia Henderson closing in on move to Al-Ettifaq

SYDNEY, July 20, (AP): Jordan Henderson was a notable absentee as Liverpool beat Karlsruher 4-2 in a preseason friendly Wednesday as the England midfielder closes in on a move to Saudi Arabian team Al-Ettifaq.

Liverpool has reportedly agreed in principle a deal worth 12 million pounds (\$15.5 million) for its Premier League and Champions League-winning captain.

The move would see Henderson link up with Liverpool great Steven Gerrard, who has just been hired as manager of the Saudi Pro League team.

The potential signing of the 33-yearold Henderson is further evidence of the growing lure of Saudi soccer as the oil-rich kingdom targets leading players from Europe's top leagues.

Karim Benzema and N'Golo Kante are among the star names to have headed there during the offseason, with Riyad Mahrez also expected to move to Al-Ahli after Manchester City reportedly agreed deal worth up to 30 million pounds (\$38.7 million) for its winger.

Henderson's former Liverpool teammate Roberto Firmino has joined Al-Ahli, while another Anfield player Fabinho has also been linked with a move to Saudi Arabia.

Henderson won every major club honor during his time at the Merseyside club, including the Champions League in 2019 and the Premier League title a year later.

That title success ended Liverpool's 30-year wait to be crowned champions of England again.

He still has two years to run on his current contract, but could have seen his first team opportunities impacted by manager Jurgen Klopp's midfield overhaul this offseason.

Liverpool has signed Alexis Mac Allister and Dominik Szoboszlai during the transfer window and is expected to add another midfielder ahead of the new season.

Klopp's midfield revamp comes after the club endured a disappointing campaign last season, which saw it miss out on the Champions League for the first time in seven years and fail to win a trophy. James Milner, Naby Keita and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain have all left, while Fabio Carvalho has joined Leipzig on a season-long loan.

Inter Milan completed the signing of Juan Cuadrado from Serie A rival Juventus on a free transfer on Wednesday, despite protests from their own fans.

The Colombia international, who signed a one-year deal at Inter, won 11 trophies in eight years at Juventus - the Nerazzurri's bitter rivals.

The 35-year-old Cuadrado has been involved in a number of incidents in matches between the two clubs, notably in April when the winger was sent off as the Italian Cup semifinal game ended in a scuffle. He was later banned for three matches.

As news of the potential signing of Cuadrado emerged, Inter fans protested outside the club's headquarters. They also unfurled a banner on Wednesday after the player arrived for his medical examination. It read: "Until today you have done everything to make yourself hated, if that's not what you want it's up to you to show it."

Netherlands midfielder Xavi Simons has returned to Paris Saint-Germain following an impressive season in the Dutch league, only to be sent on loan to Leipzig.

SOCCER

PSG said Wednesday that the 20-year-old Simons, who joined the French champions from PSV Eindhoven, will be loaned to the Bundesliga side for the 2023-24 season.

Simons signed his first professional contract with PSG in 2019, making his debut for the club in a French Cup match in 2021. He then signed for PSV after just 11 appearances with PSG.

With PSV, he scored 22 goals and delivered 12 assists in 48 matches last season.

Born in Amsterdam, the player named in honor of Spain great Xavi

Hernández, went through Barcelona's youth academy before moving to Paris.

Netherlands midfielder Tijjani Reijnders said he jumped at the chance to join AC Milan after completing a transfer from AZ Alkmaar.

Milan has reportedly paid a fee of 20 million euros (\$22.4 million) for Reijnders, who has signed a five-year deal at the Serie A club. Milan also recently signed Christian Pulisic and Ruben Loftus-Cheek from Chelsea.

"I'm very excited, very happy to be here," Reijnders said. "Also very proud to be part of this big club. When my agent told me 'AC Milan is interested in you,' I was very excited, very happy and I was like 'Wow, such a big club is interested in me.'

Barkley considering holding out after failing to get new contract

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J., July 20, (AP): A frustrated Saquon Barkley considered sitting out the 2023 season among his options if the star running back couldn't get a new contract from the New York Giants.

In an interview on a podcast released, Barkley discussed the negotiations leading up to Monday's deadline for players on a franchise tag to reach a new multi-year deal with teams. The 26-year-old used an expletive several times in noting a holdout would thumb his nose at the Giants and his teammates and show them his true value.

FOOTBALL

Barkley and the Giants, who reached the playoffs last season for the first time since 2016, failed to reach a new contract agreement on Monday, meaning the Penn State alum will earn \$10.1 million this season.

The two sides talked until the 4 p.m. deadline but could not settle on a deal, even though the Giants



Traditional dancers perform on the pitch before the Women's World Cup soccer match between Australia and Ireland at Stadium Australia in Sydney, Australia. (AP)

"I don't really care where they're born," Stajcic said. "If they have Philippines in their heart and in their blood, and they're good at football, then they're eligible for our team. They all play for their flag, they all play for their country, they all play for the people in the Philippines, wherever they reside."

Philippines, one of eight newcomers in the tournament, makes its Women's World Cup debut Friday against Switzerland.

SOCCER

The American-heavy roster boasts players from coast to coast. Olivia and Chandler McDaniel, a sister duo from California, join Long and teammates from Washington, Ohio, Texas, Virginia, Connecticut and other states.

Other U.S.-born players include Kiara Fontanilla, Kaiya Jota, Alicia Barker, Reina Bonta, Malea Cesar, Jessika Cowart, Dominique Randle, Tahnai Annis, Ryley Bugay, Carleigh Frilles, Isabella Pasion, Katrina Guillou, Sarina Bolden, Isabella Flanigan and Quinley Quezada.

A combination of factors helps explain how U.S. players wind up with the Philippines. The United States, as two-time defending Women's World Cup champion, is not only elite, but its talent pool also is deep.

talent pool also is deep. Title IX, the U.S. law requiring equal treatment for women athletes at American colleges, has helped more players secure access to quality training and facilities in the United States than is available in many other countries.

Philippines officials began recruiting the U.S. heavily for talented players in recent years, and even held a two-month training camp in Irvine, California, in 2021.

FIFA has rules that say players can only represent a country where they hold citizenship. They might be born there, or have biological ties to the country that allows dual citizenship.

"It's a way for them to honor their parents," Philippines team spokesman Cedelf Tupas said.

Added Stajcic: "I just know this team has Filipino heart, and blood, and courage, and spirit."

The team's first test comes at Dunedin against the Swiss as both squads open group play.

"I always knew I was going to see it one day in my life," Long said about Philippines qualifying for the tournament. "I didn't know I would be here being able to live it, breathe it, struggle through it, love it, like I am right now."

SPORTS



In this file photo, Charlotte Hor-nets guard LaMelo Ball brings the ball upcourt during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Detroit Pistons in Charlotte, N.C. LaMelo Ball could have tried to force his way out of Charlotte in hopes of landing with an established NBA playoff contender in the next few years. Instead the 2022 All-Star point guard decided to embrace his current situation with the Hornets by signing a five-year contract earlier this month that will pay him up to \$260 million. (AP)

Wings win

Fever top Mystics to snap losing run

WASHINGTON, July 20, (AP): Kelsey Mitchell had 18 points, five assists and four steals, Emma Cannon added 13 points and the Indiana Fever beat the Washington Mystics 82-76 on Wednesday to snap an eight-game losing streak.

Indiana used a 15-0 run, capped by a 3-pointer by Amanda Zahui B., to go ahead 63-53 with 7:42 remaining in the fourth quarter. The Fever also scored seven unanswered points to make it 70-59 with 4:10 left.

Washington made back-to-back 3-pointers in the final 30 seconds to get within 78-74, but Erica Wheeler sealed it by making two free throws with 7.5 seconds left.

Aliyah Boston had 11 points and eight rebounds and Victoria Vivians also scored 11 points for Indiana (6-15). Wheeler finished with 10 points, going 6 of 6 from the free-throw line.

Both teams were missing key players. Indiana was without Na-Lyssa Smith (foot) and Lexie Hull (nose). Washington was without Elena Delle Donne (ankle), Ariel Atkins (ankle), Shakira Austin (hip) and Kristi Toliver (plantar fasciitis).

Natasha Cloud scored 19 points and Tianna Hawkins had 13 points and nine rebounds for Washington (11-9), which had a five-game home winning streak snapped. Queen Egbo added 10 points.

Washington led 53-48 with 2:33 left in the third but didn't score again until Hawkins' basket with 7:20 remaining in the fourth.

Arike Ogunbowale scored 25 points and the Dallas Wings tied the WNBA record for fewest turnovers in a game to beat

Orioles move into AL East lead

Angels complete series sweep of Yankees



Pittsburgh Pirates' Endy Rodriguez (25) hits a single off Cleveland Guardians relief pitcher Sam Hentges for his first major league hit during the seventh inning of a baseball game in Pittsburgh. (AP)

Tampa Bay (60-39) dropped to .606 with the loss, while the Orioles (58-37) beat the Dodgers and improved to .611.

Cardinals 6, Marlins 4

In St. Louis, Nolan Gorman hit a three-run homer and had four RBIs to help St. Louis beat Mami for its second series sweep this season. Nolan Arenado's RBI single and

Gorman's 19th homer built a 4-0 lead in the first off NL Cy Young Award winner Sandy Alcantara, and the Marlins' losing streak reached a season-high six.

St. Louis had just one previous sweep this season, from May 12-14 at Boston. The Cardinals have won a season-high five in a row, moving ahead of Pittsburgh and out of the NL Central cellar.

Alcantara (3-9) gave up four runs and eight hits in six innings, dropping to 0-3 in his last four starts.

Zack Thompson (2-2), pitching for the first time in 20 days, allowed three hits in two scoreless innings. Astros 4, Rockies 1

Denver, Brandon Bielak pitched one-hit ball into the sixth inning, helping Houston split the es with Colorado

WASHING sults and games on V Houston Oakland NY Mets San Diego LA Angels Detroit Minnesota Pittsburgh Baltimore St Louis Cincinnati Milwaukee Arizona Chicago Cut	stand Wedn 4 5 2 7 3 6 7 8 6 3 5 5 8 8 8 5 5 8 8 8 8 8 5 5 8 8 8 8 9 8 8 8 9 8 9	ings frc esday. Colorad Boston Chicago Toronto NY Yan Kansas Seattle Clevela LA Dod Miami San Fra Philade Atlanta	om the o o W. Soo kees City nd gers incisco phia gton gue	MLB 1 5
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Detroit	43	52	.453	6

West Divisio

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MLB Results/Standings

NEWARK, July 20, (AP): The New Jersey Devils signed free agent forward Tomas Nosek to a one-year, \$1 million contract, general manager Tom Fitzgerald announced Wednesday.

Nosek played in 66 games for Boston last season and had seven goals and 11 assists. He played in all seven of the Bruins' playoff game in an opening-round loss to the eventual Eastern Conference champion Florida Panthers.

Nosek, from the Czech Republic, has skated in 398 career NHL games over eight seasons with Detroit, Vegas and Boston. He has 42 goals and 59 assists. He has played in 59 career playoff games, and was a member of the Golden Knights' Western Conference championship team that played in the 2018 Stanley Cup Final.

Prior to his NHL career, Nosek played parts of three seasons (2014-15 to 2016-17) with Grand Rapids confidence with this contract extension," Kraken general manager Ron Francis said in a statement. "Dave and his staff have done a great job of creating a close-knit, team-first mindset in our locker room and their work ethic helps set the tone for our team.'

Hakstol extends contract

New Jersey signs Nosek to 1-yr deal

Ŝeattle made a 40-point jump from Year 1 to Year 2, finishing with 46 wins and 100 points. The Kraken hovered around the top of the Pacific Division for most of the season and earned the top wild-card spot in the Western Conference.

In the opening round of their first playoffs, the Kraken knocked off defending Stanley Cup champion **Colorado** in seven games, before falling to **Dallas** in Game 7 of the conference semifinals.

ICE HOCKEY

Along the way, Hakstol was laud-

15

the New York Liberty 98-88 on Wednesday in a matinee camp day game.

BASKETBALL

Teaira McCowan added 15 points and 12 rebounds for the Wings, who had only two turnovers, matching the Washington Mystics' league record set in 2020. Both of Dallas' turnovers came in the opening quarter and then the Wings were spotless for the remainder of the game.

"That's elite, the first game back from All-Star. We had one practice as a full team," Ogunbowale said.

Dallas coach Latricia Trammell said protecting the basketball was an important factor in winning the game.

"Valued the basketball - it's something we talked about that was a key to the game," she said.

Trailing 60-59 nearly four minutes into the third quarter, Dallas (12-9) took over. The Wings scored the next 12 points, including two 3-pointers by Ogunbowale, to get their first doubledigit lead of the game.

When Ogunbowale wasn't hitting 3-pointers, she and her teammates were finding the 6-foot-7 McCowan in the lane. McCowan missed Dallas' game in New York in June because she was playing overseas with the Turkish national team. That game featured the first matchup between the Sabally sisters and New York won 102-93.

Dallas led 86-72 with 6:02 left before the Liberty (14-5) scored five straight to get to within single digits. They could get no closer as the Wings extended their winning streak to four games.

"I think we were locked in, slipped away from us last time we were here," Ogunbowale said. "It was a big game and they are a top four team. We wanted to prove a point to ourselves, we really did that.'

Breanna Stewart scored 25 points and Sabrina Ionescu added 22 for the Liberty, who saw their four-game winning streak snapped.

Ionescu hit five 3-pointers, keeping up her hot shooting from the All-Star 3-point contest, where she hit a record 25 of 27 shots.

The Wings became the first team in the league to beat both Las Vegas and New York, the Western and Eastern conference leaders, this season

Mariners also had a pair of The homers. Tom Murphy connected in the sixth inning, and Eugenio Suárez had a two-run shot in the seventh.

BALTIMORE, July 20, (AP): Ramón Urías drove in three runs with a pair of doubles and Gunnar Henderson homered and

Los Angeles Dodgers 8-5

into first place in the AL

The Orioles (58-37), who at .611

moved into front of the Rays (60-

5-1 loss at Texas. Baltimore is 50-

30 following an 8-7 start while the

eight of nine after taking the first

Danny Coulombe (3-1) allowed

one hit in 2 1/3 scoreless innings, while Julio Urías (7-6) gave eight

BASEBALL

Yennier Cano worked a scoreless

eighth and Félix Bautista pitched a

scoreless ninth for his 26th save in

Max Muncy hit his 22nd home

In Anaheim, Taylor Ward and

Luis Rengifo hit two-run homers,

Chase Silseth struck out a career-

high 10 in his first big league outing

in seven weeks and Los Angeles

completed a series sweep of New

The Halos swept a three-game

series from the Yankees for the first

time since 2009. Los Angeles has

won four of five to get back over

Cordero homered for the Yankees,

who have lost four straight and nine

of 11. Carlos Rodón (0-3) allowed

six runs, four hits and five walks in

4 1/3 innings. Silseth (2-1) allowed one run and

Twins 6, Mariners 3

go-ahead run on a passed ball in the eighth inning and Minnesota pitch-ers struck out 14 in a win over

In Seattle, Max Kepler scored the

Kepler scored from third when a

pitch from reliever Andrés Muñoz

(2-3) got past catcher Tom Murphy,

breaking a 3-3 tie. Kepler also hit a

solo homer in the fifth inning. Alex

Kirillof hit a two-run homer in the

five hits in 5 2/3 innings.

Giancarlo Stanton and Franchy

run for Los Angeles. Angels 7, Yankees 3

runs, matching his career high.

Baltimore avoided its first series sweep in 14 months. The Orioles were last swept in a series in May 2022. Los Angeles (55-40) had won

Rays have lost 11 of 14.

two games of the series.

31 chances.

York

.500 at 49-48.

Seattle.

ninth.

East.

Emilio Pagan (4-1) was the winner. Jhoan Duran pitched a scoreless ninth inning for his 16th save.

Athletics 6, Red Sox 5

In Oakland, JJ Bleday, Cody Thomas and Jace Peterson each hit two-run home runs, and Oakland won its second straight following an eight-game skid by hitting three or more homers in a game for the 11th time this season.

Bleday's homer was his second in as many days, while Thomas' drive was the first of his career. Peterson connected for his sixth in the fourth inning.

Angel Felipe (1-0) retired four batters for his first career victory. Trevor May picked up his eighth save.

Justin Turner hit his 15th home run for the Red Sox, winners of eight of their previous 10. Boston lost consecutive games for the first time since June 28-29 against Miami. Brayan Bello (7-6) allowed five hits and six runs in four innings.

Pirates 7, Guardians 5

In Pittsburgh, Ji Man Choi and Jared Triolo hit two-run singles in a five-run seventh inning helped by an overturned call, and Pittsburgh ended a five-game skid with a comefrom-behind win over Cleveland.

Pittsburgh rallied from a 4-0 deficit in the fifth. The Pirates had been outscored 21-1 in the first two games of the series

Josh Bell homered in the eighth off Ryan Borucki (1-0), and David Bednar struck out one in a perfect ninth for his 18th save in 19 chances.

Sam Hentges (1-2) took the loss. Aaron Civale allowed two runs and five hits in 5-1/3 innings.

Rangers 5, Rays 1

In Arlington, Leody Taveras and Jonah Heim homered as AL Westleading Texas stretched its winning streak to six games with a win over slumping Tampa Bay, which slipped into second place in the AL East. percentage points behind Baltimore.

Taveras snapped an 0-for-12 slide when he homered on the first pitch of the third inning against Zack Littell (0-2). He also added an RBI single.

Heim's 14th homer was a threerun shot in the eighth.

Brock Burke (4-2) struck out three over two scoreless innings in relief of starter Jon Gray, who departed with one out in the fifth because of a bruised left shin after being hit by a comebacker.

Chas McCormick hit his 12th homer of the season for Houston. Bielak (5-5) struck out four and walked three in 5 2/3 innings. Phil Maton, Rafael Montero, Ryne Stanek and Ryan Pressly then combined for 3 1/3 innings of one-hit relief

C.J. Cron spoiled the shutout bid with a home run off Pressly in the ninth.

Colorado starter Austin Gomber (8-8) lost for the first time since June 19 at Cincinnati. He was charged with four runs and eight hits in six innings

Reds 3, Giants 1

In Cincinnati, Will Benson hit a three-run homer, and Cincinnati ended San Francisco's seven-game win streak.

Graham Ashcraft (5-7) pitched into the seventh inning as Cincinnati stopped a six-game slide that dropped the surprising Reds into second in the NL Central, trailing Milwaukee. It was a season-worst skid for Cincinnati.

The Reds (51-46) had four hits. They had been 0-9 this year when they finished with four or fewer hits. Blake Sabol homered for San Francisco, and Ross Stripling (0-3) pitched six innings of three-run ball. The Giants (54-42) are chasing the Dodgers in the NL West.

Mets 5, White Sox 1

In New York, Justin Verlander pitched eight innings and rookie Brett Baty homered as New York won its third straight and for the ninth time in 13 games.

Baty contributed an RBI groundout during a four-run fourth, turned in fine defensive plays at third and scored from first on Brandon Nimmo's two-out double.

Fellow rookie Francisco Álvarez grounded an RBI single in the fourth, and Luis Guillorme added a sacrifice fly. The 40-year-old Verlander (4-5) gave up three hits on 100 pitches for his 248th win. He struck out seven and walked one.

Chicago starter Touki Toussaint (0-3) gave up five runs and four hits in six innings.

Brewers 5, Phillies 3

Philadelphia, William In Contreras hit a tiebreaking double in the seventh inning, and Milwaukee beat Philadelphia for its fifth win in six games.

Contreras had three hits and two RBIs for the NL Central leaders, and Blake Perkins also drove in two runs with a double. Five of Milwaukee's 10 hits were doubles.

Hoby Milner (2-0), Elvis Peguero,

	Houston	53	43	.552	4-1/2				
	Los Angeles	49	48	.505	9				
		47	48	.495	10				
	Oakland	27	71	.276	31-1/2				
	1	National L	eaque						
		East Div							
		W	L	Pct	GB				
	Atlanta	61	33	.649	-				
	Philadelphia	52	43	.547	9-1/2				
	Miami	53	45	.541	10				
	New York	45	50	.474	16-1/2				
		38		.396	24				
Central Division									
	, i								
		W	L	Pct	GB				
	Milwaukee	W 53	L 43	Pct .552	_				
	Milwaukee Cincinnati	W 53 51	L 43 46	Pct .552 .526	2-1/2				
	Milwaukee Cincinnati Chicago	W 53 51 45	L 43 46 50	Pct .552 .526 .474	2-1/2 7-1/2				
	Milwaukee Cincinnati Chicago St Louis	W 53 51 45 43	L 43 46 50 53	Pct .552 .526 .474 .448	2-1/2 7-1/2 10				
	Milwaukee Cincinnati Chicago	W 53 51 45 43 42	L 43 46 50 53 54	Pct .552 .526 .474	2-1/2 7-1/2				
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	Milwaukee Cincinnati Chicago St Louis Pittsburgh Los Angeles Arizona San Francisco	W 53 51 45 43 42 West Div W 55 54 54 954	L 43 46 50 53 54 <i>v</i> ision L 40 42	Pct .552 .526 .474 .448 .438 Pct .579 .563	2-1/2 7-1/2 10 11 GB 1-1/2 1-1/2 9-1/2				

10 22

GB

.289

Pct

598

Joey Payamps and Devin Williams (24 saves) each pitched an inning of scoreless relief, combining for seven strikeouts and no walks.

Nick Castellanos homered for the Phillies, whose four-game winning streak was stopped. Jeff Hoffman (3-2) took the loss

Diamondbacks 5, Braves 3

In Atlanta, Ryne Nelson allowed only three hits in seven innings, Lourdes Gurriel Jr. hit a two-run double and Arizona dealt Atlanta its fourth straight loss.

Nelson (6-5) allowed two runs with five strikeouts in seven innings. Kyle Nelson and Kevin Ginkel each pitched a scoreless inning in relief.

Gurriel's two-run double off Charlie Morton gave Arizona a 3-1 lead in the third. Nick Ahmed drove in two runs with two hits for the **Diamondbacks**



Cincinnati Reds' Lucas Sims throws during the eighth inning of the team's baseball game against the San Francisco Giants in Cincinnati. (AP)

(AHL). In 2016-17, he was a member of the Griffins' team that won the Calder Cup. He played eight seasons at home before coming to North America. He signed as an undrafted free agent with Detroit in June 2015.

The Seattle Kraken on Wednesday signed coach Dave Hakstol to a contract extension through the 2025-26 season after he led the franchise to the second round of the playoffs in its second season.

Hakstol had one-year remaining on the three-year contract he got when he was named the first coach in franchise history before the start of the 2021-22 season. He received the new deal tacking on two more seasons because of what Seattle was able to accomplish in Year 2.

"We believe we are heading in the right direction with Dave as our head coach and it was important to show that

Marcell Ozuna and Austin Riley homered for NL East-leading Atlanta, which matched its longest losing streak of the season. The Braves also had four-game skids from April 19-23 and May 10-14. After going 21-4 in June, the Braves are 7-6 in July.

Morton (10-7) allowed four runs on four hits and three walks in 5 2/3innings, ending his streak of wins in five consecutive starts.

Tigers 3, Royals 2

Kansas City, Eduardo In Rodriguez allowed two runs and four hits over seven dominant innings, Miguel Cabrera drove in the goed for finding a system that worked with Seattle's style of play and using the entirety of the Kraken lineup. He was a finalist for the Jack Adams Award as coach of the year.

"We are building something special here in Seattle. We have a committed staff, a great group of players and an incredible fanbase," Hakstol said. "We took a lot of positive steps last season and we have much more to achieve."

Hakstol, 54, was a surprise choice as Seattle's first head coach when he was hired in the summer of 2021 ahead of the NHL expansion draft. He had marginal success in his first head coaching stint in the NHL with Philadelphia, taking the Flyers to the postseason twice but never advancing beyond the first round. The Flyers also never reached the 100-point mark in the regular season and Hakstol was fired midway through the 2018-19 season.

ahead run and Detroit held on to beat Kansas City.

Rodriguez (6-5) held Kansas City hitless until Matt Duffy's one-out single in the fifth. Rodriguez wound up striking out seven without allowing a walk. Alex Lange picked up his 16th save.

Javier Baez homered and Kerry Carpenter also drove in a run for the Tigers.

Kansas City's Ryan Yarbrough (2-5) allowed three runs on six hits and a walk.

Cubs 8, Nationals 3

In Chicago, Nico Hoerner capped a five-run eighth inning with his first career grand slam, helping Chicago beat Washington.

Mike Tauchman also homered and drove in three runs as Chicago earned its second straight win after dropping the opener of the threegame series on Monday night. Kyle Hendricks pitched six innings of one-run ball.

Washington tied it at 3 with two runs in the top of the eighth against Julian Merryweather (3-0). Jeimer Candelario led off with his 15th homer. Consecutive two-out singles by Dominic Smith, Corey Dickerson and Luis Garcia produced another run

Chicago bounced back in the bottom half. Yan Gomes made it 4-3 when he hit a bases-loaded sacrifice fly against Mason Thompson (3-3).

After Tucker Barnhart struck out and Tauchman walked, Hoerner greeted Cory Abbott with a drive to left-center for his sixth homer of the season.



Pakistan's Saud Shakeel plays a shot during the fifth day of the first cricket Test match between Sri Lanka and Pakistan in Galle, Sri Lanka. (AP)



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Pak and India agree to play each other as Asia Cup announces schedule

Pakistan complete four-wicket win over Sri Lanka in first Test

GALLE, Sri Lanka, July 20, (AP): Pakistan made it a difficult chase at times but the visitors completed a fourwicket win over Sri Lanka in the first cricket test on Thursday.

Pakistan kept losing wickets at regular intervals but opening batsman Imam-ul-Haq scored an unbeaten halfcentury, his eighth in test cricket, to see the tourists through before lunch on the fifth day.

Sri Lanka won the toss and batted, scoring 312, and Pakistan replied with 461 in its first innings. The home side scored 279 runs in its second at-bat, leaving Pakistan 131 runs to win.

Pakistan didn't get off to a good start and limped to 48 for three at stumps on day four.

When play resumed on the final day, Pakistan needed 83 runs and there were memories of the 2009 test at Galle. That's when the visitors needed 97 runs with eight wickets in hand chasing a target of 168 but collapsed and were bowled out for 117.

Babar Azam added 41 runs for the fourth wicket Thursday with Imam and the run chase looked a mere formality, but Prabath Jayasuriya trapped the Pakistan captain for 24 to give Sri Lanka some hope.

CRICKET

Saud Shakeel and Imam then added 43 runs for the fifth wicket with the former being the more dominant partner with his clever footwork against the spinners. He had come down the track and executed an elegant cover drive off Ramesh Mendis but was caught behind the next ball to give Mendis his first wicket in the innings. Jayasuriya claimed his fourth wick-

et when Sarfraz Ahmed, attempting to sweep, was caught at backward square leg by Kusal Mendis. While wickets were falling on the

other end, Imam was unbeaten on 50 having faced 84 deliveries and hit four fours and one six.

Agha Salman walked in at the fall of the sixth wicket with Pakistan needing four runs and he completed the victory by depositing Jayasuriya over long-off for six

Shakeel was named man of the match, having posted a double century under tremendous pressure in the first innings. Pakistan captain Babar Azam praised Shakeel, who was playing just his sixth test match.

"Saud Shakeel was unbelievable." he said. "We are very happy for him. We lost early wickets in the first innings but the way he absorbed the pressure was superb. His effort helped us to get ahead of the game. Very satis-

Ferns upset Norway on emotional day, Women's World Cup kicks off



Norway's Thea Bjelde (right), is challenged by New Zealand's Betsy Hassett competes for the ball during the Women's World Cup soccer match between New Zealand and Norway in Auckland, New Zealand. (AP)

jaya," Karunaratne said. "He showed how to bat when the bowling is on top. If someone had taken responsibility and hanged around with him, we could have posted decent totals. To win the toss and not to score big when conditions were best for batting was so disappointing." The second test begins next Monday in Colombo.

tensions between cricket rivals Pakistan and India, the Asia Cup's longawaited schedule was announced on Wednesday with Multan hosting the Kerr's WC in doubt as Australia pip Ireland

AUCKLAND, New Zea- hands on her hips.

and make sure they could focus on the

fied with the way he went about things. Galle is not an easy wicket to bat but he made it look easy." Sri Lanka skipper Dimuth

Karunaratne also praised his deputy Dhananjaya de Silva, who scored 122 and 82 runs in the match.

ISLAMABAD: Delayed by political "We have to learn from Dhanan-



Denmark's Kasper Asgreen, (second right), crosses the finish line ahead of Netherlands' Pascal Eenkhoorn, (right), and the sprinting pack, (rear), to win the eighteenth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 185 kilometers (115 miles) with start in Moutiers and finish in Bourg-en-Bresse, France. (AP)

Also:

opening game between Pakistan and Nepal on Aug. 30.

The Asian Cricket Council accepted the Pakistan Cricket Board's hybrid model for the event after India refused to travel to Pakistan. Sri Lanka was chosen as joint host with Pakistan for the Aug. 30-Sept. 17 tournament.

After its opener at home in Multan, Pakistan will travel to Sri Lanka where it will take on India at Kandy on Sept. 2. If both countries qualify for the Super 4s, they will play in Sri Lankan capital Colombo.

The schedule of the tournament went through several changes and in the original draft Pakistan was scheduled to host four games in Lahore.

But after Zaka Ashraf replaced Najam Sethi as the new head of the PCB management committee, Multan was added into the plans by the PCB.

Sri Lanka will host nine matches. Pakistan, India and Nepal are in Group A while Group B comprises Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. Except for Nepal, the other five nations have qualified for the Cricket World Cup in India, starting in October.

The top two teams from both groups qualify for the Super 4s at the Asia Cup with the top two then qualifying for the Sept. 17 final at Colombo.

Asgreen holds on to stage win, Jonas protects big lead

BOURG-EN-BRESSE, France, July 20, (AP): Another Danish rider took the limelight at the Tour de France on Thursday as Kasper Asgreen joined an early breakaway and then held on to win the 18th stage in a sprint finish.

His countryman Jonas Vingegaard took it easy this time, sitting comfortably in the main pack as he protected his huge overall lead. The defending champion leads two-time Tour winner Tadej Pogacar of Slovenia by 7 minutes, 35 seconds and Britain's Adam Yates by 10:45 with Sunday's finale in Paris getting closer.

But this was Asgreen's day and he spread his arms after beating Dutchman Pascal Eenkhoorn and Norwegian Jonas Abrahamsen in their dash to the line.

"Obviously the situation of our breakaway was not ideal. I would have preferred to break with seven or eight riders. It's also one of the final stages of the Tour after really hard weeks," Asgreen said. "I didn't rule out the possibility of winning. My breakaway companions were just excellent out there. We all deserved to win because of how much work we put into the break."

They were all given the same time of 4 hours, 6 minutes, 48 seconds after holding off a large group of sprinters behind them who left it too late. Star sprinter Jasper Philipsen missed out on another stage win and finished fourth.

After Vingegaard took full control of the race with some jaw-droppingly fast riding to crush Pogacar in the Alps, Thursday's stage offered respite to the main contenders on a flat 185-kilometer (114.6-mile) route from Moûtiers to Bourg-en-Bresse.

Belgian rider Victor Campenaerts joined Asgreen and Abrahamsen to form an early breakaway.

They worked well together and after the first hour had opened up a lead of around one minute. The gap remained the same, give or take a few seconds either way, with under 100 kilometers (62 miles) left.

CYCLING

But the peloton, after rolling along in the sunshine at a mercifully reduced pace compared to previous days, then eventually stepped it up, with Quentin Pacher and Fred Wright setting a higher tempo.

Eenkhoorn was the next to attack and he was the only one to join the trio to make it a four-man group.

The peloton left it too late, and they just held on as Asgreen raised his arms at the line. The huge effort took its toll as he dismounted and sat on the tarmac to get his breath back, before being congratulated by a Soudal Quick-Step teammate.

"It means so much with the period I had this year since I crashed at Tour de Suisse," Asgreen said. "I've come a long way, and to cap it off with a victory like this is amazing."

land, July 20, (AP): On a day that started with tragedy, the Football Ferns triumphed.

Hannah Wilkinson scored to open the second half and New Zealand went on to upset Norway 1-0 on Thursday for its first-ever win at the Women's World Cup, hours after a shooting in downtown Auckland shocked the host nation.

A gunman stormed a high-rise construction site near Norway's team hotel and opened fire, killing two people. The gunman was found dead after a police shootout.

There was increased security at Eden Park stadium, where 42,137 - a record crowd for a soccer match in New Zealand - were on hand to cheer on the home team, co-hosts of the tournament with Australia. New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Hipkins was among those at the game. He went into the locker room after the game and thanked the team for an inspirational performance.

After an opening ceremony that honored New Zealand's Indigenous heritage, there was a moment of silence for the victims of the shooting. Five people were wounded in the attack, including a police officer.

New Zealand's Football Ferns had played in five previous World Cups, but hadn't won a match.

"We really wanted to inspire young girls across the nation and I think we did that tonight. We showed that anything is possible," said captain Ali Riley, who had happy tears in her eyes.

Norway couldn't finish off its chanc-es in the first half while the Ferns de-fended well. Ada Hegerberg's attempt in the 37th minute was deftly defended by Rebekah Stott and the match was scoreless after the first half.

The first woman to win the prestigious Ballon d'Or award, Hegerberg has 43 goals in 77 international appearances. Currently playing profession-ally for Lyon, she has scored a record 59 goals in the Champions League. But she couldn't find the back of the net in Auckland.

Instead, Wilkinson scored in the opening moments of the second half. Jaqui Hand moved up the right side and placed a perfect cross at Wilkinson's feet for the goal. While the home crowd wildly celebrated, Norway goalkeeper Aurora Mikalson stood with her

Norway won the World Cup in 1995. At the last tournament in 2019, the team fell to England in the quarterfinals. At the Women's Euro in 2022, England routed the Norwegians 8-0. In the run-up to this game, winger Caroline Graham Hansen called the World Cup a chance to "start fresh."

Tuva Hansen nearly tied it for Nor-

SOCCER

way in the 83rd but her shot caromed off the crossbar. The Ferns had a chance to double their lead in the 89th after video review awarded them a penalty, but Ria Percival's attempt hit the post.

Stoppage time stretched for more than 10 minutes before the whistle blew and New Zealand's bench rushed the field in celebration. Riley pounded her chest for the electrified fans.

"It's really hard to put into words, but absolutely surreal," Ferns defender Katie Bowen said of the droughtbreaking victory. "I mean we made history tonight, but we can't rest on that. Our goal is to get out of the group."

Bowen said she was awakened by an early morning call from her brother, checking if she was OK after hearing about the Auckland shooting. "I think everyone was just pretty

taken aback, because this doesn't really happen in New Zealand," Bowen said. "But I think, especially on a game day, down to just each individual doing what they needed to do to process it

game at the same time.

New Zealand got the nod to stage the World Cup's first game, although cohost Australia's match against Ireland in Sydney started about an hour after fulltime in Auckland.

Considered the favorites in Group A, the Norwegians went into the game 5-1-1 all-time against New Zealand, with the only loss coming in a 2019 exhibition match.

Norway coach Hege Riise said her players were not impacted by the shooting, despite the incident happened near their hotel.

How much of a role Sam Kerr can physically play for Australia at the Women's World Cup remains completely uncertain.

Even if her time on the sidelines with a calf muscle injury is extended, though, Australia's iconic striker still has important role to play for the tournament co-hosts after helping to inspire the Matildas to a 1-0 opening win over Ireland on Thursday.

Both host nations were in action on the opening day. The Australians were expected to have too much star power against Ireland, which was on debut at the tournament. New Zealand had never won a game at the World Cup.

But the New Zealanders produced a 1-0 upset win over 1995 champion Norway in the tournament's first match, hours after a fatal shooting in downtown Auckland shocked their nation. A minute's silence was held before that match at Eden Park.



Australia's Mary Fowler (right), vies for the ball with Ireland's Ruesha Littlejohn during the Women's World Cup soccer match between Australia and Ireland at Stadium Australia in Sydney, Australia. (AP)



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