

Egypt tracks flag burning

KUWAIT CITY, July 27, (KUNA): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Thursday expressed gratitude to Egypt regarding its cooperation and rapid response to determine circumstances of the incident of burning the State of Kuwait Flag.

The Ministry affirmed that a video clip of the incident had been posted on social media platforms, noting that the Egyptian authorities denied "existence of any evidences proving that the user of the relevant account is Egyptian or living in Egypt."

It affirmed that the brotherly relations with Egypt are solid and their mutual keenness to take any required action vis a vis any bid intended to undermine the distinctive ties between the two brotherly countries.

Man convicted in 2015 Shia mosque bombing among 5 executed in Kuwait

Five with bombing 'death' in absentia yet to be captured

KUWAIT CITY, July 27, (AP): Kuwait said Thursday it executed five prisoners, including an inmate convicted over the bombing of a Shiite mosque in 2015 that killed 27 people and was claimed by the Islamic State group.

The inmates were hanged at the Central Prison, Kuwait's Public Prosecution said in a statement. Prosecutors said the five include the man convicted in the mosque attack, Abdulrahman Sabah Idan, three people convicted of murder and a convicted drug dealer from Sri Lanka. One of the convicted murderers was Egyptian, another was Kuwaiti.

Idan, known as Saud, was a so-called Bidoun, a group largely made up of descendants of desert nomads considered stateless by the Kuwaiti government. During his trial, prosecutors described him as driving the Saudi suicide bomber to the Imam al-Sadiq Mosque in Kuwait City.

The 2015 bombing occurred during midday Friday prayers inside the mosque, one of Kuwait's oldest for Shi-

ites. The Islamic State group, which at the time controlled large areas in both Syria and Iraq, claimed the attack, which also wounded over 220 people. The Sunni extremist group views Shiites as apostates deserving of death. It was the first militant attack in Kuwait in more than two decades. The attack was likely intended to forment unrest between Kuwait's Sunni and Shiite Muslim populations, but instead it was widely condemned and reawakened a sense of national solidarity not seen since Saddam Hussein's 1990 invasion of the small, oil-rich country.

The extremist group no longer controls any territory following a grueling military campaign by an array of local and international forces, but continues to carry out sporadic attacks in Syria and Iraq. It also boasts affiliates in several Asian and African countries.

Kuwait's appeals and highest court upheld Idan's death sentence prior to his execution. Five other suspects received death sentences in absentia. They have yet to be captured.

Executions are relatively rare in Kuwait, which put seven inmates to death last November. Before that, the last mass execution was in 2017, when Kuwait executed seven prisoners, including a ruling family member.

Opinion Abolish subsidies and increase low incomes

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

INDEED the parliamentarians have lost their bearings. During the electoral campaigns, slogans were raised, but confusion prevailed among the people and the candidates. The parliamentary majority announced that it stood by the people, supported their demands, and sought to achieve them. However, after they were elected, the mood changed, and the suggestions they were making were strange to Kuwait and Kuwaitis, to say the least.

It is as if this country lives in the luxury of entertaining itself with small matters, and neither has crises that "cannot be carried by two camels," nor have people who groan from the dire situation they are enduring.

These parliamentarians revealed the fact that they do not have realistic programs. Instead of a proposal that benefits the people, some proposed a law to ban tattoos and plastic surgeries. Others contented themselves with amending some laws that concern only a specific group of Kuwaitis.

The majority of the people are waiting for justice and assistance in managing their living affairs, and making their lives better.

Therefore, when the Minister of Commerce asserts that he is not thinking of canceling the ration card, he is expressing a ministerial-parliamentary mentality that does not understand what equality means in terms of rights and duties stipulated in the Constitution.

If his statement was aimed to oppose the pro-



posal of MPs Marzouq Al-Ghanim and Ahmed Lari just for the sake of opposing, then he has lost sight of the fact that public money bears wastage of seven billion dinars annually on ration that is no longer needed.

In fact, it aimed to increase the wealth of merchants and the rich at the expense of the low-income earners.

In recent years, smuggling of subsidized food items constituted a crisis for all agencies of the Ministry of Interior.

Ironically, these materials continue to be sold in other countries at prices lower than their cost in Kuwait.

What MPs Al-Ghanim and Lari proposed is realistically in the interest of the low-income earners and the poor, because canceling subsidies on goods and allocating cash support to the needy saves public money about five billion dinars. It has been proven that just one billion dinars is sufficient and in fact more for them, while the remaining can go to other outlets that Kuwait needs.

When water and electricity are wasted in palaces, and owners of huge luxury cars benefit from the subsidized gasoline, then it is unfair, and in fact, a waste of grace.

If the rich man suffers from a cough, his private plane takes him to the most luxurious hospitals abroad, because he believes there is no proper medical infrastructure in Kuwait, let alone the fact that he contributed to its poor quality.

> Continued on Page 5 Email: ahmed@aljarallah.com Follow me on: facebook. ahmedaljarallah@gmail.com

Day by Day

OH PEOPLE of the Emirates, a notorious international swindler has come to your country, after deceiving the people of Kuwait leaving a trail of victims in his wake.

It is crucial that you remain vigilant against him. This swindler holds three different nationalities and has been subjected to American sanctions.

Despite these actions taken against him, he shamelessly claims to be the agent of president and high-ranking officials from his home country. He further asserts that he possesses substan-

tial amounts of money, which he intends to invest in projects targeting the people. Oh people of the Emirates, be wary of this

Oh people of the Emirates, be wary of this fraudster who has engaged in various illicit activities such as stealing planes and real estate, operating bogus agencies, and forging signatures of innocent individuals, including cardiologists.

This swindler repeats the story of the Bangladeshi in the State of Kuwait, who led dozens to prison after they were wrongly implicated. Currently, this thief walks freely in the 'Dubai Mall' and curses pursue him. Oh, UAE Minister of Interior, the documents are there to prove his misdeeds.

... Yet tomorrow is another day. Zahed Matar



Shiites participate in Muharram processions at the Imam Ali shrine in Najaf, Iraq, Wednesday, July 26, 2023. During Muharram, Islam's second holiest month, Shiites mark the death of Imam Hussein (RA), the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), at the Battle of Karbala in present-day Iraq in the 7th century. (AP)

Newswatch

ABU DHABI: UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan mourned the passing away of his brother Sheikh Saeed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the representative of Abu Dhabi ruler, on Wednesday.

The UAE announced a three-day mourning and the hoisting of the national flag at half mast as from Thursday, July 27, until Saturday, July 29, according to a press release from the Presidential Court.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has addressed a cable of condolences to Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, on demise of Sheikh Saeed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, the Representative of Abu Dhabi Ruler.

His Highness the Amir expressed deep sorrow on Sheikh Saeed's death, praying for his soul and his family so they may endure patiently the somber event. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has addressed a cable of condolences to Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, on demise of Sheikh Saeed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, the Representative of Abu Dhabi Ruler. (KUNA)

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KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense **Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah** sent on Wednesday a cable of condolences to Saudi Minister of Defense Prince Khaled bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud over the tragic death of the crew of a Saudi fighter jet. Sheikh Ahmad Fahad prayed for Allah, the

Sheikh Ahmad Fahad prayed for Allah, the Almighty, to lodge the martyrs in paradise and grant their families patience and solace, according to astatement from the Ministry of Defense.

A Saudi F-15SA fighter jet crashed during a training exercise Wednesday, killing the crew on board, the kingdom said.

A statement carried by the state-run Saudi Press Agency said the crash happened near the King Khalid Air Base in **Khamis Mushait**, some 815 kilometers (506 miles) southwest of the capital, Riyadh.

Military spokesman Brig. Gen. **Turki al-Malki** said in the statement that an investigation was underway to determine the cause of the crash. (Agencies)

RIYADH: The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) announced on Thursday that a ministerial extraordinary meeting of the organization would be held on Monday to address the issue of recurring desecration of the Quran.

The OIC Secretariat General said in a statement that the virtual meeting would be held in response to a request by **Saudi Arabia** and Iraq. The ministerial meeting will be held in line with the final statement of the executive committee, held in Jeddah on July 2 regarding recurring burning of copies of the Quran.

Copies of the Quran have been repeatedly burned in some European countries recently challenging sentiments of millions of Muslims worldwide. Governments of Arab and Muslim states have decried the brazen attack on the sacred book. (KUNA)

RIYADH: Secretary-General of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) **Jasem Al-Budaiwi** stressed Wednesday the significance of promoting strategic partnership between the GCC and **China**.

Al-Budaiwi made the remark while meeting with Chinese ambassador to Saudi Arabia **Chen Weiqing**, the GCC Secretariat General said in a press release.

During the meeting, they looked into a mechanism to follow up on the implementation of the statement adopted during the GCC-China summit held in the kingdom on December 9, 2022, which aimed at propping up existing strategic partnership between both sides.

They also tackled joint negotiations about a bilateral free trade agreement, the latest regional and international developments and issues of mutual concern, according to the release. (KUNA)

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin said Wednesday the relationship between his country and **Egypt** has a distinguished nature thanks to the numerous joint projects, notably in energy.

During his meeting with Egyptian President Abdelfattah el-Sisi in St Petersburg, Putin said that since both countries established their diplomatic relations, 80 years ago, the relations in all areas have got a special nature.

The meeting took place on the eve of the Second Summit **Russia-Africa** Economic and Humanitarian Forum, the Russian Presidency reported on its website. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: The Arab Corporation for Investment and Export Credit Guarantee (Daman) said Thursday that foreign direct investment projects coming to the region during the year 2022 increased by 74 percent to 1,617 projects, with 358 percent investment cost worth USD 200 billion.

In a press statement, DAMAN said that these projects were concentrated in **Egypt** with a 53 percent share of the investment cost, and the **UAE** with a 57 percent share.

The cumulative value in the region over the past 20 years reached USD 15.5 trillion through more than 16,000 projects and secured more than two million job opportunity. (KUNA)

Protests over dinar drop as US blacklists 14 Iraq banks

Suspicion of funneling money to Iran

IRBIL, July 27, (AP): Dozens of people protested in front of the Central Bank of Iraq in Baghdad and bank owners called for official action to stem a sharp increase in the dollar exchange rate Wednesday, after the United States blacklisted 14 Iraqi banks.

Over the past two days, the market rate of the dollar jumped from 1,470 dinar per dollar to 1,570 dinar per dollar. The jump came after the U.S. listed 14 private Iraqi banks among banks that are banned from dealing with U.S. dollars due to suspicions of money laundering and funneling funds to Iran.

The ban was imposed by the U.S. Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and was first reported by the Wall Street Journal on July 19.

"The listing of almost one third of the private banks as banned from dealing with the U.S. dollar will have negative consequences from many perspectives," Haidar al Shamaa, owner of a private bank in Baghdad said at a news conference Wednesday.

He called on "the brothers at the Iraqi government to work ... to undo the damage which occurred to us specifically, and to the Iraqi banking section in general."

The 14 banks facing the ban issued a joint statement urging the Iraqi government to ad-

dress the issue and warning that banning a third of Iraq's private banks from dollar trading would not only impact the dollar price but hinder foreign investment.

Protesters organized by a group calling itself Thuwar Tishreen (October Revolutionaries), which is connected to a movement that started mass protests in Iraq in 2021, also demanded that the government take action to halt inflation.

Also on Wednesday, central bank chief Ali al-Allaq told the state-run Iraqi News Agency that his institution continues to provide dollars at the official rate of 1,320 dinar to the dollar for "all legitimate transactions" including "remittances and credits for various imports."

He blamed the current rise in the street price of the dollar on the "reluctance of certain merchants" who "do not practice legitimate activities and operations" to use the official electronic platform used for currency requests.

On Sunday, the Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al Sudani met with al-Allaq and discussed measures to stabilize the dinar price against the dollar. A similar dive in the value of the dinar took place earlier this year after measures taken by the United States late last year to stamp out money laundering and the channeling of dollars to Iran and Syria from Iraq severely restricted Iraq's access to hard currency.

25 basis points

CBK raises discount rate

KUWAIT CITY, July 27, (KUNA): The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) on Wednesday decided to raise the discount rate by 0.25 percent from 4.0 percent to 4.25 percent effective July 27, 2023.

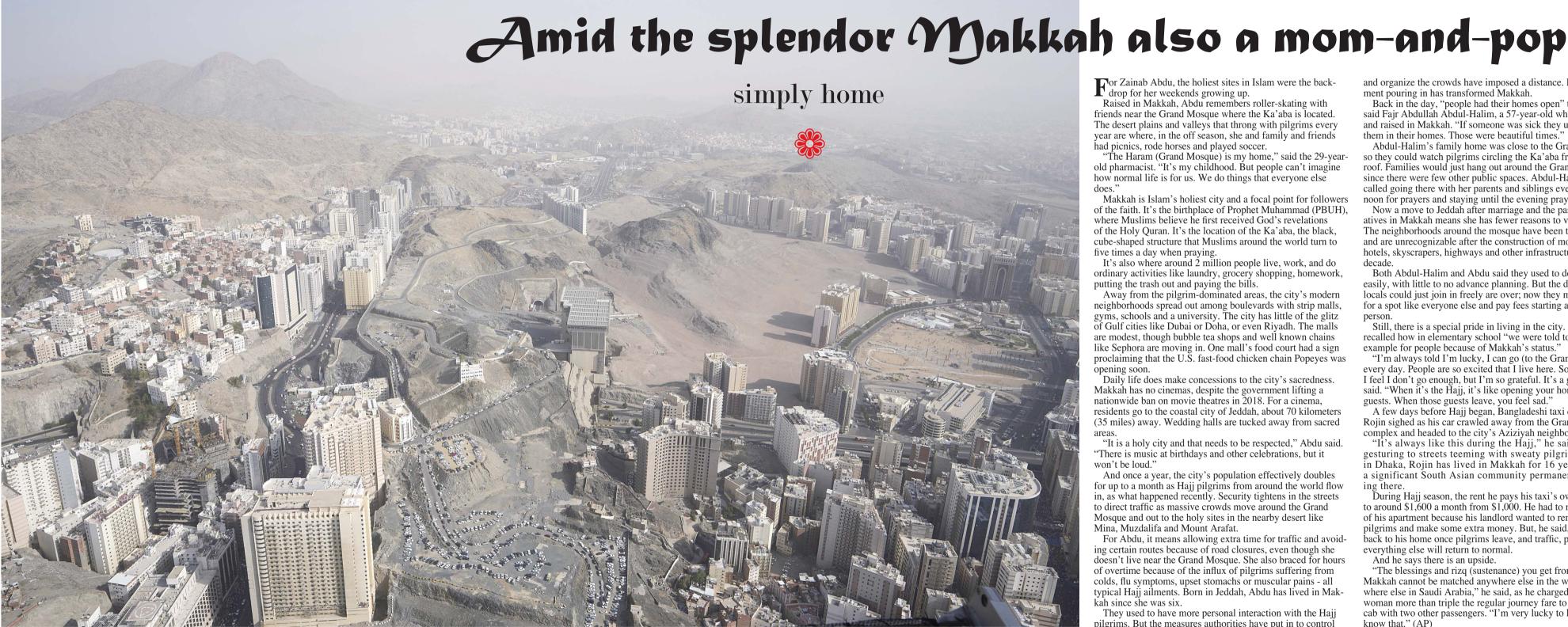
The decision is part of the CBK's efforts to maintain monetary and financial stability, enhance the economic growth of the various economic sectors, particularly the non-oil sectors, contain local inflationary pressures and maintain the competitiveness and attractiveness of the national currency as a lucrative store of domestic savings, Governor and Chairman of the CBK Board of Directors Basel Al-Haroon, said in a press statement.

It is also based on the bank's continuous monitoring of the economic, monetary and banking developments, he added.

This decision is informed by a thorough analysis of the latest economic, monetary, and banking data and information, including growth and inflation levels that trended upwards in June after stabilizing in the previous period, indicators of local liquidity, developments in deposits and bank credit, interest rates on both the Kuwaiti Dinar and on main foreign currencies, thus supporting the attractiveness of the Kuwaiti Dinar, he noted.

The Governor concluded that CBK shall continue its monitoring of the local and international economic, monetary, and banking developments, and direct the various monetary policy tools to provide an environment conducive to sustainable economic growth.





A general view shows the Muslim holy city of Makkah, Saudi Arabia, Sunday, June 25, 2023. Makkah is Islam's most sacred city and a focal point for the faith's followers. But it's also a place where around 2 million people live, work, and do everyday activities like laundry, grocery shopping, homework, putting the trash out, and paying the bills. Traffic, the population, and prices balloon during the peak Ramadan and Hajj seasons. (AP)

editor's choice



For Zainab Abdu, the holiest sites in Islam were the back-drop for her weekends growing up. Raised in Makkah, Abdu remembers roller-skating with

friends near the Grand Mosque where the Ka'aba is located. The desert plains and valleys that throng with pilgrims every year are where, in the off season, she and family and friends had picnics, rode horses and played soccer.

"The Haram (Grand Mosque) is my home," said the 29-yearold pharmacist. "It's my childhood. But people can't imagine how normal life is for us. We do things that everyone else does.

Makkah is Islam's holiest city and a focal point for followers of the faith. It's the birthplace of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), where Muslims believe he first received God's revelations of the Holy Quran. It's the location of the Ka'aba, the black, cube-shaped structure that Muslims around the world turn to five times a day when praying.

It's also where around 2 million people live, work, and do ordinary activities like laundry, grocery shopping, homework, putting the trash out and paying the bills. Away from the pilgrim-dominated areas, the city's modern

neighborhoods spread out among boulevards with strip malls, gyms, schools and a university. The city has little of the elitz of Gulf cities like Dubai or Doha, or even Riyadh. The malls are modest, though bubble tea shops and well known chains like Sephora are moving in. One mall's food court had a sign proclaiming that the U.S. fast-food chicken chain Popeyes was opening soon.

Daily life does make concessions to the city's sacredness. Makkah has no cinemas, despite the government lifting a nationwide ban on movie theatres in 2018. For a cinema, residents go to the coastal city of Jeddah, about 70 kilometers (35 miles) away. Wedding halls are tucked away from sacred areas

"It is a holy city and that needs to be respected," Abdu said. "There is music at birthdays and other celebrations, but it won't be loud."

And once a year, the city's population effectively doubles for up to a month as Hajj pilgrims from around the world flow in, as what happened recently. Security tightens in the streets to direct traffic as massive crowds move around the Grand Mosque and out to the holy sites in the nearby desert like Mina, Muzdalifa and Mount Arafat.

For Abdu, it means allowing extra time for traffic and avoiding certain routes because of road closures, even though she doesn't live near the Grand Mosque. She also braced for hours of overtime because of the influx of pilgrims suffering from colds, flu symptoms, upset stomachs or muscular pains - all typical Hajj ailments. Born in Jeddah, Abdu has lived in Makkah since she was six.

They used to have more personal interaction with the Hajj pilgrims. But the measures authorities have put in to control

and organize the crowds have imposed a distance. Huge investment pouring in has transformed Makkah.

Back in the day, "people had their homes open" to pilgrims, said Fair Abdullah Abdul-Halim, a 57-year-old who was born and raised in Makkah. "If someone was sick they used to treat them in their homes. Those were beautiful times.

Abdul-Halim's family home was close to the Grand Mosque. so they could watch pilgrims circling the Ka'aba from their roof. Families would just hang out around the Grand Mosque, since there were few other public spaces. Abdul-Halim recalled going there with her parents and siblings every afternoon for prayers and staying until the evening prayers.

Now a move to Jeddah after marriage and the passing of relatives in Makkah means she has fewer reasons to visit the city. The neighborhoods around the mosque have been transformed and are unrecognizable after the construction of monumental hotels, skyscrapers, highways and other infrastructure the past decade

Both Abdul-Halim and Abdu said they used to do Hajj easily, with little to no advance planning. But the days when locals could just join in freely are over; now they must apply for a spot like everyone else and pay fees starting at \$1,060 per person

Still, there is a special pride in living in the city. Abdu recalled how in elementary school "we were told to set a good example for people because of Makkah's status."

"I'm always told I'm lucky, I can go (to the Grand Mosque) every day. People are so excited that I live here. Sometimes I feel I don't go enough, but I'm so grateful. It's a gift," she said. "When it's the Hajj, it's like opening your home to guests. When those guests leave, you feel sad."

A few days before Hajj began, Bangladeshi taxi driver Jahid Rojin sighed as his car crawled away from the Grand Mosque complex and headed to the city's Aziziyah neighborhood.

"It's always like this during the Hajj," he said in Urdu, gesturing to streets teeming with sweaty pilgrims. Born in Dhaka, Rojin has lived in Makkah for 16 years, part of a significant South Asian community permanently residing there

During Hajj season, the rent he pays his taxi's owner jumps to around \$1,600 a month from \$1,000. He had to move out of his apartment because his landlord wanted to rent it out to pilgrims and make some extra money. But, he said, he'll go back to his home once pilgrims leave, and traffic, prices and everything else will return to normal.

And he says there is an upside.

"The blessings and rizq (sustenance) you get from being in Makkah cannot be matched anywhere else in the world, anywhere else in Saudi Arabia," he said, as he charged a desperate woman more than triple the regular journey fare to share his cab with two other passengers. "I'm very lucky to live here. I know that." (AP)

Prayer Timings						
Fajr 03:35	Asr 15:30					
Sunrise 05:05	Maghrib 18:44					
Zohr 11:54	Isha 20:11					



Expected weather for the next 24 hours: By Day: Very hot with light to

moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind with speeds of 12-45 km/h with a chance for risina dust.

By Night:						
with light to moderate northwest-						
erly wind with speeds of 12-32						
km/h.						
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec				
Kuwait City	48	38				
Kuwait Airport	t 48	30				

Weather

Jahra	
Salmiyah	
Ahmadi	
Nuwaisib	
Wafra	

Abdaly

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

New supply truck unveiled at Buehring Base

Kuwait and US defense, security ties deep-rooted: Colonel Bourisli

KUWAIT CITY, July 27: Colonel Fahad Bourisli from the Kuwait Land Forces affirmed the depth of the defense and security cooperation relations between Kuwait and the United States, revealing that one of the forms of cooperation between the Kuwaiti and American armies is to present the latest developments and innovations of the Ameri-

can forces in armaments and mechanisms to carry wheeled equipment and are equipped with a crane, which the American side seeks to put into service in the year 2026, reports Al-Rai daily. In a statement issued

on the sidelines of the display and testing of an unmanned military supply truck Palletized Load Systems PLS at Buehring Base

on Monday, he said these mechanisms operate automatically and move on their own or through wireless systems.

General Frank

He indicated that their experience on Kuwaiti territory reflects the extent of the cooperation between the armies of the two countries, adding that it is an opportunity for more joint exercises and cooperation in concluding deals in the future.

Meanwhile, the Commander-in-Chief of the

US Central Army Lieutenant General Patrick Frank affirmed that the ten-wheel supply trucks are one of the fruits of advanced technology that is being prepared to enter service in 2026.

He stressed that the US Central Command is working to test this new technology in the desert to collect data on the capabilities of these autonomous vehicles, which reduce the number of soldiers exposed to threats on the battlefield while increasing unit capabilities.

Lieutenant General Patrick Frank said, "These autonomous vehicles will help preserve the lives of Americans and their partners and allies around the world. They are considered the future of logistical support operations for armies. We are therefore testing this new technology in Kuwait in terms of capabilities and performance. We are focused on testing new technologies together withKuwait's Ministry of Defense and all our regional partners, as interoperability is a condition for any new technology.'

He highlighted his country's commitment to developing these vehicles and their autonomous systems.

Furthermore, the logistics officer from the US Central Army Nathan Amos explained that the army tested three self-driving vehicles during support operations in Kuwait. There are seven other vehicles that will soon come for the experiment. These independent systems are installed with a vehicle with ten wheels optimized for transporting loads on surfaces to support Army operations. Autonomous systems are designed to operate semiautonomously with guidance and input.

The purpose of the test was to collect as much data as possible about the capabilities and limitations of semi-autonomous vehicles in the difficult desert environment in Kuwait. The vehicles had been previously tested at the Fort Polk military base in the United States, and in the US European Command.

Amos pointed out that the vehicle operators specialize in army transportation and have been trained on vehicles since late June 2023, adding that semi-autonomous vehicles are the future of army support operations, as they reduce the risks to the employees by reducing the number of operators exposed to threats, while increasing the capacity of sustainability units.

He stressed that training in the use of these mechanisms requires just a two-week training course only to master the method of operating them.

It is worth mentioning that a herd of camels crossed the road designated for testing the PLS, and stopped in the middle of the road for more than half an hour, as if they wanted to watch these vehicles without a driver. After moving from the field, the operators of the vehicles resumed their experience.



The new unmanned military supply truck Palletized Load Systems PLS is unveiled at the Buehring Base.

Body to oversee polls process

Assembly nods supreme

commission for elections



Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah with the Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Zhang Jianwei and other senior officials.

Deputy PM congratulates China on PLA 'versary

Photo by Jehab Qurtal

complaints from voters, nominees and involved organizations and report to the public prosecution with respect of any "suspected crime" during the electoral process.

toral process.

media.

Moreover, the commission will handle elections' results declaration and prepare a

KUWAIT CITY, July 27, (KUNA): The National Assembly during Thursday's special session approved establishment of the "surger concerned comprising for also

the "supreme general commission for elec-

tions" in the first reading. Fifty-six MPs voted in favor of the rel-

evant bill and one voted against, out of the

57 members of the parliament attending the

The blessed bill stipulates empowering

the general commission that would function

under jurisdictions of the minister of justice

to oversee the polls and organize the elec-

The higher commission, planned to

group seven Kuwaiti judges for a four-year

mandate, would be tasked with examining

legality of nominations for the parliamenta-

ry elections, setting rules for electoral cam-

paigns, regulating elections' expenses and

funding resources and time to be dedicated

fairly for the candidates in the audio-visual

Its tasks also include regulating role of

civil societies, international agencies and

setting locations of the electoral commis-

sions' venues. It is also entitled to receive

session at Abdullah Al-Salem Hall.

report about its assessment of the polls, a copy of which would be submitted to the minister of justice and the head of the supreme judicial council.

National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Sa'adoun opened Thursday special session to examine a bill on National Assembly elections.

The draft law aims to reform the electoral process through additional legalities and creating an environment that allows for free honest and transparent elections. cabinet's The weekly-issued state-

ment had mentioned

Al-Sa'adoun

on Sunday that it had referred to the assembly a draft law on the electoral process as well as a high national commission for elections.

The National Assembly in its session last Tuesday had approved a letter from head of legislative parliamentary committee, MP Muhannad Al-Sayer, and head of the interior and defense parliamentary committee, MP Khaled Al-Otaibi, requesting the formation of a joint committee to examine the draft bill.

Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah affirmed keenness on strengthening the "deep and distinguished" relationship with the People's Republic of China in all fields.

"The friendly relations with the PRC are

based on cooperation and mutual respect, he said while attending a celebration, held on Wednesday by Chana Embassy in Kuwait to mark the 96th anniversary of the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

Sheikh Ahmad Fahad congratulated the

political leadership of China on this occasion, praising the technological advancement and expertise of the PLA.

He noted that the State of Kuwait and the PRC share the desire to promote the bilateral ties in all areas, notably the defense domain.

'Overcome shortage'

Other Voices

Summer clubs, learning Qur'an

By Ahmad alsarraf

It appears that, before we witness a re-turn to a path aligned with humanity's progress towards openness and liberation from the constraints of puritanism, there is an observable surge in religious influence, particularly from groups like Brotherthe

hood, Juhaymiyyah, Sururism, Salafism, and other similar factions. It seems that

certain parties are well aware of the prevailing political climate and are seeking to exploit it to

their advantage. Ibrahim Al-Otaibi, Assistant Undersecretary of Endowments for the Holy Qur'an Affairs and Islamic Studies Sector, has expressed plans to increase the salaries of Quran memorizers and expedite the payment of rewards for outstanding performance.

However, this announcement raises concerns about the number of students involved in memorization lessons.

According to Al-Otaibi, there are supposedly 40,000 male and female students attending these lessons in various homes. This figure, if accurate, is alarmingly high and raises doubts about its credibility.

If the number is indeed incorrect, those responsible for reporting it should be held accountable and relieved of their positions. On the other hand, if it is accurate and the main motivation for these students is the financial reward. those behind this idea should be held accountable as well, as it would indicate a misuse of state funds and a moral compromise in the pursuit of financial gains. If there is any manipulation or exaggeration of these numbers to secure more funding, it is unacceptable.

Furthermore, if the number is correct, the situation remains concerning as it is unclear how such a significant percentage of the population, including boys, youth, and even middle-aged in-dividuals, are enrolling in Quran memorization lessons, despite having already received Quranic education in state schools for many years.

It is worth considering whether these centers are mainly attended by non-Kuwaitis, as this could shed light on potential issues with the dedication and commitment of the teaching staff. Cooperation to bend or ignore working hours while still receiving a full salary raises questions about the effectiveness and seriousness of these centers.

In light of the abundance of online resources available for Quran memorization, there might be a better approach to tackling the issue. Rather than relying on physical institutes and memorization houses, promoting digital literacy and empowering individuals to learn independently could be more beneficial.

The concentration of memorization centers in specific areas, such as Saad Al-Abdullah, Al-Qairawan, Abdullah Al-Mubarak, West Abdullah Al-Mubarak, Al-Qusour, Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential City, Al-Mutlaa, and Jaber Al-Ahmad, raises questions about the rationale behind this distribution.

Additionally, managing 200 centers requires a substantial administrative apparatus, and it is unclear whether such a setup is truly necessary.

The ministry's supervision of summer clubs focused on Quranic studies also raises concerns. There are allegations that these clubs are heavily influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood and serve as breeding grounds for future cadres. Age-based observations suggest that these organizations target individuals from an early age, further emphasizing the need for scrutiny and caution.

Overall, the lack of attention and accountability for what is happening in these centers and roles, including potential administrative issues and the potential negative impact on young minds, could lead to a disaster that has been ignored for too long and may now be challenging to control.

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Hire more domestic help: Al-Shammari

KUWAIT CITY, July 27: Bassam Al-Shammari, a specialist in domestic labor affairs, called on all concerned government agencies, led by the Public Authority for Manpower and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to speed up the pace of signing memorandums of understanding with new countries to recruit domestic workers in order to fill the current shortage in light of the expiry of the contracts of hundreds of them who desire to return to their countries, reports Aljarida daily.

Al-Shammari said, "The First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khalid directed PAM in May regarding the need to open frameworks for cooperation to recruit expatriate workers in the private and domestic sectors from new countries to fill the need of the market, which currently suffers from significant shortage in terms of professional and technical employment. However, no steps have so far been announced on the ground in this regard."

He stressed that Sheikh Talal Al-Khalid's directives also included coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to develop plans through which memorandums of understanding could be signed with new labor-exporting countries, in implementation of the state's policies aimed at adjusting the demographics, and ensuring the diversity of countries exporting expatriate workers to fill their current shortage.

Al-Shammari affirmed the urgent need to increase the memorandums of understanding with new countries for the recruitment and use of domestic labor, and to open support activities for the employment of domestic workers, for example, daily or monthly work, in addition to ensuring financial rights, and the speedy settlement of labor disputes with employers.

He called for separating the overlap in terms of spe-cializations between PAM and other concerned government agencies, activating the educational policy for the three parties to the labor equation including recruitment and employment offices and employers, and introducing them to all the rights and duties guaranteed by the law.

Al-Shammari said, "Kuwait has the best laws in the region for regulating the recruitment and use of domestic workers, which include many and wide labor advantages such as paid annual leave, end-of-service reward and weekly leave, as well as determining the number of daily working hours. However, they need activation and follow-up to ensure their implementation.

KISR analyzes wastewater

'VOCs well below allowed limits'

KUWAIT CITY, July 27: The Water Re-search Center of the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research recently conducted a comprehensive study focusing on the analysis of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) present in wastewater, reports Al-Rai daily.

The study targeted one of the largest wastewater treatment plants in Kuwait, aiming to identify the most prevalent VOCs, measure their concentrations, and evaluate the treatment plant's efficiency in removing these compounds.

Headed by Dr. Abdullah Al-Maatouq, the project involves collecting wastewater samples from four distinct locations within the treatment plants. These samples underwent meticulous analysis to identify the common VOCs and determine their concentrations within permissible limits.

The results of the study were promising, indicating that the treatment plants possess a remarkable capacity to eliminate a significant portion of volatile organic compounds during their operation.

The overall processing efficiency surpassed an impressive 98 percent, underlining the efficacy of the treatment process in dealing with VOCs.

Furthermore, the concentrations of

VOCs observed during the study were found to be well below the maximum permissible levels for treated wastewater, signifying a successful and effective treatment approach.

Meanwhile, the Council of Ministers has agreed on the appointment of three deputies for the director general of Kuwait Municipality with the rank of assistant undersecretary, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting a reliable source.

The source revealed that the deputies are Saud Al-Dabbous, Fahd Al-Batel and Youssef Al-Azmi. He said Minister of State for Municipality Affairs Fahd Al-Shula will soon issue a decree on the appointment of these deputies, which will take effect once published in Kuwait Gazette.

Currently, there are 10 vacant leadership positions in the Municipality - general manager and nine assistant general manag-

On the other hand, Al-Shula appointed Head of the Fatwa Monitoring Unit in the Legal Department Hussein Shabib Al-Ajmi as Legal Department Director; in addition to his current duties.

He also assigned the management agent, Laila Gharib, to the Office of Legal Studies and Technical Inspection.





LOCAL

'UK committed to defending and protecting Kuwait's security and stability'

Kuwait, UK share strong historic ties of 125 years: Cleverly

By Abdullah Al-Anezi

KUWAIT CITY, July 27, (KUNA): Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs James Cleverly affirmed that the Kuwaiti-British relations are historic and strong, hoping to further develop them in the future.

In an interview with KUNA on Thursday, on the sidelines of his visit to the country, Cleverly noted that the two countries share 125 years of relations, adding that the celebration of the 70th anniversary of opening the Kuwait Investment Office in London is an example of the strong partnership between Kuwait and the UK.

Meanwhile, Cleverly expressed joy over his meeting with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, where they discussed bilateral ties on all levels. He added that he had also discussed topics of mutual concern with ministers.

The UK is committed to defending and protecting Kuwait's security and stability, said the minister, noting his country's role in standing side by side with Kuwait during the Iraqi Invasion.

The UK's relations with Kuwait are not only limited to the military and economic fields, but also include health, technology and education, he said.

He said the UK is looking forward to cooperate with Kuwait to achieve peace and stability in the Middle East region, to encourage countries to turn to dialogue instead of political conflicts.

Moreover, the British official noted that his country also aims to enhance cooperation with

the GCC states, through signing a free trade zone agreement.

As for the Palestinian cause, Cleverly said that Kuwait has been continuously supporting Palestine and its people, adding that Kuwait and the UK share the same view on the "twostate" solution, to achieve peace in the region.

Meanwhile, he spoke of the Russian invasion

of Ukraine, saying it is similar to what happened to Kuwait in 1990, affirming that the UK is against any violation of the international law.

Cleverly

Yesterday, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met with Cleverly. The UK minister also seper-ately met with First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister,



MADRID, July 27, (KUNA): The City of Marbella, Spain, announced on Thursday that it will host the second edition of the Kuwaiti-Spanish festival next Sunday.

This came in the joint press conference to present this cultural event, where Marbella Municipality Representative Remedios Bocanegra said that the event will take place on July 30 until August 1 in The Garden of Europe in Puerto Banus.

"This event seeks to strengthen the close and long relations between Marbella and Kuwait since the late 1970s of the last century," Said Bocanegra.

She pointed out that the event will allow discovering the gastronomy, folklore, culture and art of Kuwait, while stressing that the Kuwaiti community in the city is very important.

On her part, Chairman of the event's

Minister of Oil, Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment and Acting Minister of Finance Dr Saad Al-Barrak and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Alorganizing company (Future International Group) Abrar Al-Masoud said that this event sheds the light on the relations between Kuwait and Spain in the Political, Economic, and Cultural fields.

Al-Masoud thanked the Municipality of Marbella for their cooperation in the first edition of the festival back in 2016 and in the second edition this year. She also thanked the sponsors of the event, Al-Anba newspaper, Q8 Petroleum Company, Kuwait Airways and Bani Hafeth Real Estates Company.

She noted that the event will kick off at 7pm (local time) until midnight with the Kuwaiti Ambassador to Spain Khalifa Al-Kharafi, Spanish Ambassador to Kuwait Miguel Aguillar and several senior officials from both countries attending the opening ceremony.

Jaber Al-Sabah.

Cleverly had visited Qatar on Tuesday before heading to Kuwait and is set to conclude his Middle East tour in Jordan.

Maximum expected electricity load 17,503 megawatts in 2024

MEW seeks to raise state of readiness

KUWAIT CITY, July 27: A report issued by the Ministry of Electric-

current summer, specifically the period from June 1 to the end of August, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The report was regarding the operational status of the network for the summer of 2023, and was prepared by the monitoring and control centers to determine the availability of electrical capacity to meet the needs of consumers and to know the problems that may occur in the network and their implications.

It concluded that the maximum load expected for the summer of 2023 can be determined by calculating an annual increase of four percent compared to last year's consumption of 16,830 megawatts.

Safe capacity

However, if an eight percent increase is calculated, the expected maximum load for the current summer is 17,878 megawatts, bearing in mind that the value of the available safe capacity is 17,660 megawatts, while the maximum available capacity is 18,250 megawatts.

To cover the increase in loads due to any unforeseen factors or circumstances, it is necessary to raise the state of readiness, while paying attention to the readiness of the monitoring and control centers to deal with any emergency circumstance.

Regarding the expected loads for the next lating an annual increas

'Power consumption' index recorded 15,880 megawatts

KUWAIT CITY, July 27: The power consumption index recorded 15,880 megawatts on Wednesday - lower than the consumption in previous days, reports Al-Anba daily. According to official data from the Minis-

try of Electricity, the power reserve reached 1,670 megawatts when the highest temperature was recorded at 2:00 pm Wednesday.

emergency situations, from a member of the Gulf interconnection network, so that Kuwait's share is used to cover any increase in loads or to reduce the loads of some generation units.

The report also urged to work on solving the problems of generating units that are still out of service and power station equipment, and carry out emergency repair operations in this regard to return them to service.

In order to rationalize consumption, ensure the stability of the network at peak time and avoid power outages or resorting to programmed disconnection during the period when the demand for energy increases and the loads rise to the highest limit, the report highlighted the importance of adopting measures to reduce the values of loads at peak time, or to encourage consumption at other times and carry over part of the loads to other times.

It recommended instructing the co



Tunisian Ambassador to Kuwait Al-Hashimi Ajeeli and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, Dr. Hilal Al-Sayer

Kuwait's 'humanitarian efforts' highly appreciated worldwide: Tunisian envoy

KUWAIT CITY, July 27, (KUNA): Kuwait's prominent humanitarian efforts are highly appreciated and recognized around the world, said Tunisian Ambassador to Kuwait Al-Hashimi Ajeeli.

In a statement to KUNA after his meeting with Chairman of the Board of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Dr Hilal Al-Sayer on Wednesday, Ajeeli hailed the strong and historic Kuwaiti-Tunisian relations, hoping for further cooperation in the humanitarian field.

He applauded KRCS' role in easing the suffering of people affected by natural disasters and war around the world.

On his part, Dr Al-Sayer affirmed that the society will continue exerting efforts to aid those in need.

He also appreciated the efforts of Ambassador Ajeeli in strengthening ties beteen the two sides, adding that KRCS is coordinating with its Tunisian counterpart to develop their humanitarian work

ity and Water revealed several scenarios for dealing with increased electricity loads, according to the data provided by the concerned sectors in the ministry, as well as the study by the ministry's advisor on the maximum load for the



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rate of four percent, the report indicated that the maximum expected load for the year 2024 is 17,503 MW. By calculating an annual increase of 8 percent, it becomes 18,876 MW. The load will rise to 18,203 MW in 2025 when calculating an increase of 4 percent, and 20,386 megawatts at a rate of 8 percent.

As for the year 2026, the maximum load will reach 18,931 megawatts at the rate of four percent, and 22,017 megawatts at the rate of 8 percent annually. The expected load in 2027 is 19,689 MW in the first case and 23,779 megawatts in the second case.

Regarding the short-term solutions and recommendations to deal with the current electrical situation, the report recommended the necessity of conducting a study and urgently purchasing energy from the Gulf in-terconnection network based on the expected loads, according to the annual increase rate that is approved and the generation capacity available for the current summer. It called for studying the purchase of the

rotating momentary reserve, which means Kuwait's share required for the Gulf interconnection network to participate in strengthening the unified Gulf network in

cerned authorities to confirm adherence to the approved measures regarding raising the thermostat settings of air-conditioning systems to 25 degrees Celsius or stopping air-conditioning in government institutions, offices, public places, schools and mosques during the peak period.

The measures also include stopping the production in factories and some petroleum facilities or reducing their production during peak times, or relaying and displacing loads outside peak time, such as the steel plant, to reduce loads by about 120 megawatts, and the olefins plant "OL2K w" to reduce loads by about 150 megawatts.

The report referred to other possible measures, including disconnecting the electrical current during the peak hours to some industrial areas, farms and chalets, updating the schedules for automatic load separation to face any sudden and large loss of energy produced in the generation stations, and separating the Kuwait network from the Gulf electrical interconnection network to maintain the stability of the electrical system and the safe operation of the network within standard limits.

Ransomware attacks fluctuate and are increasingly dangerous in Egypt, Saudi

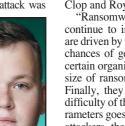
LONDON, July 27: Ransomware remains one of the main threats to information security globally and in the META region. In 2022, the average cost of a ransomware attack was US\$4.54 million (ac-

cording to IBM's data breach report), and Kaspersky solutions detected over 74.2M attempted ransomware attacks (20% increase to 2021). While the beginning of 2023 saw a decline in the number of ransomware attacks,

in Q2 some regions saw Galov an upward trend compared to the same period in 2022. According to Kaspersky Security Network data, in Q2 2023 Egypt saw a 10% increase in ransomware attack attempts on individual and corporate users compared to Q1 2023.Saudi Arabia too saw an increase of 3%. All these attempts were blocked by Kaspersky

solutions. Ransomware numbers may be increasing in some regions and decreasing in others. Regardless of the dynamics, ransomware is becoming more sophisticated and targeted. Ransomware attackers target all types of organizations, from healthcare and educational institutions to service providers and industrial enterprises.

At the beginning of 2023 LockBit, one of the world's most prolific ransomware groups, remained in the first place among the top five most influential and prolific ransomware groups. REvil and Conti were



replaced by Vice Society and BlackCat. The remaining ransomware groups that formed the top five at the beginning of 2023 were Clop and Royal.

"Ransomware groups around the world continue to improve their techniques. They are driven by three main factors. First, it is the chances of getting caught when attacking a certain organization. The second factor is the size of ransom they can potentially receive. Finally, they always estimate the technical difficulty of the attack. If any one of these parameters goes out of line with the plans of the attackers, they reconsider," comments Dmitry Galov, Head of Kaspersky Global Research and Analysis Team (GReAT), Russia. "Installing effective security solutions will likely draw ransomware groups away from an organization. It is a necessary investment, as ransomwareattacks can result in disastrous consequences such as permanent loss of information, disruption of business processes, loss of time, harm to reputation, and huge financial losses.

Kaspersky Endpoint Security for Business, Kaspersky Small Office Security and Kaspersky Internet Security have demonstrated 100 percent effectiveness against ransomware attacks in Advanced Threat Protection Test assessments by AV-TEST. In 10 different full-chain attacks, the products did not lose a single user file.

To combat ransomware and assist those affected, the National High Tech Crime Unit of the Dutch National Police, Europol's European Cybercrime Centre, Kaspersky, and other partners jointly launched the No More Ransom initiative in 2016.

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A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Do not neglect retirees, private sector employees, Chapter 5 business owners'

"IN THE strategic alternative project, the govern-ment focuses on increasing the salaries of employees who work in ministries and government agencies, and the state neglects retirees, workers in the private sector, and business owners who are classified under Chapter Five by the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS), columnist Fawaz Ahmed Al-Hamad wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"The employees deserve an increase in salaries due to inflation and high prices, and an increase in the financial obligations of the head of the family. However, the government and the National Assembly must reconsider workers in the private sector and business owners from Chapter Five as well, to include them within the strategic alternative project to increase the salary of labor support.

"The government is facing a great challenge, and the current strategic alternative project may be the straw that will break the back of the government and the budget, because if the government only increases

the salaries of government employees, there will be a large exodus of private sector employees to work in the government sector, which will increase the financial burden on the state's general budget.

"How can the government provide vacancies for new employees coming from the private sector? Will the state budget bear it? "One of the main objectives of

Al-Hamad the strategic alternative project

is to unify the salary scale among public sector employees, and to achieve missing justice for those with specializations and professions, for example an engineer working in a government agency whose salary is 3,000 dinars, and another engineer who graduated from the same university and works in another government agency with a salary of 1,000 dinars.

"Note that the strategic alternative project has been put forward by the government since 2015, and due to the constant changes and political instability, it was stopped more than once and did not see the light of day.

"The government should encourage recent graduates and government workers to work in the private sector to reduce the financial burden on the state. At the same time, work in the private sector should be stimulating and encouraging through rewarding salaries and labor support salaries, in addition to guarantees of job stability and non-discrimination.

"The strategic alternative project needs further study so that the financial increases and benefits for private sector employees are higher than the benefits that will be granted to government employees.

"All government employees, retirees, private sector workers, and business owners from the fifth chapter category must be included in the strategic alternative project, so that there is justice among employees in general, and to encourage work in the private sector.'

Also:

"The government diligently presented its program to the National Assembly, and in their oversight role the nation's representatives dealt with the great project "modifying the course", each according to his conviction, vision, and priorities. And a third parliamentarian "does not live up to ambition," and a

"The government diligently presented its program to the National Assembly. As part of their oversight role, the nation's representatives dealt with the great project called 'modifying the path', each according to his conviction, vision and priorities," columnist Hadi Al-Anzi wrote for Al-Anba daily.

"A voice is raised here, demanding that 'modifying the path should be an action, not a slogan.' Another voiced criticism, stating that it is 'a grievance project.' A third parliamentarian said 'it does not live up to the expectation' and a fourth praised it saying it is good and comprehensive, and the government abided by the Constitution.

"It is not surprising that the government program did not gain parliamentary consensus. One of the ad-vantages of parliamentary work is the difference of opinion and visions.

'Convergence is imposed by the supreme interest of the country, the urgent demands of the citizen and the shared responsibility. Hope is pinned on the legislative and executive authorities. Consensus is necessary for laws to take their natural path in terms of legislation and implementation.

'The vision on 'diversifying sources of income' is the essence of the government program entitled, 'Modifying the Path... A Productive Economy and Sustainable Welfare'. There is no sustainable prosperity in reliance on a single source of income. Diversifying sources of income will lead us out of the crucible of the single source, global price fluctuations and endless attractions of the world's poles."

"The media arena has been ablaze with the statements of parliamentarians, which were launched in all directions recently. The first of which is the unfortunate parliamentary encouragement for the 'shovels' to demolish the cultural edifice by proposing re-censorship of books," columnist Nada Al-Mutawa wrote for Al-Jarida daily.

"Our knowledge of the representatives entails that we must prepare for other upcoming proposals restricting freedoms including freedom of thought, writing, creativity and innovation.

'Then, the draft law on establishing the Higher Commission on Elections came. The government completed the draft law, which includes amendments to the law on establishing the Constitutional Court amid the debate between the lawmakers and the government over their powers.

"I was informed the parties that participated in the discussion included the Legal Affairs Sector in the ministries of Interior and Justice. However, the activists and interested parties were not invited. This is in addition to the absence of surveys to gauge the opinion and knowledge of scholars. They also ignored the views of voters, and those concerned with laws and procedures.

"The catastrophe happened when the lawmakers suggested asking permission from the Ministry of Interior before performing plastic surgeries, followed by a proposal to pay a salary to the housewife. No one asked about the priorities of the 'housewife'. Why is she not given the opportunity to complete her postgraduate studies in Kuwait, by agreeing to open postgraduate programs? What about working part time? The housewife must be productive."

"Some specialized sources indicate that the State of Kuwait is in second place - after the sisterly State of Qatar, in terms of food security, and it is 28th globally out of 133 countries," columnist Dr Adel Al-Meshaal wrote for Al-Rai daily.



First Deputy PM and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled attending the graduation ceremony of the 12th course for university non-commissioned officers.

Sheikh Talal attends graduation ceremony

Support of leadership & people for securitymen is an incentive for further excellence – Interior

KUWAIT CITY, July 27, (KUNA): First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah affirmed today, that the support of the Kuwaiti leadership and people for the securitymen is an incentive for further distinction and excellence.

This came according to a press release from the General Department of Relations and Security Media at the Ministry of Interior, during the presence of Sheikh Talal Al-Khalid, at the graduation ceremony of the 12th course for university non-commissioned officers to be promoted to the rank of lieutenant, which numbered 400 officers, which was held at the Saad Al-Abdullah Academy for Security Sciences.

Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled conveyed to the graduates the greetings of His Highness the Amir of the country, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, on the occasion of their promotion to the rank of lieutenant.

The Minister of Interior praised the efforts of the graduates and their perseverance on acquiring knowledge after passing all the security academic courses, recommending that they apply the law to everyone with one ruler and exerting all precious efforts to protect the lives and property of citizens, because the security of the home-

land and citizens is a great trust that must be preserved, and that they put the fear of God before their eyes always and trusting the men of the security establishment.

The graduation ceremony began with the national anthem, then the recitation of verses from the Holy Ouran, it was then followed by Acting Director of the Officers Training Institute, Brigadier General Fahd Abdel Salam, reciting the appointment decision and then the oath.

The graduation ceremony was attended by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Major General Mansour Al-Awadi, the Assistant Undersecretary for the Education and Training Sector, Major General Badr Al-Baloul, and the leaders and officers of the sector.

Mol thwarts smuggling of 1mln Captagon pills, 3 suspects held

68 law violators held; 20 firms penalized

KUWAIT CITY, July 27, (KUNA): The Ministry of Interior announced today, that it had thwarted the smuggling of about a million Captagon pills, with the arrest of three suspects of Arab nationality trying to bring into the country through the Shuwaikh port, "hidden in a contain er "carrying cement building materials in a secret and innovative way. The General Department of Relations and Security Media at the Ministry confirmed in a press statement that the criminal security sector, in cooperation with the General Administration of Customs and joint coordination between the General Administration for Drug Control in the State of Kuwait and the Drug Control in the State of Qatar, managed to thwart the smuggling operation. The statement indicated that the accused and the seized items are being referred to the competent authorities in order to take all necessary legal measures against them. According to the statement, the Ministry of Interior expressed its thanks to the Oatari security authorities for the fruitful cooperation with regard to the security of the two countries, especially with regard to the drug epidemic and its dangers towards the two brotherly countries. The statement affirmed the keenness of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to intensify security and follow-up efforts to repel all drug trafficking operations.





fourth praises "good and comprehensive, and the government adhered to the constitution." It is not surprising that the government program did not gain a parliamentary consensus," columnist Hadi Al-Enezi wrote for Al-Anba daily.

"There is a convergence imposed by the supreme interest of the nation, the urgent demands of the citizen, a shared responsibility, high hopes for the legislative and executive authorities, and consensus is required for laws to take their natural path in legislation and implementation, and whoever is not included in the government program of draft laws, let the nation's representatives take the initiative to present it in accordance with the approved constitutional mechanisms.

"There is a perspective that advises against merely praising those who find success in their endeavors and discouraging them from further improvement. Instead, it suggests guiding them to identify any gaps they might have overlooked or ignored, encouraging them to keep progressing on their path.

"Political action is both ideological and complementary in nature. Its success does not hinge on a government being completely uniform or a parliament trying to address all reforms simultaneously. Rather, it requires patience and the willingness to collaborate, prioritizing integration through guidance, advice, and creative legislation that aligns with individual aspirations, ultimately leading to collective contentment with the achieved outcomes

"The core principle of the government program, titled 'Modifying the Path... A Productive Economy and Sustainable Welfare,' revolves around the vision of diversifying sources of income. Sustainable prosperity cannot be achieved by relying solely on a single source of income.

"The world offers endless attractions and resources, but oil, as a finite resource, depletes with each passing day and year. Therefore, it falls upon humanity to seek investment alternatives that turn the slogan of "sustainable well-being" into a tangi-ble reality. This transformation will be bolstered by substantial projects and supported by concrete data.

"Let us constantly look ahead and cultivate an ambitious and insightful vision for the future. However, we must also be cautious not to fixate too much on our immediate surroundings, for focusing solely on our feet can lead to stumbles and falls. By keeping our gaze forward, embracing change, and embracing cooperation, we can navigate a path toward lasting prosperity and fulfillment.

"The index measures a country's ability to provide food security for its citizens. It is a confirmation of the effectiveness of the State's plans made through its institutions, such as the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources, Public Authority for Industry, Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company, Kuwait Catering Company, Union of Cooperative Societies and the private sector.

"However, the danger remains as per the purchasing power principle. Although it is lacking in many countries, such process could face danger for any reason like the closure of sea straits or war in a region that produces wheat among others.

"Dr Muhammad Al-Sayegh wrote: 'The State of Kuwait is keen on exchanging ideas, experience and expertise with a number of specialized international organizations and bodies, including the Food and Agriculture Organization at the United Nations.

"Kuwait agreed to continue strengthening fruitful partnership programs and constructive cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization to deal with global challenges. This is in addition to the development of a comprehensive strategy for food security and climate change, especially in light of the instability witnessed in several parts of the world and since Kuwait imports 95 percent of its food. Thus, the Supreme Committee for Food Security was established in Kuwait to deal with water scarcity and food production.

"Khaled Al-Otaibi, a member of the Arab Parliament and Kuwait National Assembly said: 'Food security is one of the major issues that the Arab region is facing - if not the most urgent and complex, given its comprehensive repercussions and overlap with many issues and challenges.'

"Around one year ago, Al-Rai daily published the study of the National Security Agency on food security. A ministerial source described it as a road map for the government. It included a presentation of risks and practical solutions. It presented immediate and future solutions that the government can implement, while looking into the experience of neighboring countries in dealing with the issue of food security and achieving self-sufficiency."

- Compiled by Mai Elsoukary

Abolish subsidies

Continued from Page 1

Also, when the state lacks an educational strategy for the benefit of the owners of private schools and universities, this means slow killing of society.

We have to realize that it is impossible for the situation to remain as it is. Therefore, the MPs must take into consideration the conditions of the people.

That is why MPs Al-Ghanim and

Lari did well by proposing to stop commodity subsidies, and for the cash allowance to go towards securing the needs of low-income earners and borrowers.

The writer of these lines neither needs two bags of rice every month, nor does he waste electricity and water like the owners of palaces who leave their air conditioners on throughout the summer months when they are vacationing in Switzerland, London and elsewhere. This is definitely not social justice. In most countries of the world,

and even neighboring countries sim-

ilar to Kuwait, there is comprehensive health insurance for family members, including treatment abroad. The state can insure lowincome earners within the framework of cash support.

There are many solutions to this problem, but when the parliamentarians lose their bearing and the government follows in their footsteps, then no good news can be expected.

This is because the country can only be reformed through a realistic vision, and not through machinations and draft laws that rendered us a laughing stock.

Agencies add:

20 cos penalized: The Directorate General of Residence Affairs Investigation has blocked the files of 20 companies as a result of which employees registered on these companies cannot renew their residence permits, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily said this happened after the department caught several workers sponsored by these companies working for others instead of their original sponsors.

Moreover, the arrested Article 18 workers said the company did not give them work and they had no option but to work for others to earn their daily bread.

Expat ends life: An unidentified Asian ended his life by hanging himself in the Sabah Al-Ahmad residential area, reports Al-Anba daily.

A source told the daily after a report was received by the Ministry of Interior's operations department, security patrols and an ambulance rushed to the site and saw the man hanging from the ceiling fan with one end of a piece of cloth tied around the neck and the other to the

KUNA photos The seized cement bags containing the Captagon pills (inset).

CID closes file of 100 cases

5 expats confess to selling 'stolen' items in Amghara

KUWAIT CITY, July 27: The Criminal Investigation Department has closed the file of nearly 100 cases of theft of equipment and electricity cables from projects and transformers of the Ministry of Electricity, which occurred during the past months by arresting a five-member gang of Asians, reports Al-Anba daily.

A security source told the daily that after the increase in cases of theft of equipment and electric cables from the projects of the Ministry of Electricity in several separate regions of the country during the past months, a special team was formed to follow up on these cases.

ceiling fan.

The corpse has been referred to Forensic medicine.

Massage parlors raided: CID personnel have arrested 15 men of different nationalities for practicing immoral acts in three massage parlors in Salmiya and Hawalli, reports Al-Rai daily.

The Interior Ministry said that this comes within the framework of the Ministry of Interior's continued monitoring and follow-up of all negative phenomena that violate public morals.

Corpse found in Salmi: The investigations and criminal evidence personnel have moved to the site in Salmi where the corpse of an unidentified person was found and transferred the body to Forensics to find out its details, identity and cause of death, reports Al-Rai daily.

68 law violators held: Intensive inspection campaigns and heavy During investigation that lasted for several days, CID men revealed that the perpetrators of the thefts was a gang of 5 Asians who steal electrical equipment, wires and cables from projects and using a mini bus to sell the loot in the Amghara scrapyard.

The daily added, the suspects were ambushed and caught red-handed during a theft operation, and during interrogation they confessed to having car-ried out nearly 100 thefts and selling the stolen items to the Amghara scrapyard.

After completing the investigation they were referred to the Public Prosecution.

security presence by the Research and Investigation Unit in Farwaniya Governorate which is under the Residence Affairs Investigation General Department and covering Khaitan, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and Farwaniya; resulted in the arrest of 68 individuals of various nationalities who violated the Residency and Labor laws, in addition to an Arab beggar in Reggae, reports Al-Qabas daily.

All those arrested were referred to the concerned authorities.

Injured airlifted to hospital: An unidentified Kuwaiti, who was seriously injured and suffered multiple fractures, in a two-vehicle collision, was air lifted to the Farwaniya Hospital, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily said, the accident happened yesterday afternoon on the Kabd Expressway. Following the accident, traffic was partially disrupted and security and traffic men moved the two cars off the road and resumed normal traffic flow.



Bank continues efforts to support 'Diraya' campaign

KFH underlines customers rights, regulations on dealing with banks

KUWAIT CITY, July 27: Kuwait Finance House "KFH" continues efforts to support "Diraya" financial and banking awareness campaign launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association for the second year in a row. The campaign aims to shed light on customers rights, rules and regulations of dealing with banks, information safety and security against intrusion, combating fraud transactions in addition to other warnings and regulations. This campaign comes as part of the bank obligation to keep the customers informed about their rights and duties towards banking and financial transactions and their cyber security.

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The campaign discusses finance types, banking cards, awareness of customers with special needs, tips on cyber security and protection of bank accounts. Also, it provides the mechanism to lodge complaints, protect customers rights and identify the banking sector duties and its role in enhancing and developing national economy

KFH contribution in the campaign comprises the dispatch of various messages on different topics related to the main components of the campaign. These messages are sent to all types of customers to suite the culture and nature of each tier. Also, messages are sent on continuous basis to employees who are considered

as the second main component in the awareness triangle (customers - employees public) who are either potential or targeted customers, thus aiming to achieve the targets of the campaign. The main targets of the campaign comprise awareness, identification of and warning against any possible risks of failing to follow safety and security instructions upon using modern technology means. Regulations include refraining from extending any information about accounts and personal transactions to any unknown parties or reply to messages from unknown sources as this would be a violation to data privacy and banking protection regulations.

KFH is keen on spreading financial education, saving and investment knowledge and customer's awareness of the bank's products and services. KFH appreciates the efforts extended by the Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association in organizing the Be Aware "Diraya" campaign to spread awareness in society regarding banking and financial transactions and e-banking services. Technology has opened vast business opportunities. However, several risks and challenges were also detected considering the several attempts, most of which failed, to hack customers accounts and cause system damage. Accordingly, this situation has called for a comprehensive awareness plan and enhancement of the

cyber security systems, anti-money laundering systems and prevention of other egally incriminated and suspicious activities.

KFH messages highlight the clear and defined policies placed by the Central Bank of Kuwait to supervise the lending and finance operations at banks. These policies provide that the customer shall be provided with the loan details, value and No. of instalments, settlement dates, instalment/ net salary ratio and default penalties. The customer is given at least 2 days grace period to review the contract fully before signing. Once signed, a draft copy of the contract shall be given to the customer including type of loan, payment term, instalment value and profit. There are two types of loans offered to customers, consumer loan and residential loan.

According to CBK instructions, the bank is required to provide financial advice and all information concerning the finance contract and explain all details related to the finance transaction including rate of return/ finance amount, No. of installments to be paid by customer and components of each instalment before signing the contract with the customer. Customer shall be given two days period to review the contract and read the terms and conditions carefully and be aware of his rights and obligations before signing the contract.

US economy unexpectedly rose to a 2.4% growth rate



Musk wants to turn tweets into 'Xs'

Changing language not quite so simple

SAN FRANCISCO, July 27, (AP): Elon Musk may want to send "tweet" back to the birds, but the ubiquitous term for posting on the site he now calls X is here to stay - at least for now. For one, the word is still plastered all over the site formerly known as Twitter. Write a post, you still need to press a blue button that says "tweet" to publish it. To repost it, you still tap "retweet." But it's more than that. With "tweets," Twitter accom-

plished in just a few years something few companies have done in a lifetime: It became a verb and implanted itself into the lexicon of America and the world. Upending that takes more than a top-down declaration, even if it is from the owner of Twitter-turned-X, who also happens to be one of the world's richest men.

"Language has always come from the people that use it on a day-to-day basis. And it can't be controlled, it can't be created, it can't be morphed. t get to decide Nick Bilton, the author of "Hatching Twitter: A True Story of Money, Power, Friendship, and Betrayal" about Twitter's origins.

followed in 2013. The Associated Press Stylebook entered it in 2010.

"Getting into the dictionary is an indication that people are already using it," said Jack Lynch, a Rutgers University English professor who studies the history of language. "Dictionaries are usually pretty tentative or cautious about letting new words in, especially for new phenomena, because they don't want things to be just a flash in the pan.'

As Twitter grew into a global communications platform and struggled with misinformation, trolls and hate speech, its friendly brand image remained. The blue bird icon evokes a smile, like the Amazon up-turnedarrow smile - in contrast to the X that Musk has imposed.

Martin Grasser was two years out of art school when Twitter hired him for the logo redesign in 2011. His wasn't the first bird logo for Twitter, but it would be the most enduring.

"They knew they wanted a bird. So we weren't starting completely over, but they wanted it o be on p Apple and Nike. That was really the brief," he said.

Kubota tractors are stored in Uniontown, Pa., Friday, June 9, 2023. (AP)

April-June quarter result achieved despite Fed hikes

WASHINGTON, July 27, (AP): The U.S. economy surprisingly accelerated to a 2.4% annual growth rate from April through June, showing continued resilience in the face of steadily higher interest rates resulting from the Federal Reserve's 16-month-long fight to bring down inflation.

Thursday's estimate from the Commerce Department indicated that the gross domestic product - the economy's total output of goods and services - picked up from the 2% growth rate in the January-March quarter. Last quarter's expansion was well above the 1.5% annual rate that economists had forecast.

Driving last quarter's growth was a burst of business investment, which surged at a 5.7% annual pace, the fastest rate since late 2021. Companies plowed more money into factories and equipment. Increased spending by state and local governments also helped fuel the economy's expansion in the April-June quarter.

Consumer spending, the heart of the nation's economy, was also solid last quarter, though it slowed to a 1.6% annual rate from a robust 4.2% pace in the first quarter of the year.

Investment in housing, though, fell, weakened by the weight of higher mortgage rates.

"This is a strong report, confirming that this economy continues to largely shrug off the Fed's aggressive rate increases and tightening credit conditions," said Olu Sonola, head of U.S. economics at Fitch Ratings. "The bottom line is that the U.S. economy is still growing above trend, and the Fed will be wondering if they need to do more to slow this economy." In fighting inflation, which last year hit a fourdecade high, the Fed has raised its benchmark rate 11 times since March 2022, most recently on Wednesday. The resulting higher costs for a broad range of loans - from mortgages and credit cards to auto loans and business borrowing - have taken a toll on growth.

Still, they have yet to tip the United States into a widely forecast recession. Optimism has been growing that a recession isn't coming after all, that the Fed can engineer a so-called "soft-landing" - slowing the economy enough to bring inflation down to its 2% annual target without wrecking an expansion of surprising durability.

This week, the International Monetary Fund upgraded its forecast for U.S. economic growth for all of 2023 to 1.8%. Though that would be down from 2.1% growth for 2022, it marked an increase from the 1.6% growth that the IMF had predicted for 2023 back in April.

At a news conference Wednesday after the Fed announced its latest quarter-point rate hike, Chair Jerome Powell revealed that the central bank's staff economists no longer foresee a recession in the United States. In April, the minutes of the central bank's March meeting had revealed that the Fed's staff economists envisioned a "mild" recession later this year.

In his remarks, Powell noted that the economy has proved resilient despite the Fed's rapid rate hikes. And he said he still thinks a soft landing remains possible.

By any measure, the American job market has shown itself to be remarkably strong. At 3.6% in June, the unemployment rate hovers just above a fivedecade low. A surge in retirements after COVID-19 hit in early 2020 has contributed to a shortage of

workers across the country, forcing many companies to raise wages to attract or keep staffers.

Higher pay and job security are giving Americans the confidence and financial wherewithal to keep shopping. Indeed, consumer spending, which drives about 70% of economic activity, rose at a 4.2% annual rate from January through March, the fastest quarterly pace in nearly two years. Americans have kept spending - crowding airplanes, traveling overseas and flocking to concerts and movie theaters.

And the Conference Board, a business research group, reported Tuesday that Americans this month are in their sunniest mood in two years, based on the board's reading of consumer confidence.

Indeed, many consumers are finally enjoying some relief from spiking prices: Year-over-year inflation, which peaked at 9.1% in June 2022, has eased consistently ever since. Inflation-adjusted hourly pay rose 1.4% in June from a year earlier, the sharpest such gain since early 2021.

"Inflation is easing, moving in the right direction," said Rubeela Farooqi, chief U.S. economist at High Frequency Economics. "In other words, the Fed is achieving what it wants without causing damage to the economy, so they don't need to push too hard from this point on."

Still, Farooqi suggested, the surprisingly healthy GDP report makes it somewhat more likely that the Fed will raise rates again because the economy appears to be "much stronger" than what the central bank would like to see. With stronger growth comes a greater likelihood of high inflation.

At the same time, the risk remains that the weight of ever-higher interest rates will eventually slow borrowing so much - for homes, cars, renovations, business expansions and other costly expenses - as to pull the economy into recession.

Twitter didn't start out as Twitter. It was "twttr" - without vowels, which was the trend in 2006 when the platform launched and SMS texting was wildly popular. The iPhone only came out in 2007.

Twitter co-founder Evan Williams "went one day and purchased the vowels, two vowels for essentially \$7,500 each," when he bought the URL for twitter.com from a bird enthusiast, Bilton said.

At the beginning, people didn't "tweet" - it was "I'm going to twitter this," Bilton recalled. But "twittered" doesn't roll off the tongue and "tweet" soon took over, first in the Twitter office, then San Francisco, then everywhere.

We've been tweeting for well over a decade. World leaders, celebrities and athletes, dissidents in repressive regimes, propaganda trolls, sex workers and religious icons, meme queens and actual queens. Former President Donald Trump's incendiary use of the bird app quickly punted "tweet" into nearconstant headlines during his presidency. People who never signed up for Twitter knew what the word meant.

For now, we still tweet, retweet and quote tweet, and sometimes - perhaps not often enough - delete tweets. News sites embed tweets in their stories and TV programs scroll them. No other social network has a word for posting that's entered the vernacular like "tweet" - though Google did the same for "googling."

The Oxford English Dictionary added "tweet" in 2011. Merriam-Webster

Twitter launched Grasser's design in May 2012; the company went public on Wall Street later that year.

One early in-house design shown to Grasser looked like "a flying goose with a tail. It looked kind of like a dragon. It was crazy," he said. Jack Dorsey, another co-founder (and twice-CEO) wanted something simpler.

The bird represented a vision of Twitter as a friendly place "where everyone can weigh in and chat," Grasser said.

"The round form evokes a sense of optimism, the bird even being sort of turned upward, as corny as that sounds, I think is different than a bird flying down or flat," he said. "We wanted to give it this idea of like soaring.□

The word "Twitter" itself is playful, as is "tweet." This was no accident, Bilton said.

Other names that floated as the platform started out included "Status" and 'Friend Stalker.'

It was Noah Glass, another cofounder who never quite got the credit he deserved for his role in hatching Twitter, who had the winning idea.

Glass, Bilton said, "had been thinking about like heartbeats and emotions. He was going through a divorce and he literally went through the dictionary word by word until he came across the word twitter. And he just knew instantly that was it."

"He was one of the four founders who had the emotional intelligence to be able to understand that this was about connecting with humans," Bilton said. "It was inviting, it was emotional. It was about connecting with humans and your friends and your loved ones.'



A woman 'tweets' with her Blackberry phones during a news conference in Lagos, Nigeria, Sept. 25, 2012. Elon Musk may want to send 'tweet' back to the birds, but the ubiquitous term for posting on the site he now calls X is here to stay, at least for now. For one, the word is still plastered all over the website formerly known as Twitter. Write a post, you still need to press a blue button that says 'tweet' to publish it. To repost it, you still tap 'retweet.' (AP)

CBO predicts slower economic growth and 4.7% unemployment into 2024

WASHINGTON, July 27, (AP): The Congressional Budget Office reported Wednesday that economic and job growth so far this year has been stronger than forecast in February, but an updated outlook sees parts of the economy as weakening through 2024.

The latest 10-year budget and economic outlook from the nonpartisan office shows how difficult it is to figure out where the United States is going in the wake of the pandemic. Many economists and investors were caught off guard as Federal Reserve interest rate increases, intended to combat high inflation, have not led to mass layoffs and a recession. Rather, growth and hiring have stayed relatively solid.

The CBO said it expects rates to continue to rise, as well as slower growth in the gross domestic product for the rest of this year and unemployment reaching 4.7% by the end of 2024.

In February, the agency projected that the unemployment rate would jump to 5.1%. It currently

stands at 3.6%. The CBO now estimates that rate will end the year at roughly 4.1%.

Consumer spending is expected to flag later this year and labor force participation to decline as employers need fewer workers.

In a bright spot, inflation is expected to decline due to actions by the Fed to tame price increases, which rose at the highest annual pace in four decades in June of last year. The central bank has tried to reduce inflation by raising its benchmark interest rates.

7

Shell earnings top \$5 billion

Shell reported Thursday that it earned nearly \$5.1 billion in the second quarter, nearly half what the oil and natural gas giant pulled in during the first three months of the year as energy prices have plunged.

The British energy company said its adjusted earnings followed lower oil and gas prices, produc-tion and trading. The figure was down from \$11.5 billion in the same period a year ago and \$9.6

Oil and gas prices surged last year after Russia invaded

billion in the first quarter.

Ukraine, fueling inflation around the world and driving record profits for energy companies, includ-ing Shell, British rival BP and others. Prices have since fallen amid weak global economic growth and other factors, leading to lower earnings. "Shell delivered strong op-

erational performance and cash

flows in the second quarter, despite a lower commodity price environment," CEO Wael Sawan said in a statement.

The financial earnings have become a political flashpoint in Britain, spurring calls from opposition politicians and campaign groups for oil and gas companies to do more to help consum-ers burdened by soaring energy bills that have contributed to a cost-of-living crisis. (AP)

FAA details safety info that aircraft makers must disclose

The Federal Aviation Administration, which was heavily criticized for the way it approved the Boe-ing 737 Max before two deadly crashes, says it is more clearly explaining the kind of critical safety information that must be disclosed to the agency. The FAA said Wednesday that

two draft policy documents spell out the process for considering certification of new, large passenger planes.

The documents also guide manufacturers on disclosing any design changes that sig-nificantly affect information already submitted to FAA, the agency said.

It is generally accepted in the aviation industry that certification of new planes will be more difficult and take longer after the Boeing Max debacle.

The FAA certified the 737 Max in 2017 without under-

standing a critical flight-con-trol system, according to the Transportation Department's inspector general and a panel of international aviation experts. They also found that Boeing withheld information about the automated system, which malfunctioned when it got faulty sensor readings be-fore the two crashes in 2018 and 2019 that killed 346 people in all. (AP)

Brenmiller signs MoU with India's largest solar panel manufacturer Waaree Energies to deploy thermal energy storage projects in India

ROSH HA'AYIN, Israel & MUMBAI, India, July 27, (BUSINESS WIRE): Brenmiller Energy Ltd. ("Brenmiller", "Brenmiller Energy" or the "Company") (Nasdaq: BNRG, TASE: BNRG), a clean energy company that provides Thermal Energy Storage ("TES") systems to global industrial and utility markets, today announced that it has signed a Memorandum of Understanding ("MoU") with Waaree Energies Ltd. ("Waaree"), India's largest manufacturer of solar panels, to implement hConTM TES in Ludia. implement bGen™ TES in India. This announcement marks Brenmiller's entrance into the Indian market, adding to the Company's growing global presence including Israel, Europe, and the U.S

Under the terms of the MoU, Brenmiller and Waaree will jointly explore, develop, and deploy solar-powered TES systems in India, subject to entry into a definitive agreement.

Brenmiller's award-winning bGen TES system is a mature, scalable, and costeffective solution that enables 24/7 renewable management for industrial processes and power production. The bGen can store energy in the form of heat for minutes, hours, or days, and produce steam, hot water, or hot air on demand. In addition to decarbonization, Brenmiller's TES technology provides critical reliability and protection from renewable intermittency and fluctuations in energy market prices.

"We've seen a massive uptick in demand for our TES systems in response to climate-forward policies, rising energy costs, and challenges to reliability," said Avi Brenmiller, president and Chief Executive Officer of Brenmiller. "Our team is thrilled to collaborate with Waaree to bring bGen TES to India's industrial and utility markets.'

"In India, steam and other high-temperature processes for industrials are primarily powered by coal, accounting for roughly 25 percent of India's carbon

emissions," said Hitech Doshi, chairman of Waaree. "We are focused on helping large industrial corporations, including beverage, pharmaceutical, chemical, paper manufacturers, and more, to help them meet ambitious ESG goals. Partnering with Brenmiller to deploy its innovative thermal energy storage technology will enable us to significantly reduce dependence on fossil fuels." Waaree Energies Ltd. is the flagship company of Waaree Group, founded in

1989 with headquarters in Mumbai, India. Waaree Energy is today one of the largest vertically integrated new energy companies. It has India's largest Solar panel manufacturing capacity of 12GW at its plants in Chikhli, Surat and Umbergaon in Gujarat and is a top player in EPC Services, Project Development, Solar Rooftop Solutions, Solar Inverters, and Solar Water Pumps. It is also an Independent Power Producer. Waaree has a presence in over 388 locations nationally and 20 countries internationally. The company has supplied 6+GW of solar modules and commissioned 1+ GW of solar EPC projects.

Brenmiller Energy delivers scalable thermal energy storage solutions and services that allow customers to cost-effectively decarbonize their operations. Its patented bGen thermal storage technology enables the use of renewable energy resources, as well as waste heat, to heat crushed rocks to very high temperatures. They can then store this heat for minutes, hours, or even days before using it for industrial and power generation processes. With bGen, organizations have a way to use electricity, biomass and waste heat to generate the clean steam, hot water and hot air they need to mold plastic, process food and beverages, produce paper, manufacture chemicals and pharmaceuticals or drive steam turbines without burning fossil fuels. For more information visit the company's website at https://brenenergy.com/ and follow the company on Twitter and LinkedIn.

This press release contains "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of

the safe harbor provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995 and other federal securities laws. Statements that are not statements of historical fact may be deemed to be forward-looking statements. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, words such as "plan," "project," "potential," "seek," "may," "will," "expect," "believe," "anticipate," "intend," "could," "estimate" or "continue" are intended to identify forward-looking statements. For example, we are using forward-looking statements when we are discussing the entry into a de-finitive agreement, the implementation of bGen[™] TES in India, and the potential of such implementation to help India transition to a have half of its energy supply from renewables by 2030. Readers are cautioned that certain important factors may affect the Company's actual results and could cause such results to differ materially from any forward-looking statements that may be made in this press release. Factors that may affect the Company's results include, but are not limited to, the Company's planned level of revenues and capital expenditures, the demand for and market acceptance of our products, impact of competitive products and prices, product development, commercialization or technological difficulties, the success or failure of negotiations and trade, legal, social and economic risks and the risks associated with the adequacy of existing cash resources. The forward-looking statements contained or implied in this press release are subject to other risks and uncertainties, many of which are beyond the control of the Company, including those set forth in the Risk Factors section of the Company's Annual Report on Form 20-F for the year ended December 31, 2022 filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC") on March 22, 2023 and the Company's other filings with the SEC, which are available on the SEC's website, www.sec.gov. The Company undertakes no obligation to update these statements for revisions or changes after the date of this release, except as required by law.



A man with a lunch bag walks into an office building with monitors showing the Shanghai Composite index, from left, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index and the New York Dow Jones Industrial Average in Tokyo, Thursday, July 27, 2023. Asian shares were higher Thursday after the Federal Reserve raised interest rates to their highest level in more than two decades, just as Wall Street expected. (AP)

'Thrilled to partner with Certinia'

Haveli acquires Certinia

AUSTIN, Texas/SAN JOSE, Ca- tioned in a rapidly expanding marlif., July 27, (BUSINESS WIRE): Haveli Investments, L.P. ("Haveli" or "Haveli Investments"), a technology-focused private equity firm, today announced that it has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire Certinia ("Certinia" or the "Company"), formerly Financial-Force, from Advent International and Technology Crossover Ven-tures. Certinia's Services-as-a-Business platform includes Professional Services Automation ("PSA"), Customer Success, Services CPQ, ERP and FP&A solutions. Haveli will fund the transaction from Haveli Investments Software Fund I L.P., with participation from partners including General Atlantic, a leading global growth equity firm. Salesforce (NYSE: CRM) will continue as a shareholder in Certinia. Certinia's industry-leading PSA software powers and connects all aspects of professional services operations, from services estimation and delivery to customer success management and financial planning and accounting. Certinia's suite of offerings, including ERP and Customer Success solutions, offers a system of record for people-centric services engagements. The Company delivers a complete services-as-a-business platform and has transformed services delivery for 1,400 customers in more than 30 countries. Ian Loring, Senior Managing Director and Executive Chair of the Haveli Software Fund, commented: "Certinia is the gold standard system of record for end-to-end software for professional services organizations, and its demonstrated continued ability to deliver market-leading capabilities underscores the Company's impact and future potential. We are thrilled to partner with Certinia for Haveli's first enterprise software investment, and we look forward to collaborating with the talented team there to continue its strong growth trajectory.' Mike Stewart, Principal at Haveli Investments, said: "Certinia has an incredibly strong offering with a loyal and growing customer base. Given our team's collective experience working with high potential companies in the enterprise software space, we believe Haveli is very well positioned to support Certinia through its next stage of growth and drive value creation for all of its stakeholders.' Scott Brown, President and CEO of Certinia, stated: "Haveli has assembled a world-class team of investment professionals, and we are thrilled to partner with them as we enter this exciting next chapter for Certinia. We are very well posi-

ket, and with Haveli as our new PE partner, we are confident we can take full advantage of growth opportunities and further enhance our ability to meet our customers' ever evolving needs and help them achieve their full potential.'

Wall St rises as economy keeps growing and profits keep rising

Asian shares advance after Fed raises interest rates

NEW YORK, July 27, (AP): Stocks are rising Thursday following fatterthan-expected profit reports from big companies and the latest signals that the economy is so far refusing to ditch into a recession.

The S&P 500 was 0.5% higher in midday trading after touching its highest level in nearly 16 months. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 25 points, or 0.1%, at 35,545, as of noon Eastern time, and on track for a 14th straight gain. The Nasdaq composite, meanwhile, was leading the market with a gain of 0.9% following a strong profit report from Meta Platforms.



The transaction is subject to customary closing conditions and is expected to close in August 2023.

Ropes & Gray LLP and Morgan Stanley served as legal and financial advisers to Haveli on the transaction.

Haveli Investments is an Austinbased private equity firm that seeks to invest in the highest quality companies in the technology sector through control, minority or structured equity and debt investments with a focus on software, data, gaming and adjacent industries. The firm partners with innovative companies, entrepreneurs and management teams throughout a company's life cycle. Haveli's experienced team of investors and diverse industry experts will provide operational and strategic support, enabling portfolio companies to focus on driving innovation and increasing growth, scale and operating margins. Underscoring Haveli's investments is an unwavering focus on DEI and sustainability. For more information, please visit www. haveliinvestments.com, or follow Haveli on LinkedIn, @Haveli Investments.

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Certinia (formerly Financial-Force) delivers a Services-as-a-Business platform that powers and connects all aspects of services operations, from services estimation and delivery to customer success management and financial planning and accounting. The company's Professional Services Automation (PSA), Customer Success, and ERP solutions-delivered on Salesforce's leading cloud platform-provide services businesses with the ability to run a connected services business, deliver with intelligence, and achieve business agility. Headquartered in San Jose, California with offices around the world, Certinia is backed by Haveli Investments and Salesforce Ventures. For more information, visit www.certinia.com.

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Earnings rose more for Meta, which owns Instagram and WhatsApp in addition to Facebook, than analysts expected after its services attracted additional active members. Meta is one of Wall Street's most influential stocks because of its massive size, and it rose 6.5%

McDonald's was helping to prop up the Dow after it easily topped analysts? forecasts for profits during the spring. Its sales grew worldwide, and its stock rose 1.9%

In the bond market, Treasury yields were rising after a wave of reports indicated the economy is in stronger shape than expected.

Ône estimate said growth for the overall economy accelerated in the spring. That easily topped forecasts from economists, who were expecting a slowdown from the first three months of the year. That report also suggested a measure of inflation wasn't as high from April through June as expected.

Another report, meanwhile, said that fewer workers applied for jobless benefits last week. It's the latest indication the job market remains remarkably solid, while a third report said orders for long-lasting manufactured goods strengthened more than expected last month.

All the data helped keep Wall Street ebullient amid hopes the economy can keep defying predictions for a recession despite much higher interest rates.

The Federal Reserve on Wednesday raised its federal funds rate to its highest level in more than two decades in hopes of dragging inflation lower. High rates work by bluntly slowing the entire economy and hurting prices for stocks and other investments. After zooming higher from virtually zero early last year, the sudden shock higher in interest rates has had investors on a long watch for a potential recession.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell on Wednesday, though, said any further increases in rates will depend on what reports say about the path of inflation and economy in the future. That bolstered hopes among traders that Wednesday's increase may have been the final one of this cycle.

Investors see higher interest rates as hurting technology and other highgrowth stocks in particular, which is part of why Big Tech stocks were helping to lead the market on Thursday. Besides Meta's earnings-fueled rise, Nvidia, Amazon and Apple were the other biggest forces pushing upward on the S&P 500.

Hopes for a halt to rate hikes are raising bets that the Fed can pull off what's called a "soft landing" for the economy, where high inflation can

Fed chairman Jerome Powell's news conference is displayed on the floor at the New York Stock Exchange in New York, Wednesday, July 26, 2023. Stocks are mixed after the Federal Reserve followed through on Wall Street's expectations and raised its benchmark interest rate to its highest level in more than two decades. (AP)

BWXT to provide N-reactor engine and fuel for DARPA Space Project

LYNCHBURG, Va., July 27, (Business Wire): BWX Technologies, Inc. (NYSE: BWXT) today announced that its reactor and fuel will be key components in the world's first demonstration spacecraft using nuclear thermal propulsion. DARPA has selected BWXT and Lockheed Martin to pro-

duce a nuclear-powered spacecraft.

Working as part of a team led by Lockheed Martin, BWXT Advanced Technologies LLC will complete final design of the nuclear reactor, manufacture the reactor's hardware and fuel, assemble the components and deliver the fueled reactor as a complete subsystem for integration into the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency's (DAR-PA) Demonstration Rocket for Agile Cislunar Operations, known as DRACO.

The reactor's energy will enable propulsion that allows DRACO to maneuver through space with great speed and agility for an extended period of time. This nuclear thermal propulsion system is designed to be extremely safe and reliable, using High Assay Low Enriched Uranium (HALEU) fuel to rapidly heat a super-cold gas, such as liquid hydrogen. As the gas is heated, it expands quickly and creates thrust to move the spacecraft more efficiently than typical chemical combustion engines.

The spacecraft is targeted for a 2027 launch from Earth

come down to the Fed's target without causing a painful recession. Powell said Wednesday the Fed's staff is no longer forecasting a recession.

Such hopes have helped launch stocks higher this year, but critics say the market may have gone too far, too fast. While inflation has come down from its peak last summer, it's still high and the hardest part of the Fed's task may still be ahead. A recession may still ultimately hit, they say.

But on Thursday, at least, optimism seemed to rule markets.

Stocks also climbed in Europe after the European Central Bank raised interest rates and left unanswered whether more increases are coming. The French CAC 40 jumped 2.1%, and Germany's DAX returned 1.7%.

Asian stock indexes were also mostly higher, led by a 1.4% rally for Hong Kong's Hang Seng.

in "cold" status (meaning that the reactor is turned off as a part of launch safety protocols) by a conventional rocket, and then the reactor will be powered on once the spacecraft attains an appropriate location above low earth orbit

'The award of this contract further demonstrates BWXT's ability to design, manufacture and deploy nuclear reactors and fuel on a scale that is unmatched elsewhere in the world today," said Joe Miller, president of BWXT Advanced Technologies LLC. "This partnership with Lockheed Martin working for DARPA adds another important dimension to BWXT's already-impressive line-up of nuclear reactor designs for commercial and defense applications."

'These more powerful and efficient nuclear thermal propulsion systems can provide faster transit times between destinations. Reducing transit time is vital for human missions to Mars to limit a crew's exposure to radiation," said Kirk Shireman, vice president of Lunar Exploration Campaigns at Lockheed Martin Space. "This is a prime technology that can be used to transport humans and materials to the Moon. A safe, reusable nuclear tug spacecraft would revolutionize cislunar operations."

Work on this program will be conducted primarily at BWXT's Mt. Athos Road complex near Lynchburg, Virginia.

19.545.77.

The Shanghai Composite index slipped 0.3% to 3,213.20. In Australia, the S&P/ASX 200 added 0.7% to 7,455.90. South Korea's Kospi climbed 0.4% to 2,603.81.

Bangkok's SET rose 0.8% and Taiwan's benchmark gained 0.5%.

Oil

In other trading Thursday, U.S. benchmark crude oil gained 60 cents to \$79.38 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It fell 85 cents to \$79.78 on Wednesday.

Brent crude, the international standard, added 46 cents to \$83.02 per barrel.

Currencies

The dollar fell to 140.09 Japanese yen from 140.25 yen. The euro rose to \$1.1096 from \$1.1087.

In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year Treasury rose to 3.94% from 3.87% late Wednesday. It helps set rates for mortgages and other important loans.

The two-year Treasury yield, which moves more on expectations for the Fed, rose to 4.92% from 4.85%.

Europe

Germany's DAX was up 1% at 16,284.76. In Paris, the CAC 40 ad-vanced 1.5% to 7,424.74. Britain's FTSE 100 was up 0.3% at 7,699.90.

Asia

Asian shares were mostly higher Thursday after the Federal Reserve raised interest rates to their highest level in more than two decades, just as Wall Street expected.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index gained 0.7% to 32,891.16 and the Hang Seng in Hong Kong jumped 0.9% to

new rule would make websites, apps more accessible

The Biden administration has proposed new regulations to make state and local government websites and apps for services like libraries, parking, transit and court records more accessible for people with disabilities.

The new Justice Department rule would establish certain accessibility standards for websites and app-based services maintained by state and local governments, the White House

announced. Those could include providing text descriptions for photos for the visually impaired who use screen readers, and captioning for government vid-

eos Administration officials say such websites and government services have not been as accessible as they should be for people with disabilities, and that President Joe Biden was aiming to change that. Wednesday is the

33rd anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

"President Biden has been completely clear that everyone in America has to be able to share in the benefits of technology," said Arati Prabhakar, director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. "That means a digital infrastructure that works for the 25 percent of Americans who are living with a disability." (AP)

users have 1 month left to apply for share of settlement

U.S. Facebook users have one more month to apply for their share of a \$725 million privacy settlement that parent company Meta agreed to pay late last year. Meta is paying to settle a lawsuit alleging the world's largest social media platform allowed millions of its users' personal information to be fed to Cambridge Analytica, a firm that supported Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign. Anyone in the U.S. who has had

a Facebook account at any time between May 24, 2007, and December 22, 2022, is eligible to receive a payment. To apply for the settlement, users can fill out a form and submit it online, or print it out and

mail it. The deadline is August 25. It's not clear how much money individual users will receive. The larger the number of people submitting valid claims, the smaller each payment will be since the money has to be divided among

them. The case sprang from 2018 revelations that Cambridge Analytica, a firm with ties to Trump political strategist Steve Bannon, had paid a Facebook app developer for access to the personal information of about 87 million users of the platform. That data was then used to target U.S. voters during the 2016 campaign that culminated in Trump's election as the 45th president. (AP)

Recognized with 5 prestigious awards for excellence

Al-Mulla Motors is 'Distributor of the Year' in Middle East and Africa

KUWAIT CITY, July, 27: Al Mulla Motors, exclusive distributor of Mitsubishi Motors in Kuwait, bagged five prestigious awards at the first Mitsubishi Motors Middle East and Africa Business Excellence Award ceremony for the company's efforts in financial year 2022.

Held in Dubai, senior management from Mitsubishi Motors Corporation and Mitsubishi Motors Middle East and Africa presented Mr. Imad Flay-



An official recieving one of the

awards.

han, Managing Director of Automotive Group and other management members five awards including the coveted Distributor of the Year award, Sales & Marketing Excellence, After Sales Excellence, Best PR Activity and Best Distributor Website.

At a subsequent separate special ceremony that took place at the Mitsubishi Motors showroom in Kuwait, the CEO of Al Mulla Group Mr. Talal A. Al Mulla was joined by the Managing Director of Al Mulla Automotive Mr. Imad Flayhan, and the Director of Automotive Mr. Hisham Fakih to congratulate the team of Maseelah Trading Company on their distinguished performance and the clean sweep of regional awards of excellence from Mitsubishi Motors Middle East & Africa.

Commenting on the accolades, Mr. Flayhan said: "We are truly honored by this recognition from Mitsubishi Motors Middle East and Africa for the way we represent this authentic Japanese automotive brand in Kuwait. We are fully committed to our partnership with Mitsubishi Motors Corporation and are grateful for their longstanding support for Al Mulla Motors. Last year marked our 50th Anniversary representing the Mitsubishi Motors brand in Kuwait, and we hope to celebrate more successes in the future. For us, this win



Officials pose for a group photo after the awarding ceremony.

means that we need to work twice as hard to keep the title for next year". In conjunction with winning these

awards, Al Mulla Motors affirms its commitment and adherence to the highest standards of excellence

in everything it does. The company understands that this honor carries with it an even greater responsibility to constantly innovate, adapt and evolve to meet the changing needs of its customers and the industry.

European Central Bank hikes interest rates for 9th time to combat inflation

'The ECB is again running the risk of being behind the curve'

FRANKFURT, Germany, July 27 (AP): The European Central Bank raised interest rates for the ninth straight time in its yearlong campaign to stamp out painfully high inflation, coming as worries about

GURUGRAM, India, July 27, (AP): substantial progress in expanding cleaner energy into action today, ReNew Energy Global Plc ("Re- its renewable energy portfolio and to transform how we live tomor-RNW, RNWWW), New" India's leading decarbonisation solutions company, through its subsidiary ReNew Power Pvt. Ltd. (ReNew) and clean energy solutions provider Gentari, through its subsidiary Gentari Renewables India Pte. Ltd., have executed key terms to collaborate on a 50:50 joint venture in clean energy solutions. The term sheet was exchanged between Sushil Purohit, Chief Executive Officer of Gentari and Sumant Sinha, Founder, Chairman and CEO of Re-New.

achieving its global ambition to build

ReNew and Gentari announce strategic a

collaboration for 5 GW renewable capacity

row. Gentari offers solutions through three initial core pillars - Renewable Energy, Hydrogen and Green Mobility, forming a portfolio of solutions cutting across the electron value chain to help customers achieve net zero emissions. In the long term, Gentari aims to be a full-suite net zero solutions provider, creating greater value, connecting businesses, and making the journey to net zero possible. For more information, visit www.gentari.com. ReNew is India's leading decarbonisation solutions company listed on Nasdaq (Nasdaq: RNW, RNWWW). ReNew's clean energy portfolio of ~13.7 GW on a gross basis as of March 31, 2023, is one of the largest globally. In addition to being a major independent power producer in India, ReNew provides end-to-end solutions in a just and inclusive manner in the areas of clean energy, value-added energy offerings through digitalisation, storage, and carbon markets that increasingly are integral to addressing climate change.



recession fuel speculation that Thursday's hike could be its last.

ECB President Christine Lagarde had all but promised the quarter-percentage point increase and left the door open to future hikes, saying data would determine one decision to the next.

'We have an open mind as to what the decisions will be in September and in subsequent meetings," she told reporters. "So we might hike and we might hold. And what is decided in September is not definitive. It may vary from one meeting to the other.

Central banks around the world have been raising borrowing costs to combat inflation unleashed by higher energy prices after Russia invaded Ukraine and supply chain backups as the global economy recovered from the coronavirus pandemic.

Now, the question is whether the rapid rate hikes are reaching their end.

The ECB move followed a decision by the U.S. Federal Reserve on Wednesday to raise its key rate for the 11th time in 17 months. Fed Chair Jerome Powell was noncommittal about whether more rate increases might be coming, though inflation is lower in the U.S. - at 3% - than it is in Europe.

Inflation in the eurozone has fallen from its peak of 10.6% in October to 5.5% in June - still well above the bank's target of 2% considered best for the economy.

Households and businesses are facing a double hit from price spikes and higher rates, which make it more expensive for people to get loans to buy homes and cars or for companies to get new equipment or build facilities.

Rates are working their way through the economy, weighing on home prices and construction activity, and are designed to work so people spend less and prices come down. But they can also weigh on economic growth, and the eurozone already has seen back-to-back quarters of contraction.

With Thursday's quarter-point increase, the ECB has raised its benchmark deposit rate from minus 0.5% to 3.75% in one year, the fastest credit tightening since the euro currency was launched in 1999.

And the bank kept the door "wide open" for more increases, said Carsten Brzeski, chief eurozone

As part of this proposed joint venture, Gentari and ReNew will collaborate to explore investments into the development of renewable assets including solar, wind and energy storage, to achieve a target of 5 GW in renewable energy capacity. The collaboration between the parties follows Gentari's initial investment for a 49% equity stake in ReNew's 403 MW Peak Power project in May this year.

As partners, Gentari and ReNew can accelerate their decarbonisation objectives, enabling Gentari to make

economist at ING Bank.

"The ECB is again running the risk of being behind the curve. This time not by being too benign on inflation but rather by being too optimistic and too benign on the economic impact of its own policy measures," he said.

Lagarde acknowledged that "the economic outlook for the euro area has deteriorated" and will stay weak in the short run. But she said infla-

over 30 GW in renewable energy capacity by 2030. For ReNew, this partnership ties in with its strategy of collaborating with long-term partners, accelerating renewable energy transition and meeting its net zero target by 2040.

We are elated to embark on this strategic collaboration with ReNew, as it holds tremendous potential for accelerating the development of renewable assets in India. With our aligned vision and extensive expertise, we aim to drive rapid progress in expanding India's renewable energy capacity and fostering sustainable growth," said

"We are delighted to welcome Gentari as a strategic partner in our goal of accelerating the clean energy transition. This partnership will be crucial in developing innovative solutions which will contribute significantly to India's 2030 goal of achieving 500 GW of installed renewable energy capacity.

Gentari is a clean energy company focused on delivering the net zero solutions required to put

tion is expected to fall and incomes to rise, helping the economy to recover.

The rate hikes are already working: Home prices have started to decline after a yearslong rally, and business loans are at their lowest level since statistics started in 2003. The outlook for construction companies in Germany also hit its lowest level since 2010.

Fears about recession are focus-



The sun sets next to the European Central Bank in Frankfurt, Germany, Monday, July 24, 2023. The European Central Bank is set to raise interest rates again Thursday. Economists are saying it could be the last hike in a rapid-fire series that started a year ago. (AP)

ing on Germany, Europe's industrial powerhouse and largest economy. It is the only developed economy that the International Monetary Fund expects to shrink this year.

Germany already has recorded two straight quarters of falling economic output, meeting one definition of recession. A third is possible, with figures for the April-to-June period coming out Friday.

The German economy is going through a "slowcession" - "stuck in the twilight zone between stagnation and recession," Brzeski says.

The whole eurozone economy also shrank slightly in the first three months of the year, likewise the second straight quarterly decline. Preliminary figures for the second quarter are due Monday.

The economists on the euro area business cycle dating committee, which declares recessions, use a broader set of data than just two quarters of shrinking output figures in its decisions. The committee said June 30 that talk of a eurozone recession was "premature" given record low unemployment of 6.5%.

ECB officials say getting tough on inflation now avoids even more drastic credit restrictions later if inflation becomes ingrained through expectations for higher wages and prices.

A flyer of the campaign.

Ahli United Bank congratulates the winners of Al-Hassad weekly draw

KUWAIT CITY, July 27: Ahli United Bank (AUB) Congratulates the Win-ners of Al-Hassad Weekly Draw of Al-Hassad Islamic account, which was held on 26 July at the bank's head office in the presence of a representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry as well as a representative from Deloitte as the external auditor to oversee the draws as per the instructions of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in this regard.

The Bank Announced 10 Winners Of KD 1,000 As Follows: Nawaf A S Al-Asousi, Zahra Mohammad Ebrahim Yadollahi, Loulwah Ahmad Khaled Al-Saqoubi, Yahya Khuwailed Aasem Al-Mutairi, Faisal Abdulla Abdulla Al Qallaf, Mohd Y I Abdulla, Fazlollah Abbas Yadollahi, Hanan Mohammad Abbas Ahmad Doukhi, Awatef Mubarak Mnawer Al-Resheediand Badreyah Shlash Saud Al-Hajraf.

During the same day, AUB held the postponed weekly draw of 19 July, 2023 and announced 10 Winners Of KD 1,000 As Follows: Mohammad Mousa Mohammad Buloushi, Naser Khamees Muaish Al-Mutairi, Tahani Thawab Samar Al-Azmi, Shaikhah Abdullateef Ibrahim Al-Duhaim, Saleh Marzouq Mohammad Al-Adwani, Sajjad Javed Ali Nawaz, Khalid Basem Jabra Shuhaibar, Khaled Al-Omar, Reem Salem Thiab Al-Eneziand Mohammad Ahmad Mohammad Hasan. In its new package, Al-Hassad

Islamic Saving Account presents a broader variety of rewards. Customers could now participate in the draw to win a monthly KD 100,000 prize, in addition to 10 weekly prizes of KD 1,000 each. The grand quarterly prize of KD 250,000 in cash for the winner remains the most important aspiration of customers. It is a real chance for them to realize their life dreams. In addition to this attractive package, there will be the annual expected profits on the basis of a Wakala contract that increases the attractiveness of the Al-Hassad Islamic Saving Account to customers

Al-Hassad Account provides a suite of unique features, including the simplest and easiest savings program and a unique account-opening feature online with all ease with an instant deposit option.

To be eligible to participate in the draw, the customer should have a minimum balance of KD 100, whereby the customer has two chances to participate, with up to 30,000 chances per draw, in addition to rewarding annual profits. Every KD 50 invested entitles the customer to one chance in the draws, provided that to maintain his balance for at least fifteen days before the draw date. The longer the customer keeps his balance the bigger the chances of participation in the draw with every KD 50 in the account. Draws are held every Wednesday based on the draw scheme. On religious and national holidays, the draw is postponed to the next business day.

For more information on Ahli United Bank's products and services, customers are invited to visit any of the Bank's branches, dial the customer services "Hayakom" on 181 2000, or log on to the Bank's website at www. ahliunited.com.kw

Sidus Space to host SOLAR MEMS Star Tracker

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., July 27, (AP): Sidus Space , a multi-faceted Space and Data-as-a-Service company today announced it will host a star tracker developed by SOLAR MEMS (the "Star Tracker") on its fourth planned LizzieSat mission, currently scheduled to launch with SpaceX in June of next year.

Sidus will host the Star Tracker as a part of its payload rideshare program. This payload rideshare is available for customers to launch and test their own technology aboard Sidus' satellites. As a part of the program, Sidus will provide space aboard its LizzieSat TM satellite, along with launch support, testing, and the ability to conduct experiments over the expected five-year timeline of the mission, with the goal of evaluating the Star Tracker's capabilities for the broader satellite sensor market.

Star trackers are used to determine a satellite's orientation and position in space. SOLAR MEMS is a leader in Sun Sensor technologies for small and medium spacecraft. Its Star Tracker is autonomous and will be used to capture images of star constellations to help determine the accuracy of star locations and use that information to determine the satellite's orientation with respect to the Earth.

Mattel posts a surprise profit

H World Group Limited ("H World" or "the Group", NASDAQ: HTHT and HKEX: 1179) announced its preliminary results for hotel operations in the second quarter ended

H World announces operating results

30 June 2023 ("Q2 2023"). As of 30 June 2023, H World operates 8,750 hotels with 844,417 rooms in 18 different countries. For the Legacy-Huazhu business, the RevPAR recovered significantly to 121% of the 2019 level, benefiting from the strong recovery of demand

for domestic travel. The RevPAR in April, May and June 2023 recovered to 127%, 115% and 123% of the 2019 levels, respectively. The hotel closures were mainly attributed to closures that were carried over due to the impact of COVID-19, and continuous effort to eliminate lower-quality and underperforming economy hotels. Legacy-Huazhu opened 374 new hotels, which was broadly in line with growth expectations. (AP)

The "Barbie" blockbuster movie created magic at the box office, but the iconic doll's parent Mattel is bracing for it to make a big difference in the toy aisles.

Mattel Inc. on Wednesday turned in a surprise profit and better sales during the second quarter than analysts expected. But worldwide sales of Barbie to retailers excluding adjustments fell 6% in the quarter ended June 30 as promotions were shifted to align with last weekend's release of the iconic doll's first live action picture. Mattel executives told analysts during an earnings call following the release that sales have improved in July, and it expects the movie will have a halo effect on the brand for years to come.

The film - which set an opening weekend record last week for the year - splashed worldwide attention on the doll and boosted shares of the company in the past month. Ahead of the opening, Mattel created a product marketing blitz with more than 100 brands plastering pink everywhere. But it won't likely see the full benefits of the tieins for awhile - and consumers are still spending cautiously on toys

"We significantly increased free cash flow and continued to gain market share," said Ynon Kreiz, chairman and CEO of Mattel in a statement. "Importantly, this moment will be remembered as a key milestone in our company's history with the release of the Barbie movie."

The movie release comes also at a time when Kreiz, who came to Mattel's helm in 2018, is turning the toy company into an in-tellectual property house, with "Barbie" the first of 14 live action movies planned with major studios. (AP)

Bigger displays and more advanced cameras

Samsung unveils foldable phones in a bet on bending devices

SEOUL, South Korea, July 27 (AP): Samsung Electronics on Wednesday unveiled two foldable smartphones as it continues to bet on devices with bending screens, a budding market that has yet to fully take off because of high prices.

The clamshell-designed Galaxy Z Flip 5 and Galaxy Z Fold 5, a larger device that opens and folds like a book, can be pre-ordered in certain markets including the United States and South Korea starting Wednesday.

Built with 6.7-inch and 7.6-inch main screens, the phones have bigger displays than Samsung's previous folding devices and are equipped with more advanced cameras, providing crisper visuals and more features for work, text and video chats, movies and games, the company said. Designed to be compact and easy to carry, the Flip 5 is also built with a 3.4-inch cover screen that allows it to be used folded in half

The phones, which run on Qual-

comm's Snapdragon 8 Gen 2 processor chips, are slightly sleeker and lighter than their predecessors but designed to be more durable and shock-resistant.

All that technology comes with hefty price tags. In the United States, Flip 5 will start at around \$1,000 while the Fold 5 is set at \$1,800.

Samsung, a South Korean technology giant that's also a major producer of computer memory chips, has been the longest provider of folding phones, releasing its first devices in 2019

The company announced the new phones at a lavish product event in South Korea's capital, Seoul, choosing one of the markets where folding phones are closer to being mainstream products than novelties.

Foldable devices accounted for around 40% of Samsung's highend devices sold in South Korea last year and the share is expected to increase in 2023, TM Roh, chief of Samsung's mobile business, said during a meeting with a select group of reporters.

While Samsung has goals to develop cheaper folding phones, Roh said it's difficult to specify when they would come, considering the complicated engineering involved and the tradeoffs between cheaper components and advanced functions people expect for such devices.

But high prices will not prevent foldable phones from becoming mainstream in global markets, Roh said.

"The form factor is not something that's entirely new - it's actually something people have been very accustomed to for a long time," Roh said, pointing to a reporter's notebook that folded.

"People want products that fold, making them easier to carry and protect important information ... and then to flip them open to use and make notes. That has been a natural pattern for such a long time, for people in both the East and West.'

DETROIT, July 27, (AP): Seven major automakers

say they're joining forces

to build a North American

electric vehicle charging

network that would rival

Tesla's and nearly double

the number of fast-charging

plugs in the US and Canada.

Hyundai, Kia, Mercedes and Stel-

lantis said Wednesday that they

will share in a multibillion-dollar

investment to build "high power"

charging stations with at least

30,000 plugs in urban areas and

along travel corridors by 2030.

General Motors, BMW, Honda,



Samsung Galaxy Z Flip 5 Phones displayed during the Galaxy Unpacked 2023 event at the COEX in Seoul, South Korea, July 26. (AP)

There's optimism in the industry that the worldwide sales of foldable

phones are growing at a faster pace with other vendors like Google, Mo-

Double fast-charging plugs in US, Canada

torola and Huawei now providing competition to Samsung.

According to Counterpoint, a technology market research firm, global shipments of foldable phones will approach 19 million units in 2023, which would mark a 45% increase from 2022, mainly fueled by rising consumer demands in China.

The shipments may exceed 100 million units by 2027, Counterpoint said in a report released Wednesday, although that projection was based on a presumption that Apple would eventually release a foldable iPhone, sometime around 2025. Apple, which closely competes with Samsung for the top spot in global smartphone shipments, has yet to confirm any plans for foldable devices.

Samsung on Thursday said its operating profit for the April-June quarter fell 95% from the same period last year to 670 billion won (\$526 million), mainly due to a slow recovery in the global semiconductor market.

Union Pacific hires CEO favored by hedge fund

OMAHA, Neb, July 27, (AP): Union Pacific has hired the CEO candidate favored by a hedge fund that's been pressuring the railroad to improve amid disappointing results driven by weakening consumer demand and higher labor costs.

The Omaha, Nebraska-based railroad said its former chief operating officer Jim Vena will take over as CEO next month. Soroban Capital Partners, a hedge fund that holds a \$1.6 billion stake in Union Pacific, had been urging the railroad to hire Vena because of his expertise in streamlining operations.

The hedge fund said that UP lagged behind its peers during Lance Fritz' 8-year tenure in all key measures. Soroban declined to comment on the hire Wednesday, but investors resoundingly endorsed it by sending Union Pacific's stock soaring more than 10% to \$238 Wednesday.

am excited about returning to

'Insider trading'

British billionaire pleads not guilty

NEW YORK, July 27, (AP): Joe Lewis, the British billionaire whose family trust owns the Tottenham Hotspur soccer club, pleaded not guilty in New York on Wednesday to insider trading charges alleging that he fed corporate secrets to romantic partners, personal assistants, friends and his pilots, earning them millions of dollars illegally.

Lewis was released on \$300 million bail, using a yacht and private plane as collateral, after he entered the plea in Manhattan federal court. Two of his pilots, Patrick O'Connor and Bryan 'Marty' Waugh, also pleaded not guilty to related charges and were each released on \$250,000 bail.

Major automakers unite on EV charging network to rival Tesla

Defense and space business perform worse

Boeing lost \$149m in Q2 as plane maker pushes ahead with production increases

WASHINGTON, July 27, (AP): Boeing flipped to a \$149 million loss in the second quarter despite higher revenue, as the plane maker struggled with higher costs in both its airline and defense business.

The company beat Wall Street expectations for profit, revenue and free cash flow and said it is beginning to increase production of its two most popular airl The shares jumped 8.7% on Wednesday - the biggest one-day percentage gain in more than a year. European rival Airbus reported a second-quarter profit and also said it was making progress to raise production of its best-selling plane. Airbus said a new problem with Pratt & Whitney engines will not affect its assembly

Boeing, headquartered in Arlington, Virginia, has been beset by supply-chain problems that continued during the second quarter, including a tem-porary delay in 737 deliveries because of fittings on the Max and regulators' questions about Dreamliner inspections.

Boeing said the commercial-planes division was weighed down by "abnorit did not detail Cai

an increase in delivery of commercial planes to airlines and lessors.

Airbus said net income attributable to shareholders were 1.06 billion euros (\$1.17 billion) in the quarter, or 1.34 euros (\$1.48) per share. Revenue was 15.9 billion euros (\$17.6 billion).

Analysts expected 1.55 euros per share on revenue of 15.85 billion euros, according to FactSet.

Like being, Airbus making progress toward raising pro-

duction of its A320neo-family of jets -

they compete with the Max -- to 75 jets

that hundreds of Airbus passenger jets

will need to have their engines removed

and inspected in the coming months af-

ter engine maker Pratt & Whitney dis-

covered a problem with powder metal

used in making parts for 1,200 engines.

the affected Pratt engines, according

to aviation-data firm Cirium. Indian

low-cost airline IndiGo has nearly 140.

Among U.S. carriers, Spirit Airlines

has 34 of the planes, Hawaiian Airlines

Pratt parent RTX Corp. said this

week that the issue does not affect new

engines, and Airbus CEO Guillaume

Faury said Wednesday that Pratt has

confirmed it can meet Airbus' demand

for engines despite the inspections of

18 and JetBlue Airways 16.

Nearly 800 Å320 and A321s have

However this week, it was revealed

a month in 2026.

Stock soars more than 10%

Union Pacific and look forward to the journey to be the safest, most reliable and most efficient railroad in the industry," Vena said in a statement. "Working closely with the entire team, my focus from day one will be to ensure the company delivers industry-leading customer and operating excellence, cultivates and empowers our employees, and cares for the communities in which we operate."

Deliver

Fritz acknowledged that the railroad didn't deliver "consistent and reliable" service during his tenure, and "that needs to be remedied." He said proving to Union Pacific customers they can count on good service will help the railroad attract new business and improve profits in the future. At times, UP has struggled to handle everything companies wanted to ship after cutting too deep during the pandemic. Regulators had to twice order the railroad to deliver emergency shipments to livestock producer Foster Farms to ensure that company wouldn't run out of feed for the millions of chickens it raises.

The rail industry has also been under pressure to improve safety ever since the fiery Norfolk Southern derailment in February prompted evacuations and sent a towering plume of black smoke over the town of East Palestine, Ohio. Lawmakers and regulators are considering imposing new rules on railroads.

Vena was brought in to Union Pacific in 2019 after more than 40 years at Canadian National to help the railroad change to a new operating model that relies on fewer, longer trains and significantly fewer employees and locomotives to move freight, but Vena left after less than two years on the job.

"He knows us and he's laser-focused on running the safest, best-service railroad in the industry," Fritz said. "And that's going to be that's going to be really valuable to us."

But rail unions have criticized UP and the other major freight railroads' reliance on that precision scheduled railroading model that has become the industry standard. They say the deep workforce cuts that have accompanied that model have made railroads riskier because employees are spread too thin and under pressure to rush safety inspections and maintenance. Plus, the changes made it less desirable to work for the railroads with train crews on call 24-7 and increasing demands on all rail workers.

All three must remain in the United States.

US Attorney Damian Williams, who announced the charges Tuesday night in a video, said Lewis was accused of "orchestrating a brazen insider trading scheme" that utilized his access to corporate boardrooms to feed inside tips to friends and lov-

"Those folks then traded on that inside information - and made millions of dollars in the stock market because, thanks to Lewis, those bets were a sure thing," Williams said. "That's classic corporate corruption. It's cheating. And it's against the law - laws that apply to everyone, no matter who you are.

Fiaht

David M. Zornow, an attorney for Lewis, said his client had come to the U.S. "to answer these illconceived charges" and would fight them vigorously.

"The government has made an egregious error in judgment in charging Mr. Lewis, an 86-year-old man of impeccable integrity and pro-digious accomplishment," Zornow said in a statement Tuesday.

Wearing a gray three-piece suit, Lewis said, "Not guilty, your honor," when asked for his plea. He and his lawyers declined to comment as they left court and hailed a yellow cab.

Lawyers for the pilots did not immediately reply to messages seeking comment.

Union Pacific has made progress this year in addressing workers' quality of life concerns by agreeing to provide paid sick time to all its workers and improve scheduling for engineers so they can reliably know ahead of time what days they will have off. The president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, Eddie Hall, was operating UP trains during Vena's previous stint with the railroad, and he said he hopes the new CEO is willing to temper his approach now. "We would like to see contin-

ued progress, including necessary changes to the precision scheduled railroading operating model," Hall said. "Few people alive know more about PSR than Vena. He should be fully aware of its failings. If not, rest assured, we will make him aware."

The dramatic move is intended speed the adoption of electric vehicles, allaying fears that chargers won't be available for long distance travel.

The companies wouldn't disclose the exact number of charging stations or financial details of the joint venture they're forming to put the network in place. They said the first of the U.S. chargers will be ready by next summer.

Investment

The automakers said in a joint statement Wednesday that they want to build the "leading network" of reliable high-powered charging stations in North America.

"The parties have agreed not to disclose specific investment numbers at this time, but the seven founding automakers intend to work as equals to ensure the success of the joint venture," the companies said in a written statement answering questions from The Associated Press. "As you can imagine, such a high-powered charging network of this scale requires a multibillion-dollar investment.

There are currently just under 8,700 direct-current fast-charging stations in the U.S. and Canada with nearly 36,000 charging plugs, according to the US Department of Energy. Even with 30,000 more plugs, the U.S. will need far more chargers. The National Renewable Energy Laboratory estimates that 182,000 fast chargers will be needed by 2030.

Fast chargers can get a battery to 80% of its capacity in 20 minutes to one hour, making them optimal for travel corridors and in some cases comparable to the time it takes to fill a car with gasoline. They're much quicker than 240-volt "Level 2" chargers that can take hours to get a battery to a full charge.

The new network is expected to have 10 to 20 charging plugs per station, meaning there would be a minimum of 1,500 stations and a maximum

Boeing plans to raise production of the 737 Max from 31 to 38 planes a month and boost output of the larger, two-aisle 787 Dreamliner from four to five per month by year end.

The world's two leading aircraft manufacturers are benefitting as travel recovers from the pandemic and airlines place huge orders for newer, more fuel-efficient planes.

"We have more work ahead to improve performance, but our progress is clear and we're confident in our path forward." CEO David Calhoun said in a memo to employees. He said the company was improving the stability of operations in its factories and among suppliers.

of about 3,000.

Tesla's network, with the largest number of fast chargers in North America, has 2,050 stations and more than 22,000 plugs in the U.S. and Canada, the DOE says.

The network formed by the seven automakers would be public and open to all electric vehicle owners. It will have connectors for both Tesla's North American Charging Standard plugs as well as the Combined Charging System plugs used by other automakers.

The network will speed up electric vehicle sales in North America by getting people who now are reading stories about holes in the charging network that prevent long-distance travel, said Stephanie Brinley, an analyst with von Rumohr, an analyst with Cowen, said those were likely the result of fixing issues with fuel tanks on the Boeing 767 and fuselage fittings on the Dreamliner.

The defense and space business also performed worse than analysts expected. Von Rumohr called it "disappointingly still in the red," partly due to vrite-downs on several programs.

Delays

The company recorded charges of \$257 million related to a delay in launches of its Starliner reusable space vehicle, \$189 million for higher than expected production costs for a military training jet, and \$68 million for delays in a defense refueling drone.

Boeing's loss compared with net income of \$160 million a year earlier and, excluding unusual items, amounted to 82 cents per share. Analysts expected a loss of 89 cents per share, according to a FactSet survey.

Revenue rose 18% to \$19.75 billion, more than the \$18.59 billion that analysts expected. Sales were boosted by

S&P Global Mobility.

"It's stopping them even from ex-ploring what EV life is like," Brinley said. The announcement of the network "is giving them confidence that this is going to work out."

In their statement, the seven automakers said they would use renewable energy as much as possible to power the chargers, and they will be in convenient locations with canopies and amenities such as restrooms, food service and stores nearby.

Brinley said a good charging experience is key to earning the trust of potential EV buyers. "The reality is consumers want to feel comfortable when they charge," she said.

It will take years and billions of dollars

to build out the network, which will need special electrical wiring, Brinley said.

The current charging network, being built by a hodgepodge of companies, is growing but is often unreliable or in poor locations. This has prompted Ford, General Motors and others to sign agreements with Tesla to give their EVs access to its much larger network of fast chargers. Automakers also have announced they're building their own networks, but Brinley said the moves weren't enough.

She also doesn't see the automakers' announcement as a threat to Tesla. "I think the reality is this is needed, and these automakers are getting together to say 'we need this'" she said. "Tesla can't build enough for everyone."

First-half earnings fall by 20%

Volkswagen takes steps to boost its China business

FRANKFURT, Germany, July 27, (AP): Volkswagen saw after-tax earnings fall by 20% in the first half of the year, to 8.5 billion euros (\$9.45 billion), as the automaker tries to engineer a rebound in China.

The decline from the same period last year was due in part to a 2.5 billion euro non-cash loss on raw materials hedging in financial markets. Companies use such market strategies to offset risk and insure themselves against rapid changes in the prices of raw materials.

Volkswagen said operating earn-

ings, excluding the hedging effect, rose 13% to 13.9 billion.

Chief Financial Officer Arno Antlitz said the company "achieved solid financial results" in the first six months of the year and that with changes in the China business, "we will improve the competitive business of the Volkswagen Group even further.'

The company said its business in Western Europe was strong, given an order book of 1.65 million vehicles, including 200,000 battery-only electric cars, "demonstrating stable customer demand.'

Volkswagen reaffirmed its financial outlook for the year and said it was taking steps to strengthen its business in China, where it has seen sales decline in the face of stronger local competition.

Sales revenue increased 18.2% as the company stemmed some of its losses in China, where sales were down 1.2%

The Wolfsburg, Germany-based company has announced partnerships between its Volkswagen brand and local electric carmaker Xpeng as well as the expansion of cooperation between its Audi luxury brand and local partners FAW and SAIC. The partnerships are aimed at developing new models for promising markets in China, the world's largest car market.

While affirming its earnings outlook for the year, the company lowered its outlook for deliveries to 9 million to 9.5 million vehicles, from 9.5 million earlier.

The company sold 4.4 million cars during the first six months of the year, up 13% on strong performance outside China. Non-China sales rose 21%.

hundreds of ones already in use. Shares of Boeing Co. rose \$18.68, its biggest nominal one-day gain since November 2020, to close at \$232.80.

BUSINESS

CartiHeal performs 1st Agili-C implantation in US

CartiHeal Ltd., developer of im-plants for the treatment of cartilage and osteochondral defects in arthritic and non-arthritic kneejoints, today announced its first commercial implantation of Agili-C in the US by Dr. Ken Zaslav, a specialist in Orthopedic Surgery and Sports Medicine at North-well Health in New York City, NY. The Agili-C implant features

a bi-phasic design that supports both bone remodeling and

cartilage regeneration. Agili-C received FDA breakthrough designation status in 2020 and demonstrated clinical superiority to the surgical standard of care (SSOC)-microfracture and debridement-in one of the largest cartilage clinical trials on record with the broadest inclusion criteria, which was meant to mimic real-life patients. This resulted in the Agili-C implant receiving FDA approval with

an indication for the treatment of an International Cartilage Repair Society (ICRS) grade III or above knee-joint surface lesion(s), with a total treatable area of 1-7cm2, without severe osteoarthritis (Kellgren-Law-rence grade 0-3).

Dr. Zaslav commented, "Agili-C is a technology I and others in the surgical community have been watching and waiting on for over 10 years." (AP)

court grants protection settlement for Sacklers

OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma can start executing a settlement that protects members of the Sackler family who own the company from civil lawsuits over the toll of opioids, a court ruled Tuesday

The ruling from the 2nd US Cir-cuit Court of Appeals in New York allows the company's transforma-tion to start - though it's still subject to approval from another court. Under a deal reached last year

with thousands of state and local government entities, the company is to become a new entity, with its profits being used to fight the opioid epidemic. And Sackler family members are to pay up to \$6 billion over time.

The Purdue deal is one of the bigger ones in a series of corporate opioid settlements worth a total of more than \$50 billion so far. Unlike most of them, it includes funds for people who

were victims of the crisis and their families.

In exchange, the members of the wealthy Sackler family, who are not themselves seeking bankruptcy protections, are to be shielded from lawsuits.

A 2nd Circuit panel approved the deal in May. By then, the main remaining objector was the U.S. Bankruptcy Trustee, which says the Sacklers should not have legal protections. (AP)

Current treatments take months for new moms to find symptom relief

New postpartum depression pill shows rapid improvement

MANHASSET, N.Y., July 27: Approximately one in eight women experience perinatal or postpartum depression (PPD) and current treatment options can take months for new mothers to find symptom relief, if ever. The Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research at Northwell Health announced the publication of the results from the SKYLARK Study, a phase 3 placebo-controlled clinical trial of an investigational oral, 14-day neuroactive steroid zuranolone (50mg) pill in the treatment of PPD. The results showed rapid, clinically meaningful improvements in depressive symptoms at measured time points -supporting the potential for US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval of the first oral, at-home, neuroactive steroid therapy to treat PPD.

The trial was led by Kristina M. Deligiannidis, MD, professor at the Institute of Behavioral Science at the Feinstein Institutes, who, with colleagues, published their findings in The American Journal of Psychiatry. Fourteen-day oral, at-home, treatment with zuranolone versus placebo resulted in statistically significant improvement in depressive symptoms, as measured by change from baseline in HAMD-17 total score. At day 15, the study's primary outcome measure, with statistically significant improvement in depressive symptoms, reported as early as day 3 (after two doses) and with improvements sustained at all measured time points through day 45. Results showed that 57 percent of the women taking zuranolone versus 38 percent of women taking placebo experienced a 50 percent or more im-



Deligiannidis

provement in their depressive symptoms at day 15. At day 45, 61.9 percent of the trial participants who received zuranolone compared to 54.1 percent of women receiving placebo, experienced a 50 percent or more improvement in their depressive symptoms. The study's most common treatment-emergent adverse events (>5 percent in the zuranolone 50 mg arm) were somnolence, dizziness, sedation, headache, diarrhea, nausea, urinary tract infection and COVID-19.

"Postpartum depression is underrecognized, undertreated and disruptive for those who live with the condition. We collaborate with researchers around the world in an effort to develop more rapid and effective

therapies for the many women who need support," said Dr. Deligiannidis, the trial's principal investigator, lead author of the paper and director of Women's Behavioral Health at Zucker Hillside Hospital. "We have been working on neuroactive steroid research in PPD for nearly 15 years. The SKYLARK study follows previous successful clinical trials, and publishing its results is a pinnacle moment in treating postpartum depression."

Diverse

Among the 200 enrolled patients and randomized diverse patients screened across international clinical sites, 196 female patients between ages 18 to 45 with postpartum major depressive episodes received the blinded study drug. Zuranolone (50 mg) or placebo was given once daily for 14 days and the patient's depressive symptoms were evaluated at several defined points in the study for 45 days.

In 2021, Dr. Deligiannidis reported the publication of the phase 3 results of the ROBIN Study, which was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Psychiatry. The trial demonstrated the improvement in depressive symptoms with zuranolone at 30 mg versus placebo in patients with PPD and that zuranolone was generally well tolerated. Based on those results, the team began to study the safety and efficacy of 50 mg of zuranolone.

Evidence suggests that PPD is partly due to a disruption in the normal interaction between the nervous system's stress response, D-aminobutyric acid (GABA) signaling, and neuroactive steroids (NAS). The SKYLARK and ROBIN clinical trials provide some of the most substantial results for improving depressive symptoms in women with PPD.

"Dr. Deligiannidis is a leader in postpartum depression medical re-

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., July 27: nfer-ence, a science-first software company transforming healthcare by making biomedical data computable, and Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC), a leading academic medical center, have announced a strategic agreement aimed at advancing research through the deployment of nference's state-of-the-art federated clinical analytics platform. By leveraging the power of federated AI and machine learning, this collaboration will expand clinical insights in key research areas

Combining VUMC's extensive longitudinal, multi-modal data with nference's federated AI platform will enable both parties to advance real-world scientific insights for drug discovery and patient care. This platform will provide /anderbilt researchers and others in the life sciences community with an increasingly diverse dataset, which is crucial in understanding and addressing the varied patient needs across the healthcare specusing the most advanced technology to accelerate medical research and improve

"nference's advanced capability to utihealth records, imaging data, and digital pathology data, when combined with our historic and deep experience and leaderinformation technology, allows us to advance the understanding of devastating diseases while accelerating biomedical research," said Jeff Balser, MD, PhD, President and Chief Executive Officer for VUMC and Dean of Vanderbilt Uni-

Leveraging multi-modal data, including imaging and digital pathology, offers a holistic view of complex diseases. As part of this agreement, Pramana, a nference company modernizing the pathol ogy sector, will lead efforts to digitize VUMC's glass pathology slides across oncology, cardiovascular, and metabolic diseases. Implementing Pramana's digital pathology solution allows VUMC researchers to access a new modality of digitized patient data.

Daewoong obtains approval of Envlomet SR Tab

SomaLogic and Dante Genomics to enhance research adoption of proteomics in Europe

BOULDER, Colo., July 27: SomaLogic Operating Co. Inc., (Nasdaq:SLGC), a leader in data-driven proteomics technology, has announced its partnership with Dante Genomics, a global leader in genomics and precision medicine, to offer a comprehensive solution for proteomics testing at scale in Europe. Dante will be the first SomaLogic authorized site in Italy.

"Over the past seven years, Dante has been intensely focused on enhancing the clinical utility of the genome, and in partnering with SomaLogic, we will now work together to enhance the research and discovery capabilities of the proteome," said Andrea Riposati, Co-founder and CEO of Dante Genomics. "By combining proteomics and genomics, we will develop clinical insights and actionable results. We are excited for the future of multiomics, where partnerships like this will mean overall better healthcare for more people around the world."

Dante Genomics will run SomaLogic's technology out of its laboratory in Italy, providing proteomics services for the European market. SomaLogic's 7,000-plex SomaScan® Platform can be applied across research and discovery. It can run approximately 7,000 protein measurements on a single 55 microliter plasma or serum sample.

SomaLogic and Dante Genomics will partner to offer one of the first multiomic capabilities to support clinical research discovery, expanding the databases and total able market for both companies address

"Italy is a leader in life science research in Europe, showing promising growth in -omics research in academic and private sectors," said SomaLogic Chief Executive Officer Adam Taich. "We're excited to be supporting Dante Genomics's vision for accelerating the clinical research of proteomics."

Quality

For more than twenty years, Som-aLogic has grown from its roots in the research lab to become a global leader in proteomics with technology that delivers the quality and quantity of biological insights life science researchers need from lab to last mile.

About Dante Genomics Dante Genomics is a global genomic information company building and commercializing a new class of transformative health and longevity applications based on whole genome sequencing and software. The Company uses its platform to deliver better patient outcomes, prevention, enhanced diagnostics and personalized medicine. The Company's assets include one of the largest private genome databases with research consent, proprietary software designed to unleash the power of genomic data at scale and proprietary processes which enable an industrial approach to genomic sequencing.

About SomaLogic SomaLogic is catalyzing drug research and development and biomarker identification as a global leader in proteomics technology. With a single 55 microliter plasma or serum

sample, SomaLogic can run 7,000 protein measurements, covering more than a third of the approximately 20,000 proteins in the human body and twice as many as other proteomic platforms. For more than 20 years we've supported pharmaceutical companies, and academic and contract research organizations who rely on our protein detection and analysis technologies to fuel drug, disease, and treatment discoveries in such areas as oncology, diabetes, and cardiovascular, liver and metabolic diseases.

Also:

SEOUL, South Korea: Daewoong Pharmaceutical obtained approval for a SGLT-2 inhibitor+metformin combination drug in just one month after the release of Envlo Tab., the 1st SGLT-2 inhibitor by Korea, expanding its product portfolio.

Daewoong Pharmaceutical (Jeon Sengho and Lee Chang-jae) announced on the June 14th that Envlomet SR Tab. 0.3/1000mg, (ingredient name: enavogliflozin, metformin hydrochloride) has obtained the approval on June 13th.

Envlomet SR Tab., is a combination of two drugs, enavogliflozin and metformin hydrochloride. It has been approved as an adjuvant for dietary and exercise therapies to improve blood glucose control in patients with type 2 diabetes. Metformin is used as first-line treatment for type 2 diabetes, and enavogliflozin effectively lowers blood glucose levels with just 0.3mg, a dosage that is only 1/30 of other drugs in the same class.

generation for complex diseases

nference, VUMC partner to expand insights in key research areas

Al platform to help advance RWE

trum. The agreement highlights both nference and VUMC's commitment to patient care.

lize information gathered from electronic ship in biomedical informatics and health versity School of Medicine.

search," said Kevin J. Tracey, MD, president and CEO of the Feinstein Institutes, Karches Family Distinguished Chair in Medical Research. "These clinical trial results are evidence that years of perseverance and dedication lead to significant advances in medicine.

The Feinstein Institutes and Dr. Deligiannidis also pioneer research methods to diagnose and treat perinatal depression - depression before and after childbirth. She received more than \$4 million in multi-year grants to use non-invasive brain imaging to study how the condition develops in women and to develop novel treatments, including bright light therapy, sleep modification and non-invasive vagus nerve stimulation to treat major depressive disorders.

The Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research is the research arm of Northwell Health, the largest health care provider and private employer in New York State. Home to 50 research labs, 3,000 clinical research studies and 5,000 researchers and staff, the Feinstein Institutes raises the standard of medical innovation through its five institutes of behavioral science, bioelectronic medicine, cancer, health innovations and outcomes, and molecular medicine. We make breakthroughs in genetics, oncology, brain research, mental health, autoimmunity, and are the global scientific leader in bioelectronic medicine - a new field of science that has the potential to revolutionize medicine.

Discoveries

"Joining with nference is a VUMC strategic initiative to improve healthcare for patients everywhere through accelerated discoveries derived from our deidentified electronic health data. Importantly, VUMC's de-identified clinical data is maintained in a secure VUMC environment that allows our investigators and companies to develop and use algorithm models for innovation. The data-derived knowledge will address unmet medical needs across many diseases," said Jennifer Pietenpol, PhD, Chief Scientific and Strategy Officer for VUMC and holder of the Brock Family Directorship. The Brock Family Center for Applied Innovation at VUMC is fa-

cilitating this collaboration. "VUMC is a pivotal new member of our federated network that will expand the diversity of our clinical datasets, helping researchers to better understand underserved populations," said Murali Aravamudan, co-founder and CEO of nference. "The depth and longitudinal nature of this high-quality data will provide crucial insights into the complexities of disease progression over time. As a result, our platform will accelerate research, drug development, and clinical trials, paving the way for advancements in healthcare.

Sights, nference's AI-enabled clinical analytics platform, offers a dataset across all therapeutic areas, including, but not limited to, cardiology, immunology, and rare diseases, enabling life science, biopharmaceutical, and medical device companies to leverage real-world data across the product lifecycle. Agreements with premier academic medical centers, like VUMC, have resulted in a rich repository of clinical data, enabling nference to develop algorithms that unlock the potential of federated, de-identified healthcare data with the power to drive unprecedented insights into human health.

Through its powerful technology platform and software, nference is transforming health care by making biomedical knowledge computable. Its partnership with major academic medical centers empowers nference to synthesize decades of institutional knowledge, producing real-world evidence (RWE) in real time by converting large amounts of de-identified data into deep insights to advance discovery and development of diagnostics and therapeutics. Its proprietary AI-enabled software platform, nSights, harnesses the power of federated learning to accelerate life sciences research, development, and clinical care in significant ways, including biomarker discovery and validation, RWE generation leveraging real-world data, early disease detection, public health policy generation and validation, and more. nference is headquartered in Cambridge, Mass. Follow nference on LinkedIn and Twitter.



Prolonged strike can impact regional and state economy

Calif Gov Newsom offers to help negotiate Hollywood strike

SACRAMENTO, Calif., July 27, (AP): California Gov. Gavin Newsom has contacted all sides of the strikes that have hobbled Hollywood, his office said Wednesday, offering to help broker a deal to restart an industry that is crucial to keeping the state's economy humming amid signs of weakness.

So far, neither studio executives nor actors and writers have shown formal interest in bringing Newsom to the negotiating table, said Anthony York, Newsom's senior adviser for communications. But York said both Newsom and senior members of his administration have been in touch with all sides as the two strikes stretch deeper into the summer blockbuster season.

"It's clear that the sides are still far apart, but he is deeply concerned about the impact a prolonged strike can have on the regional and state economy," York said. He further noted "thousands of jobs depend directly or indirectly on Hollywood getting back to work," including crew, staff and catering.

The last time the writers went on strike more than a decade ago, the 100-day work stoppage cost the state's economy an estimated \$2 billion. The economic hit could be even bigger this time around now that actors have joined the picket lines. The strikes come after Newsom signed a state budget that included a more than \$31 billion deficit in part because of a slowdown in the tech sector, another one of the state's key industries.

The writers have been on strike since May, and the actors joined them earlier this month. Both unions have concerns about how they will be paid in an age where fewer people are paying to go to the

Variety

movies or watch cable TV in favor of streaming services. And they are worried how the rise of artificial intelligence will affect the creative process of how movies and TV shows are made and who is paid to make them.

The Democratic governor first offered to help mediate a deal in May, shortly after the writers strike began, saving he was sympathetic to their concerns about streaming and artificial intelligence.

Contract

Now in his final term in office, Newsom has worked hard to boost his national profile as he sets his sights on life after the governor's office. He is widely considered a future presidential contender, though he has said he has no plans to run. Any role for Newsom to help end strikes halting one of the country's most recognizable industries could bolster his status on the national stage.

Labor actions have lit up California this summer, and it has become common for politicians and their allies to step in to broker deals. New Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass, for example, helped negotiate an end to a strike by Los Angeles school staff. Acting Biden administration Labor Secretary Julie Su, a former California labor leader, helped reach an end to a contract dispute at Southern California ports.

Asked about Newsom's involvement, Bass spokesman Zach Seidl said in a statement that "this is a historic inflection point for our city. ... We continue to engage with labor leaders, studio heads, elected leaders and other impacted parties to arrive at a fair and equitable solution.

York declined to say who Newsom has spoken with, either on the unions' side or the studios. Representatives for the Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists and the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers declined to comment.

Hollywood isn't just a major economic driver in California - it's also a fundraising powerhouse for mostly Democratic candidates, including Newsom. In 2021, when Newsom was facing a recall election that could have removed him from office, Netflix co-founder Reed Hastings donated \$3 million to help defeat it. He has received smaller contributions from executives at Disney, Sony and Lionsgate. Prominent directors and producers like Stephen Spielberg and Chuck Lorre have also donated to his campaigns.

Newsom's relationships with some of Hollywood's most powerful executives could potentially help him in any negotiations over the strikes as he continues to advocate for the causes of the workers. Newsom also has a connection to Hollywood through his wife, Jennifer Siebel Newsom, who used to be an actor and is now a documentary director.

Also this year, Newsom signed a law to extend tax credits for movie and television productions. The big change is that those tax credits will be refundable, meaning if a movie studio has credits that are worth more than what it owes in taxes, the state will pay the studio the difference in cash.



LONDON: A London High Court judge on Thursday allowed Prince Harry's lawsuit against the publisher of The Sun tabloid to go to trial on claims the newspaper used unlawful methods to gather information about him, rejecting the newspaper's attempt to throw out the case.

The Duke of Sussex alleged the publisher of The Sun and the now-defunct News Of The World had hacked his phone and used investigators and deception to unlawfully gather information on him dating back two decades.

News Group Newspapers, which is owned by **Rupert Mur**doch, argued that the suit should be thrown because the claims were brought after the six-year limitation to do so expired.

Justice Timothy Fancourt ruled in favor of the argument by the newspapers that Harry was well enough aware of the phone hacking scandal to bring his case sooner. However, he said he would allow him to proceed on claims about other unlawful intrusions, such as the use of private investigators hired to snoop on him.

The ruling was similar to one Fancourt made in May in a companion case brought by actor Hugh Grant, that also tossed out phone hacking charges.

Harry's lawyer had argued he was prevented from bringing his case because of a "secret agreement" between the royal family and the newspapers that called for a settlement and apology. The deal, which the prince said was authorized by the late Queen Elizabeth II, would have prevented future litigation from the royals.

The publisher denied there was any secret agreement and Fancourt said Harry failed to produce evidence of such a deal. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: Workers for corporations owned by Michael Jackson had no legal obligation

to protect children from the pop star, an attorney told an appeals court Wednesday.

Jackson estate lawyer Jonathan Steinsapir pushed back against a tentative decision by California's 2nd District Court of Appeal, which said it was inclined to revive previously disFilm

Galifianakis gives the best performance of his career

'Beanie Bubble' dives into plush toy craze

By Jake Coyle

Who knew so many movie ideas could be found while rummaging through your attic?

This year we've had movies on Tetris ("Tetris"), Nike ("Air"), Blackberry ("Blackberry") and Cheetos ("Flamin' Hot"). The latest is "The Beanie Bub-ble," a comic drama about the Beanie Baby craze of the 1990s.

We once debated the ethics of product placement in movies - now the product is the movie. It may not say entirely wonderful things about our capitalistic society that we're pumping out big-screen movies and streaming-service content that exalts the stories behind snacks, sneaks and stuffies. "The Beanie Bubble," which lands on Apple TV+

Friday, may be part of a '20s trend but its interest is unpacking a late-20th century phenomenon and the some of the women exploited along the way. Zach Galifianakis plays Ty Warner, the chief executive of Ty Inc., the maker of the stuffed animals that - thanks to a few ingenious innovations and lucky twists of fate - became, as one character says in the film, "little plush lotto tickets.

With a softer, under-stuffed design, limited editions to drive up demand and the help of the then-nascent online second-hand market of eBay, Beanie fever took hold before, a few years later, dissipating as fast as it began. "We didn't set out to make America lose its mind, but that's what happened," says Warner's business partner Robbie (Elizabeth Banks).

The backdrop is full of Clinton-era kitsch. But "The Beanie Bubble" - a first feature by a pair of people with first-hand experience with the early days of the internet: Kristin Gore, daughter of Al, and Damion Kulash, lead singer of the band OK Go - is most concerned with a triptych of stories about the women who helped foster the Beanie craze but whose contributions were co-opted by Warner.

They unfold in parallel storylines. There's Banks Robbie, a friend and Ty Inc. co-founder who finds herself pushed out once success arrives. There's Sheila (Sarah Snook), a single mother of two who's initially won over by Warner's charisma and playfulness with her children, only to eventually discover a warped, immature side to him. And there's Maya (Geraldine Viswanathan), a young Ty Inc. hire who presciently leads the company's lucrative dive into the internet yet is kept on an hourly wage.

The script, by Gore, comes from Zac Bissonnette's 2015 book, "The Great Beanie Bubble: Mass Delusion and the Dark Side of Cute." (Warner was convicted of tax evasion in 2013.) In mixing up the Beanie Baby timeline to play out each storyline simultaneously, "The Beanie Bubble" needlessly complicates itself. But it also makes a compelling reflection of history repeating itself.

Reality

Robbie, Sheila and Maya all follow the same arc: Initial infatuation followed by the harsher onset of reality. It's the same story for the Beanie craze, and, as the film notes in a montage, countless other bubbles that have come and gone. America, it's said in the film, is "the land of comebacks and second chances." Here, that means an excuse for betray one woman after another.

While those historical corollaries are neat enough, it also makes "The Beanie Bubble," well, kind of repetitive. Gore and Kulash's film is far from the first to follow such ups and downs. Outside of some easy irony given the cuddliness of the product at hand, there may not be enough that makes this iteration of such a familiar cycle especially interesting.

What keeps "The Beanie Bubble" from bursting, though, is the likability of its central performers. Banks, Snook and especially Viswanathan are all terrific comic actors who individually capture the exasperations of women fed up with an egotistical adolescent executive. And Galifianakis gives perhaps the best non- "Between Two Ferns" performance of his career. His Warner is a man whose charm, and face lifts, steadily peel away. In Galifianakis' long line of man-children, he's the biggest baby of them all.

"The Beanie Bubble," an Apple Studios release is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for language. Running time: 110 minutes. Two stars out of four.

Also:

NEW YORK: The 61st New York Film Festival will kick off with **Todd Haynes**' "May December," a juicy drama starring Natalie Portman as an actor preparing for a film about a years-ago tabloid scandal.

Film at Lincoln Center, which puts on the New York Film Festival, has announced that "May December" - one of the standouts at this year's Cannes Film Festival - will be the opening night film at this year's edition. The gala will take place Sept. 29 at Alice Tully Hall.

In it, Portman plays a well-known TV star who, to research a role, spends time with Gracie (Julianne Moore) and her much-younger husband, Joe (Charles Melton). They're a seemingly happy suburban family whose initial affair 20 years earlier, when Joe was 13, was a national story. Their backstory is loosely based on the case of Mary Kay Letourneau, a Washington State schoolteacher convicted of raping her sixthgrade student, Vili Fualaau. They later married. "'May December' is a tour de force of writing, act-

ing, and directing: a film built on moment-to-moment surprise, as thought-provoking as it is purely pleasurable," said Dennis Lim, the festival's artistic director, in a statement. "It cements Todd Haynes's place as one of American cinema's most brilliant mischiefmakers and as an all-time great director of actors.

Following its Cannes premiere, Netflix acquired "May December" and will release it in theaters Nov. 17 and on the streaming platform Dec. 1. The NYFF launch will return Haynes to a festival he's regularly attended over the years. His "Velvet Goldmine," "I'm Not There," "Car-"Wonderstruck" and "The Velvet Underground" ol." have all previously played at the festival.

"It is a festival that plays a role in my work and life like no other in the world, since it enshrines the cultural life of this city, which is both my creative home as a filmmaker and, as ever, the eternal site of artistic possibility," Haynes said in a statement.

The New York Film Festival runs Sept 29-Oct 15. (AP)

missed lawsuits from two men who allege Jackson abused them for years when they were boys.

Holly Boyer, an attorney for plaintiffs Wade Robson and James Safechuck, said workers ought to have that responsibility. "We do require that employees of the entity take those steps.

because what we are talking



Jackson

about is the abuse of children," Boyer told the three-judge panel in the videoconference hearing. "What we are talking about here is 7- and 10-year-old children who are entirely ill-equipped to protect themselves from their mentor, Michael Jackson."

Boyer added that the boys "were left alone in this lion's den by the defendant's employees. An affirmative duty to protect and to warn is correct.

Jackson died in 2009. Robson filed suit in 2013, and Safechuck sued the following year. The two men became more widely known for telling their stories in the 2019 HBO documentary " Leaving Neverland."

A judge who dismissed the suits in 2021 found that that MJJ Productions Inc and MJJ Ventures Inc, two corporations for which Jackson was the sole owner and lone shareholder, could not be expected to function like the Boy Scouts or a church where a child in their care could expect their protection. (AP)

NEWS/FEATURES

People & Places

People

'Enormously grateful' Spacey acquitted of sex assault charges

LONDON, July 27, (AP): **Kevin Spacey** charmed the jury in his sexual assault trial with humor, humility and emotion as he dropped names of fellow stars and stories from his once-celebrated career while his lawyer called his accusers liars and said the Oscar winner was the real victim.

Spacey was acquitted of sexual assault Wednesday after his star turn as a witness in his own defense spared him a possible prison term and gave him a shot at a career comeback.

Tears rolled down Spacey's cheeks as the final "not guilty" verdict was read. The actor looked at the jury, placed his hand over the lapel of his blue suit and pink shirt, and mouthed "thank you." It was his 64th birthday.



"I imagine that many of you can understand that there's a lot for me to process after what has just happened today," a humbled Spacey said outside Southwark Crown Court after thanking a handful of jurors who met him in the lobby. "I am enormously grateful to the jury for having taken the time to examine all of the evidence and all of the facts carefully before they reached their decision."

Spacey

Spacey's wide-ranging testimony over two days culminated as he choked up speaking of the six years he went without work after sex abuse allegations surfaced against him during the #MeToo movement in the US in 2017.

"My world exploded," Spacey testified. "There was a rush to judgment and before the first question was asked or answered, I lost my job, I lost my reputation, I lost everything in a matter of days."

Three men accused the Oscar winner of aggressively grabbing their crotches, describing him as "vile" and a "slippery, snaky" predator. A fourth, an aspiring actor, said he awoke to the actor performing oral sex on him after falling asleep or passing out in Spacey's London apartment where he had gone for career advice and a beer.

Complaints

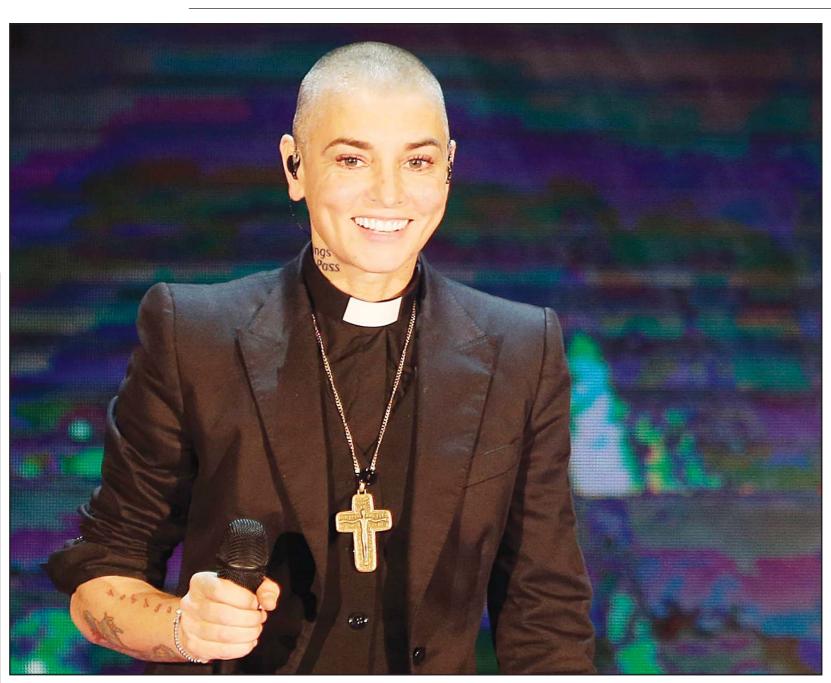
Spacey said he was a "big flirt" who had consensual flings with men and whose only misstep was touching a man's groin while making a "clumsy pass."

Defense lawyer Patrick Gibbs said three of the men were liars and that incidents had been "reimagined with a sinister spin." He accused them of hopping on a "bandwagon" of complaints in the hope of striking it rich. Two of the men have sued Spacey. Prosecutor Christine Agnew called Spacey a "sexu-

Prosecutor Christine Agnew called Spacey a "sexual bully" who preyed on younger men. She said he was shielded by a "trinity of protection" - he knew men were unlikely to complain; they wouldn't be believed if they did complain; and if they did complain, no action would be taken because he was powerful.

Spacey had faced nine charges, including multiple counts of sexual assault and one count of causing a person to engage in penetrative sexual activity without consent.

Spacey had viewed the London case as a chance for redemption, telling German magazine Zeit last month that there were "people right now who are ready to



Irish singer Sinead O'Connor performs during the Italian State RAI TV program "Che Tempo che Fa", in Milan, Italy on Oct. 5, 2014. O'Connor, the gifted Irish singer-songwriter who became a superstar in her mid-20s but was known as much for her private struggles and provocative actions as for her fierce and expressive music, has died at 56. The singer's family issued a statement reported Wednesday by the BBC and RTE. (AP)

Obituary

Gifted and provocative artist Irish singer O'Connor dies at 56

LONDON, July 27, (AP): Sinéad O'Connor, the gifted Irish singersongwriter who became a superstar in her mid-20s and was known as much for her private struggles and provocative actions as for her fierce and expressive music, has died at 56.

"It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our beloved Sinéad. Her family and friends are devastated and have requested privacy at this very difficult time," the singer's family said in a statement reported Wednesday by the BBC and RTE. No cause was disclosed. She was public about her mental illness, saying that she was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. O'Connor posted a Facebook video in 2017 from a New Jersev motel where she had been living, saying that she was staying alive for the sake of others and that if it were up to her, she'd be "gone." When her teenage son Shane died by suicide last year. O'Connor tweeted there was "no point living without him" and she was soon hospitalized. Her final tweet, sent July 17, read: "For all mothers of Suicided children," and linked to a Tibetan compassion mantra. Recognizable by her shaved head and with a multi-octave mezzo soprano of extraordinary emotional range, O'Connor began her career singing on the streets of Dublin and soon rose to international fame. She was a star from her 1987 debut album, "The Lion and the Cobra," and became a sensation in 1990 with her cover of Prince's ballad "Nothing Compares 2 U," a seething, shattering performance that topped charts from Europe to Australia and was heightened by a promotional video featuring the gray-eyed O'Connor in intense close-up. She was a lifelong non-conformist - she said she shaved her head in response to record executives pressuring her to be conventionally glamorous but her political and cultural stances and troubled private life often overshadowed her music.

A critic of the Roman Catholic Church well before allegations of sexual abuse were widely reported, O'Connor made headlines in October 1992 when she tore up a photo of Pope for a full investigation into the extent of the church's role in concealing child abuse by clergy. In 2010, when Pope Benedict XVI apologized to Ireland to atone for decades of abuse, O'Connor condemned the apology for not going far enough and called for Catholics to boycott Mass until there was a full investigation into the Vatican's role.

"People assumed I didn't believe in God. That's not the case at all. I'm Catholic by birth and culture and

would be the first at the church door

if the Vatican offered sincere recon-

ciliation," she wrote in the Washington

she had converted to Islam and would

be adopting the name Shuhada' Dav-

itt, later Shuhada Sadaqat - although

she continued to use Sinéad O'Connor

world and her talent was unmatched

and beyond compare," Irish Prime

Minister Leo Varadkar said in a state-

O'Connor was born on Dec. 8.

1966. She had a difficult childhood,

with a mother she alleged was abusive

and encouraged her to shoplift. As a

teenager she spent time in a church-

sponsored institution for girls, where she said she washed priests' clothes for

no wages. But a nun gave O'Connor

her first guitar, and soon she sang and

performed on the streets of Dublin.

her influences ranging from Dylan to

"Her music was loved around the

O'Connor announced in 2018 that

Post in 2010.

professionally.

ment on social media.

hire me the moment I am cleared of these charges in London."

The verdict came about 20 minutes after jurors said they were deadlocked and the judge told them they could reach verdicts without unanimity - a provision allowed in English criminal cases.

Justice Mark Wall told the panel of nine men and three women that it could reach verdicts if at least 10 of 12 jurors agreed. They deliberated nearly 12.5 hours over three days in a trial that spanned nearly a month.

Shortly before reaching the impasse, jurors had asked Wall to summarize the testimony of a man who said the actor grabbed his crotch so forcefully while he was driving to a gala at Elton John's that he almost ran off the road.

In a cameo appearance, the rock star and his husband, David Furnish, testified by video from Monaco and offered a timeline that cast doubt on the driver's account. They said Spacey didn't attend the White Tie & Tiara Ball the year the man said, but had been a surprise guest three or four years earlier in 2001.

That was significant because the man said he had begun working with Spacey in the early 2000s and suffered from unwanted fondling for years. He said the incident in the car was the final straw and he avoided the star afterwards.

The accusations dated from 2001 to 2013 and included a period when Spacey - after winning Academy Awards for "The Usual Suspects" and "American Beauty" - had returned to the theater. He served as artistic director of the Old Vic Theatre in London for most of that time.

The men came forward after an American actor accused Spacey of sexual misconduct as the #MeToo movement heated up in 2017.

One of the men called his encounter with Spacey "completely traumatic and life-ruining." One said he sought solace by working out and drinking more. Several said they couldn't bear to watch productions starring Spacey.

With the confidence of a seasoned performer, Spacey took his seat in the witness box in what had to be the smallest stage of his career - a laminated oak desk at the front of a brightly lit courtroom.

He spoke in the warm, rich, calming voice that most audiences would instantly recognize. When pressed by Agnew, he did not take the menacing, cold tone of some of his characters, but maintained his composure and only showed flashes of indignation delivered with a flourish.

When asked about grabbing the genitals of a man backstage at a charity event, he snapped: "Absolute bollocks!"

As laughter rose in the gallery, Agnew retorted: "That's exactly where you did grab him, isn't it?"

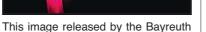
Disbelief

"Really?" Spacey said as he looked up at Wall in disbelief.

He then denied the act and later dismissed the prosecution case as weak.

Jurors laughed and smiled at parts of his testimony and Wall occasionally had to rein him in when irrelevant anecdotes strayed.

Spacey sounded like a regular guy at times, speaking about how he liked to smoke marijuana but was incapable of rolling a joint and acknowledging he sought sex during lonely periods, quipping "welcome to life." He insisted that being promiscuous did not make him a bad person.



Festival shows baritone Jordan Shanahan portrays Klingsor in a dress rehearsal of Jay Scheib's production of Wagner's 'Parsifal' at Bayreuth Festival 2023 in Bayreuth, Germany. (AP)



s Williams

Variety

NEW YORK: A 71-year-old man linked to a crew of drug dealers blamed in the fentanyl-laced heroin death of "The Wire" actor **Michael K. Williams** was sentenced Tuesday to more than two years in prison at a proceeding in which the actor's nephew recommended compassion for the defendant.

Carlos Macci was sentenced to 2-1/2 years in prison by US District Judge **Ronnie Abrams**, who told Macci that selling heroin and fentanyl "not only cost Mr. Williams his life, but it's costing your freedom," in part because he did not stop selling drugs after Williams died.

Macci had pleaded guilty to conspiring o possess and distribute narcotics.

to possess and distribute narcotics. The judge noted that more than 3,000 fatal overdoses occurred in New York City last year, killing many who never understood the threat they faced from lethal doses of drugs whose components were unclear.

Williams, who also starred in films and other TV series including "Boardwalk Empire," overdosed in his **Brooklyn** penthouse apartment in September 2021. He was 54.

Macci benefited from words spoken on his behalf by Williams' nephew and a sentencing letter submitted weeks ago in which **David Simon**, a co-creator of HBO's "The Wire," urged leniency, saying Williams himself "would fight for Mr Macci."

Macci was not charged directly in the actor's death, although others in the case have been. Still, he could have faced nearly 20 years in prison if the judge had not agreed to depart downward from federal sentencing guidelines that called for double-digit years in prison.

Assistant US Attorney **Micah F. Fergenson** had urged a sentence of at least four years, saying Macci had more than 20 previous convictions and had not spent much time behind bars despite four drug-related convictions since 2016.

Defense attorney **Benjamin Zeman** said he was a "huge fan" of "The Wire" John Paul II while appearing on NBC's "Saturday Night Live" and denounced the church as the enemy.

The next week, Joe Pesci hosted "Saturday Night Live," held up a repaired photo of the Pope and said if he had been on the show with O'Connor he "would have gave her such a smack." Days later, she appeared at an all-star tribute for Bob Dylan at Madison Square Garden and was immediately booed. She was supposed to sing Dylan's "I Believe in You," but switched to an a cappella version of Bob Marley's "War," which she had sung on "Saturday Night Live."

Although consoled and encouraged on stage by her friend Kris Kristofferson, she left and broke down, and her performance was kept off the concert CD.

Condemned

She also feuded with Frank Sinatra over her refusal to allow the playing of "The Star-Spangled Banner" at one of her shows and accused Prince of physically threatening her. In 1989 she declared her support for the Irish Republican Army, a statement she retracted a year later. Around the same time, she skipped the Grammy ceremony, saying it was too commercialized.

In 1999, O'Connor caused uproar in Ireland when she became a priestess of the breakaway Latin Tridentine Church - a position that was not recognized by the mainstream Catholic Church. For many years, she called

and considered Williams "a tragic victim in this case." But he said his client was a victim, too, of the drug crisis, causing him to do things to sustain his own drug



Actor Holland Taylor walks on a picket line outside Netflix studios on Wednesday, July 26, in Los Angeles. The actors strike comes more than two months after screenwriters began striking in their bid to get better pay and working conditions. (AP) — **Details Page 11**

Her performance with a local band caught the eye of a small record label, and, in 1987, O'Connor released, "The Lion and the Cobra," which sold hundreds of thousands of copies and featured the hit "Mandinka," driven by a hard-rock guitar riff and O'Connor's piercing vocals. O'Connor, then 20

and pregnant, co-produced the album.

Siouxsie and the Banshees.

habit.

Dominic Dupont, Williams's nephew, told the judge that he believed Macci can turn his life around. AP)

TOKYO: Japanese pop star **Shijiro Atae** said he is gay in an emotional announcement at a fan event that was warmly welcomed in a country where the government does not legally recognize LGBTQ equality.

"What I'm going to tell you now may not be something you expect or hope to hear. Perhaps some of you may need time to understand," Atae told fans at the event in Tokyo on Wednesday.

"For years, I struggled to accept a part of myself ... But now after all I have been through, I finally have the courage to open up to you about something," he said.

As he choked up, fans cheered, saying "hang in there!" and applauding. Atae performed for 15 years in the

Atae performed for 15 years in the hugely popular group AAA before it went on a hiatus in 2020. He's been based in Los Angeles lately and is pursuing a solo career in the United States. The political party that has governed

The political party that has governed Japan for most of its postwar history is known for its conservatism and many lawmakers in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party oppose equal rights. (AP)

13

SCIENCE

Climate

Warmest seawater

Vital ocean current is close to collapse

NEW YORK, July 27, (AP): A system of ocean currents that transports heat northward across the North Atlantic could collapse by mid-century, according to a new study, and scientists have said before that such a collapse could cause catastrophic sea-level rise and extreme weather across the globe.

In recent decades, researchers have both raised and downplayed the specter of Atlantic current collapse. It even prompted a movie that strayed far from the science. Two years ago the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said any such catastrophe is unlikely this century. But the new study published in Nature Communications suggests it might not be as far away and unlikely as mainstream science says.

The Atlantic meridional overturning circulation is a vital system of ocean currents that circulates water throughout the Atlantic Ocean, according to the National Oceanic and Atmos-



pheric Administration. It's a lengthy process, taking an estimated 1,000 years to complete, but has slowed even more since the mid-1900s. A further slowdown or complete

halting of the circulation could create more extreme weather in the Northern Hemisphere, sea-level rise on the East Coast of the United States and drought for millions in southern Africa, scientists in Germany and the US have said. But the timing is uncertain.

Ditlevsen

In the new study, Peter and Susanne Ditlevsen, two researchers from Den-

mark, analyzed sea surface temperatures in the North Atlantic between 1870 and 2020 as a proxy, meaning a way of assessing, this circulation. They found the system could collapse as soon as 2025 and as late as 2095, given current global greenhouse gas emissions. This diverges from the prediction made by the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change in 2021, which said the collapse isn't likely to occur this century.

Uncertainties

"There are large uncertainties in this study, in many prior studies, and in climate impact assessment overall, and scientists sometimes miss important aspects that can lead to both over and underprediction of impacts," Julio Friedmann, chief scientist at Carbon Direct, a carbon management company, said in a statement. "Still, the conclusion is obvious: Action must be swift and profound to counter major climate risks."

Stefan Rahmstorf, co-author on a 2018 study on the subject, published an extensive analysis of the Ditlevesen's study on RealClimate, a website that publishes commentary from climate scientists. While he said that a tipping point for the collapse of the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation is "highly uncertain," he also called the IPCC estimate conserva-

tive. "Increasingly the evidence points to the risk being far great-"he wrote "rather worrying er than 10% during this century," he wrote, "...rather worrying for the next few decades.³

Meanwhile, the water temperature around the tip of Florida has hit triple digits - hot tub levels - two days in a row. Meteorologists say it could be the hottest seawater ever measured, although some questions about the reading remain.

Scientists are already seeing devastating effects from prolonged hot water surrounding Florida - coral bleaching and even the death of some corals in what had been one of the Florida Keys' most resilient reefs. Climate change has set temperature records across the globe this month.

The warmer water is also fuel for hurricanes.

Scientists were careful to say there is some uncertainty with the reading. But the buoy at Manatee Bay hit 101.1 degrees Fahrenheit (38.4 degrees Celsius) Monday evening, according to National Weather Service meteorologist George Rizzuto. The night before, that buoy showed an online reading of 100.2 F (37.9 C). "That is a potential record," Rizzuto said.

"This is a hot tub. I like my hot tub around 100, 101, (37.8, 38.3 C). That's what was recorded yesterday," said Yale Climate Connections meteorologist Jeff Masters.

If verified, the Monday reading would be nearly 1.5 degrees Fahrenheit higher than what is regarded as the prior record, set in the waters off Kuwait three summers ago, 99.7 degrees Fahrenheit (37.6 degrees Celsius). "We've never seen a record-breaking event like this before." Masters said.



The sun rises over fishing boats in the Atlantic Ocean, Sept. 8, 2022, off of Kennebunkport, Maine. A system of ocean currents that carries heat northward across the North Atlantic could collapse during this century, according to a new study, and scientists have said before such a collapse could cause catastrophic sea-level rise and extreme weather across the globe. (AP)

The Conversation

Offer insights on reining in diabetes, obesity Horse study will help man stay healthy **By Jane Manfredi**

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

cine and rehabilitation specialist, I've seen firsthand the similarities between horses and humans.

Both horses and people with endo-crine disorders like Type 2 diabetes can suffer multiple types of musculoskeletal disorders. For example, horses with pituitary pars intermedia dysfunction - similar to Cushing's disease in people - suffer from tendon and ligament degeneration. Horses can also experience muscle loss, which can cause joint instability. That, and the chronic low-grade inflammation associated with endocrine disorders, can contribute to osteoarthritis.

There's a principle in medicine called One Health, which says that animals, humans and the environment are inextricably connected - for one to be healthy, all must be healthy. It also means that we can learn a lot about our own health by studying the health of animals, and vice versa, including the many parallels in endocrine disorders between humans and horses. Your endocrine system produces hormones that support many of your body's basic functions, including growth and development, metabolism, sleep and more. Your hormones also play a role in the health of your bones, tendons and ligaments. Some endocrine disorders change how your body produces and releases hormones and can lead to osteoporosis, arthritis, ligament injury and other orthopedic diseases. Humans aren't the only species affected by this dynamic - horsesare, too. In fact, approximately 20% of horses and over 34% of people in the US are affected by endocrine disorders such as metabolic syndrome. These disorders are often accompanied by obesity. For both species, the degree to which endocrine disorders are con-

Michigan State University nected to obesity and its associated

negative health effects is complex. As mammals, horses and people share similar anatomy and endocrine physiology, and researchers have noted their parallel genetic links between obesity and metabolic disease.

Like people, obese horses with endocrine disorders often develop lowgrade inflammation. Inflammation is a normal response to injuries and sickness. But chronic, low-grade inflammation can have long-term negative effects on the body. For example, lowgrade inflammation is associated with metabolic osteoarthritis in people, and my laboratory is studying this possible link in horses.

Metabolism

In people, childhood obesity, which is related to maternal obesity, is associated with a type of joint disease called osteochondrosis. Foals born from obese mares are also predisposed to this same type of joint

reduces blood insulin spikes, which can help prevent obesity, metabolic syndrome and cardiovascular disease in both horses and people.

Some dietary supplements, such as resveratrol, especially when used in combination with an amino acid called leucine, also help with weight loss, mobility and insulin sensitivity in people and horses. Lowering blood insulin concentrations can also prevent horses from developing laminitis, a disease that inflames tissues in hooves that can necessitate euthanasia because of incurable pain.

I find one of the most exciting avenues of research in both animals and people to be the expansion of precision medicine. Instead of the standard onesize-fits-all protocol, precision medicine uses information from a person's genes, environment and medical history to create a customized treatment plan. For example, precision medicine is often applied in oncology when doctors gat genetic informs the patient's tumor to inform which treatments might work best for them. In horses, precision medicine currently focuses on DNA-based diagnostic tests to inform exercise regimens, treatment and breeding decisions. Recent work with horses also suggests that measuring the heritability of certain metabolic traits could be used to screen for metabolic syndrome in the future. Within precision medicine, doctors aim to get a full-picture view of an individual and their metabolic health by using multiomic analysis. Multiomics entails looking at multiple "omics" - or information from a range of biological disciplines, such as epigenomics, lipidomics, genomics and transcriptomics - to better treat an individual patient. The more researchers learn from individual patients, including horses, the better doctors will be able to treat every patient. My lab and others use multiomic analysis to generate data that may one day help us identify more effective and safer therapies for horses and - likely - people with metabolic conditions. (AP)

In this image provided by NOAA, the sun shines on coral showing sign of bleaching at Cheeca Rocks off the coast of Islamorada, Fla., on July 23. Scientists have seen devastating ef-fects from prolonged hot water surrounding Florida - coral bleaching and some death. (AP)



As a veterinary science researcher, equine surgeon and sports medi-

The consequences for sea corals are serious. NOAA researcher Andrew Ibarra, who took his kayak out to the area, "found that the entire reef was bleached out. Every single coral colony was exhibiting some form of paling, partial bleaching or full out bleaching."

Some coral even had died, he said. This comes on top of bleaching seen last week by the University of Miami, when NOAA increased the alert level for coral earlier this month.

Until the 1980s, coral bleaching was mostly unheard of. But "now we've reached the point where it's become routine," Enochs said. Bleaching, which doesn't kill coral but weakens it and can lead to death, occurs when water temperatures exceed the upper 80s (low 30s Celsius), Enochs said.

Masters and University of Miami tropical meteorologist Brian McNoldy said while the hot temperatures do fit with what's happening around Florida, Monday's reading may not be accepted as a record because the area is shallow, has sea grasses in it and may be influenced by warm land in the nearby Everglades National Park. Still, McNoldy said, "it's amazing."

The fact that two 100 degree measurements were taken on consecutive days lends credence to them, McNoldy said. Water temperatures have been in the upper 90s in the area for more than two weeks.

There aren't many coral reefs in Manatee Bay, but elsewhere in the Florida Keys, scientists diving at Cheeca Rocks found bleaching and even death in some of the Keys most resilient corals, said Ian Enochs, lead of the coral program at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory.

"This is more, earlier than we have ever seen," Enochs said. "I'm nervous by how early this is occurring."

This all comes as sea surface temperatures worldwide have broken monthly records for heat in April, May and June, according to NOAA. And temperatures in the north Atlantic Ocean are off the charts - as much as 9 to 11 degrees Fahrenheit (5 to 6 degrees Celsius) warmer than normal in some spots near Newfoundland, McNoldy said.

Also:

BEIJING: The coastal Chinese city of Shantou on Thursday joined parts of Taiwan in shutting down schools and offices as Typhoon Doksuri brings heavy wind and rain to the Taiwan Strait and surrounding areas.

Doksuri weakened further on Thursday, with sustained winds of 155 kph (96 mph) and gusts of up to 190 kph (118 mph), according to Taiwan's Central Weather Bureau. The typhoon's center will not hit Taiwan's mainland, but its outlying bands will still bring stronger winds and rains Thursday afternoon.

Shantou, which lies on the border between Guangdong and Fujian provinces, will remain largely shut through the end of Friday, the local government said on social media. Images from the area on public news broadcasts showed fishing ships tied up in port as heavy waves broke along the seawall. Apart from an occasional squall, there was no sign of heavy rain as of early Thursday afternoon, reports said.

The Taiwan Strait is one of the world's busiest routes for international trade and the typhoon has caused major disruptions to shipping and flights.

In southern Taiwan, the port city Kaohsiung and the ancient capital Tainan announced that offices and schools will be closed Thursday. Hualien and Taitung counties along the Pacific Ocean on the island's east coast also shuttered schools and offices. Kaohsuing also evacuated some 300 residents who lived in a mountainous part of the district, according to the semi-official Central News Agency.

Millipede species found in LA: The City of Angels, a metropolis of freeways and traffic, has a newly discovered species named in its honor: The Los Angeles

Thread Millipede. The tiny arthropod was found just underground by naturalists at a Southern California hiking area - near a freeway, a Starbucks

and an Oakley sunglasses store. About the length of a paperclip but skinny as pencil lead, it's translucent and sinuous like a jellyfish tentacle. The creature burrows four inches below ground, secretes unusual chemicals and is blind, relying on hornlike antennas protruding from its head to find its way.

Under a microscope, the millipede with its 486 legs and helmet-like head resembles a creature in a Hollywood monster film.

"It's amazing to think these millipedes are crawling in the inner cracks and crevices between little pieces of rock below our feet in Los Angeles," said entomologist **Paul** Marek of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute. He was part of the research team that included scientists from West Virginia University, and the University of California, Berkeley.

Their findings on the species, whose scientific name is Illacme socal, were published June 21 in the journal ZooKeys. The species' vernacular name is Los Ángeles Thread Millipede.

"It goes to show that there's this undiscovered planet underground," Marek added. It joins other millipedes found in the state, including the world's leggiest creature on record - aptly named Illacme plenipes, Latin for "in highest fulfillment of feet" with 750 limbs. It was found in 1926 in a small area in Northern California.

Millipedes feed on dead organic material and without them people would be "up to our necks" in it, Marek said. "By knowing something about the species that fulfill these really important ecological roles, we can protect them and then the environment that protects us as well," Marek said.

iNaturalist, a citizen naturalist app, led Marek to the discovery. Naturalists Cedric Lee and James Bailey posted the critter they found when when they were out collecting slugs at Whiting Ranch Wilderness Park in nearby Orange County four years ago. The team used DNA sequencing and analysis to prove it was indeed a new species.

Lee, a doctoral student at UC Berkeley, has discovered and documented thirty centipedes species in California. He said microorganisms have been often neglected in the search for new species, but thanks to modern tools available to anyone, citizen science can be a bridge between between the natural world and the lab.

"We don't know what's completely out there," Lee said. "There's literally undescribed species right under our feet.

Scientists estimate 10 million animal species live on Earth, but only one million have been discovered. "What we don't know is far more than what we know in terms of insect species and small creatures around the world," said Brian Brown, curator of entomology at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County.

After having led a four-year research project called BioSCAN, which planted insect traps throughout backyards in the city, Brown estimates 20,000 species of insects inhabit Los Angeles alone, both discovered and undiscovered.



In this undated photo provided by Paul Marek is a Los Angeles Thread Millipede awaiting study at the Marek Lab of Virginia Tech's Department of Entomology in Blacksburg, Va. The tiny arthropod is a new species and was found just beneath the surface by graduate students at a hiking area in Southern California, near a freeway, a Starbucks and an Oakley sunglasses store before reaching Virginia Tech researchers. (AP)

Because of the similarities between people and horses, research on diagnostics and treatments for metabolic conditions could provide health benefits to both species.

For example, a class of drug called glucagonlike peptide-1 agonists, which includes such brands as Trulicity (dulaglutide) and Ozempic (semaglutide), is commonly used to treat metabolic syndrome and Type II diabetes in people. This class of medication is also effective in treating these conditions in horses, similarly slowing down how quickly food empties the stomach and blunting glucose release into the bloodstream.

Another class of drugs called sodium-glucose cotransporter protein-2 inhibitors, which include such treatments as Jardiance (empagliflozin) and Farxiga (dapagliflozin), are used to treat Type 2 diabetes in people and a similar condition in horses. These drugs alter the kidneys' ability to absorb sugar from urine such that the body eliminates some of the glucose it would normally absorb. This greatly

But he worries about threats to native species such as climate change and invasive species. Daniel Gluesenkamp, president of the California Institute for Biodiversity, who was not involved in the research, points to the Los Angeles Thread Millipede as the perfect example of an unexplored frontier. (AP)



Pilot whales euthanized: A pod of almost 100 whales that beached on the southwestern Australian coast were euthanized Wednesday after a second day of frantic, but unsuccessful efforts to rescue them, authorities said.

The pod of long-finned pilot whales stranded themselves Tuesday on Cheynes Beach east of the former whaling station of Albany in Western Australia state, south of the capital Perth.

Despite the efforts of 100 wildlife officers and 250 volunteers wearing wetsuits to protect against the Southern Hemisphere winter cold, 52 stranded whales died on the beach.

The remaining 45 were euthanized Wednesday after efforts to lead them to deeper water failed. The survivors continually returned to the shallows, the Western Australia Parks and Wildlife Service said in a statement late Wednesday.

"Sadly, the decision had to be made to euthanize the remaining whales to avoid prolonging their suffering," the service said.

"It was a difficult decision for all involved, however the welfare of the whales had to take precedence," it added.

The service thanked the officials and volunteers who helped with the attempt to save the whales. A storm lashed the beach with wind and rain Wednesday afternoon, and two volunteers were treated by paramedics for hypothermia, Australian Broadcasting Corp reported.

Peter Hartley, a manager of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions who oversaw the response, on Thursday described the decision to euthanize the survivors as "incredibly hard."

"Probably one of the hardest decisions of my 34 years of wildlife management. Really, really difficult," Hartley told reporters in Albany. "It was a considered and well thought out decision. And you know, we thank the support of the ... veterinarians that assisted with the assessments and the advice that they gave me to make that decision,' Hartley added. (AP)

SPORTS

Rodón, Bader lead Yanks past Met for series split

Red Sox sweep major league-leading Braves

NEW YORK, July 27, (AP): It took nearly four months for Carlos Rodón to begin paying dividends for the New York Yankees. Rodón earned his first victory in

four starts with his new team and the Yankees got an offensive spark from Harrison Bader in beating the New York Mets 3-1 on Wednesday night for a two-game split of their Subway Series.

Bader had three hits and scored twice at Yankee Stadium, including an aggressive dash and headfirst dive into home plate. Rodón (1-3) outpitched fellow lefty José Quintana before four Yankees relievers combined to retire all 10 batters they faced.

Clay Holmes worked the ninth inning for his 14th save in 17 chances, giving the last-place Yankees (54-48) a four-game split of the season series with the Mets (47-54). The crosstown rivals also split two games last month at Citi Field.

BASEBALL

It was an encouraging outing for Rodón, off to a rough start with the Yankees after signing a \$162 million, six-year deal as a free agent in December. The two-time All-Star missed the first three-plus months of the season because of forearm and back injuries, then compiled a 7.36 ERA while losing his first three starts.

Last week in a road game against the Los Angeles Angels, he sarcastically blew a kiss toward a fan while walking to the dugout after the second inning.

This time, a fired-up Rodón allowed one run and four hits in 5 2/3 effective innings. He lobbied to stay in, but manager Aaron Boone had already made his decision.

Rodón struck out four, walked three and received a warm hand from Yankees fans in the sellout crowd of 46,761 as he came off the mound.

After getting hit in the back by a 95 mph fastball from Rodón, Mets right fielder Jeff McNeil made a couple of excellent catches - robbing Gleyber Torres of a home run with a leaping grab in the fifth.

Torres' first-inning single extended his hitting streak to a career-high 15 games, longest by a Yankees player this season.

outstanding baserunning Some helped the Yankees score twice in the second

With one out, Anthony Volpe got a great jump and beat third baseman Mark Vientos' throw to second on Oswald Peraza's RBI grounder. The speedy Bader then scored by a wisp with a headfirst dive on Isiah Kiner-Falefa's shallow sacrifice fly to right, where McNeil made a sliding catch before popping up for a strong throw to the plate.

Brandon Nimmo had a sacrifice fly in the third, but Rodón prevented further damage by retiring Pete Alonso on a line drive to left with two runners aboard.



Boston Red Sox's Brayan Bello delivers a pitch to a Atlanta Braves batter in the first inning of a baseball game in Boston. (AP)

now is a teammate. "There's a lot of little things that I pick up from him that he learned here," Gorman said.

Goldschmidt, Lars Nootbaar and Andrew Knizner also homered to give the Cardinals the series victory over the slumping Diamondbacks, who have lost six of seven and are 3-9 since the All-Star break.

Andre Pallante (3-1) pitched 1 1/3 innings in relief of Jack Flaherty, who made his final start for the Cardinals before the trade deadline Tuesday.

Flaherty, who will be a free agent after the season, pitched five-plus innings, allowing eight hits and three runs. He walked two and struck out four

He gave up a leadoff triple to Geraldo Perdomo in the first, but stranded him thanks to a pair of strikeouts.

Flaherty admitted to being distracted by any impending moves. He has been with the Cardinals since 2017.

Pirates 3, Padres 2

In San Diego, Ji Man Choi, Bryan Reynolds and Carlos Santana hit home runs for the Pittsburgh Pirates, who held off the San Diego Padres 3-2 to win two of three games.

David Bednar loaded the bases with one out in the ninth inning and then walked pinch-hitter Juan Soto before getting rookie Taylor Kohlwey to foul out and then striking out Trent Grisham. Bednar, who played with the Padres in 2019 and 2020, hopped off the mound and punched his glove with his fist after securing his 20th save and converting his 16th straight chance. The Padres, who have baseball's third-highest payroll but are mired in fourth place in the NL West, went 1-5 this season against Pittsburgh, which is in last place in the NL Central. Bednar struck out Machado opening the ninth before walking Xander Bogaerts, allowing a single to Luis Campusano and hitting Jake Cronenworth with a pitch. He then walked Soto on four straight pitches. Right-hander Johan Oviedo (4-11) shook off three pitch clock violations and a wild pitch in the first inning to snap a streak of eight straight losing decisions. He held San Diego to one run and three hits in six innings to win for the first time since May 19 against Arizona. Oviedo threw a wild pitch behind Fernando Tatis Jr. in the first inning, allowing Ha-Seong Kim to take second. Earlier Wednesday, MLB suspended Perdomo for three games and fined him an undisclosed amount for hitting Manny Machado in the back with a 98-mph fastball after giving up a home run to Juan Soto in the seventh inning of the Padres' 5-1 win Tuesday night.

St. Louis Cardinals Paul DeJong scores on a base hit by Andrew Knizner during the seventh inning of a baseball game in Phoenix. (ĂP)

RBIs, two runs scored and a strikeout. Toronto starter Yusei Kikuchi (8-3) allowed one run and seven hits in

six innings. The left-hander struck out eight and walked two. Toronto's Bo Bichette added a two-

plate umpire Ben May.

second straight day.

sius) day.

run single in the eighth.

Nationals 5, Rockies 4

single capped a four-run ninth inning

and the Washington Nationals rallied

to beat the Colorado Rockies 5-4 for a

to come back from a 5-2 deficit to beat

the Rockies 6-5, Lane Thomas and

Jeimer Candelario opened the ninth

with walks against Daniel Bard (4-2)

in the finale of the three-game series.

Joey Meneses, whose three-run homer

was the difference in Tuesday night's

fly, but Bard hit Dominic Smith with a

pitch to walk in a run and make it 4-2.

Stone Garrett was out on a slow roller

before Candelario scored Washing-

ton's third run. Luis Garcia was inten-

tionally walked and Ildemaro Vargas

drew a four-pitch walk to tie the game.

who grounded a single between first

and second to score pinch runner Mi-

runs over his past eight appearances,

said he felt fine physically but was

Washington completed a 5-1 home-stand after going 15-22 at Nationals

Brewers 3, Reds 0

Milwaukee, Freddy

alta pitched six scoreless innings

and matched a career high with 13

strikeouts, Tyrone Taylor hit a two-

run homer and the Milwaukee Brewers

three games in the series and extended

their lead in the NL Central to 1 1/2

games over the Reds (56-48). This

The Brewers (57-46) took two of

Per-

chael Chavis for the winning run.

struggling with his delivery.

Park before the All-Star break.

beat the Cincinnati Reds 3-0

In

Matt Koch came on to face Abrams,

Bard, who had allowed only two

Keibert Ruiz was out on an infield

win, singled to load the bases.

A day after using a four-run eighth

marked the final matchup of the season between the teams, with Milwaukee winning the season series 10-3. It was the Brewers' 12th shutout victory of the season.

After Abraham Toro singled with one out in the seventh off Cincinnati starter Ben Lively (4-6), Taylor followed with a 417-foot blast to left field on the first pitch from Lively to break a scoreless tie. It was just the second home run of the season for Taylor. Taylor entered the day with a .153

average.

Milwaukee extended the lead on Andrew Monasterio's run-scoring double in the eighth. Peralta was in a groove from the

start. He struck out the side on 11 pitches in the first inning and whiffed the first two batters in the second before Joey Votto's single.

The 13 strikeouts matched the total Peralta had in his major league debut on May 13, 2018, against the Rockies in Colorado. It was his ninth career game with 10 or more strikeouts and third this season. Peralta and three Brewers relievers combined for 18 strikeouts

Guardians 8, Royals 3

In Cleveland, José Ramírez hit a two-run homer in the first inning and a solo shot in the fourth, leading the Cleveland Guardians past the Kansas

Julio Rodríguez added a home run and two doubles as the Mariners won for the fifth time in their past seven games. The AL Central-leading Twins dropped their second in a row follow-

ing a four-game winning streak. On a hot afternoon in the Twin Cities that saw seven home runs and 22 combined hits, Moore finished 3 for 4 with four RBIs and his first multihome run outing. The fifth-year pro came into the day hitting .128 in 20 games this season.

Moore's three-run homer off reliever Jordan Balazovic in the fifth inning gave Seattle a 7-3 lead

Mariners rookie right-hander Bryce Miller (7-3) struck out seven while yielding six earned runs on eight hits in 5 2/3 innings.

Minnesota's Matt Wallner hit his second home run of the day - a solo shot to left for his own first career multi-homer game - off Miller in a fourrunning sixth inning for the Twins.

Andrés Muñoz earned his second save after coaxing Max Kepler's game-ending ground-out with a runner at second.

Twins starter Joe Ryan (9-7) lasted just 3 2/3 innings, yielding four earned runs on seven hits and striking out seven batters. He required 95 pitches to record 11 outs.

Recalled from Triple-A St. Paul on Wednesday, reliever Josh Winder gave a depleted Twins bullpen four innings **MLB Results/Standings**

14

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Miami	-D yaines (7	Tampa	a Rav	1		
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Philadelphia	8 LA Dodgers 1 6 Baltimore 4					
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Boston	5			3		
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Boston	55	47	.539	7		
New York	54	48	.529	8		
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Minnesota	• ·	50	.519	_		
Cleveland	51	51	.500	2		
Detroit	46	55	.455	6-1/2		
Chicago	41	62	.398			
Kansas City	29	75	.279	25		
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Atlanta	64		.640	10		
Philadelphia	55	47	.539	10		
Miami New York	55	48	.534	10-1/2		
New York	47	54	.465	17-1/2		
Washington	43 Control F	59	.422	22		
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Milwaukee	57	46	.553	1 1/0		
Cincinnati	56	48	.538	1-1/2		
Chicago	50	51	.495	6		
St Louis	46	57	.447	11		
Pittsburgh	45		.441	11-1/2		
	West Di		P-1	00		
	W	L	Pct	GB		
	58	43	.574	_		
Los Angeles	56	47	.544	3		
San Francisco						
San Francisco Arizona	55	48	.534	4		
San Francisco		48 54 62	.534 .476 .392	4 10 18-1/2		

a 13-5 win over the Houston Astros in a tense game .

Following his grand slam, García and Marcus Semien exchanged words with Martín Maldonado. That led to the benches and bullpens emptying. No punches were thrown in the scrum around home plate, but Maldonado and Semien were ejected.

Tempers were hot earlier in the game. Both benches were warned in the third inning after Houston's Framber Valdez hit Semien in the left shoulder with the first pitch of his at-bat. The Rangers' Andrew Heaney had hit Yordan Alvarez in the right shoulder with a pitch in the first inning. Semien, Nathaniel Lowe and Sam

Huff also homered for Texas, which avoided a three-game sweep and held on to its two-game lead over the Astos in the division.

Lowe hit a two-run homer in the third.

Cubs 10, White Sox 7

Rodón also struck out Alonso with two on to end the fifth. Alonso, who had two homers and five RBIs in the series opener, went 0 for 4 with two strikeouts.

Bader scored again in the fourth on Volpe's single to make it 3-1 after a costly throwing error by Vientos.

Red Sox 5, Braves 3

In Boston, Justin Turner hit a goahead, two-run double off the Green Monster in the seventh inning and the Boston Red Sox beat the major leagueleading Atlanta Braves 5-3 to sweep the two-game series.

Rafael Devers, Tristan Casas and Adam Duvall homered for Boston, which trailed 3-0 after Ozzie Albies hit a three-run shot for Atlanta in the sixth.

Red Sox rookie starter Brayan Bello allowed four hits and all three runs in six innings. The right-hander struck out four and walked two.

Joe Jacques (2-1) pitched the seventh. John Schreiber and Brennan Bernardino worked the eighth and All-Star closer Kenley Jansen finished for his 22nd save.

Devers got the Red Sox started in sixth with his 25th home run, a shot that landed in the right-field seats. In the seventh, Casas hit the first pitch he saw from Atlanta starter Spencer Strider to center for his 15th homer.

Cardinals 11, Diamondbacks 7

In Phoenix, Nolan Gorman hit two of St. Louis' five home runs in the Cardinals' 11-7 victory over the Arizona Diamondbacks.

Gorman connected leading off the second against All-Star starter Zac Gallen, then hit a two-run blast to dead center in the eighth off Scott McGough.

Gorman, who grew up in Phoenix and had a large contingent of friends and family on hand, has two multihomer games this season and 22 homers on the season.

He watched Paul Goldschmidt when he was with the Diamondbacks, and

Blue Jays 8, Dodgers 1

In Los Angeles, Whit Merrifield hit a three-run homer, Danny Jansen also went deep and the Toronto Blue Jays defeated the Los Angeles Dodgers 8-1, taking two of three from the NL West leaders

Merrifield sent an 0-2 pitch from Tony Gonsolin (5-4) over the wall in left with two outs in the fifth inning, scoring Bo Bichette and Vladimir Guerrero Jr., who both singled.

Jansen led off the sixth, blasting a line-drive to left off reliever Alex Vesia for a 6-0 lead.

Merrifield sacrificed into a double play that scored Guerrero in the second for the Blue Jays' first run. Brandon Belt had a RBI single in the third.

Merrifield was 2 for 4 with four

City Royals 8-3. Blue Jays bench coach Don Mat-Ramírez has 22 multi-homer games tingly was ejected in the fifth by home-

in his career, including two this season. He homered into the right field seats in Dodgers starter Tony Gonsolin gave the first and cleared the wall in center up five runs and seven hits in five inin the fourth for his 16th of the season. nings. The right-hander struck out five, Ramírez was 3 for 4 with a checkwalked three and threw a career-high swing infield hit in the sixth and a 109 pitches on a 92-degree (33 Celwalk in the second followed by a stolen base, and he scored three runs. He was finally retired on a groundout in In Washington, CJ Abrams' RBI the eighth.

David Fry hit a two-run homer in the fourth and Steven Kwan had two RBIs. Cleveland moved to 51-51 and trails Minnesota by two games in the AL Central.

Fry is in his first season with the Guardians and quickly became a Ramírez fan.

Cleveland starter Gavin Williams pitched four scoreless innings but was pulled after throwing 85 pitches. It was his first start since developing a blister on his middle finger Friday against Philadelphia. The rookie right-hander threw 31 pitches and worked out of a bases-loaded jam in the first.

He said the blister was manageable, but he needs to cut down on his pitch count getting so high early in games. Nick Sandlin (5-3) allowed a run in

the fifth. Kansas City starter Alec Marsh (0-

5) allowed four runs in 2 2/3 innings. The rookie right-hander has lost each of his five major league starts. Marsh has allowed nine home runs in 23 innings.

Mariners 8, Twins 7

In Minneapolis, Dylan Moore hit a pair of home runs, including a threerun blast in the fifth inning, and the Seattle Mariners survived a Minnesota Twins' rally for an 8-7 win and a series victory.

of relief. He surrendered one earned run and struck out four batters.

Marlins 7, Rays 1

In St. Petersburgh, Sandy Alcántara threw a five-hit complete game and the Miami Marlins stopped a 10-game road losing streak by beating the Tampa Bay Rays 7-1

Alcántara (4-9), the reigning NL Cy Young Award winner, struck out seven and walked one in his second complete game this season and 11th overall. He had been 0-3 in four July starts with one no decision.

Alcantara also went the distance Apr. 4 against Minnesota. His 11 complete games since 2019 are the most in the majors. St. Louis' Adam Wainwright is second with six.

Tampa Bay starter Zach Eflin (11-6), who was bidding to become the AL's first 12-game winner, left after four innings with left knee discomfort. The right-hander dropped to 10-2 in 12 home starts this season after allowing five runs and seven hits

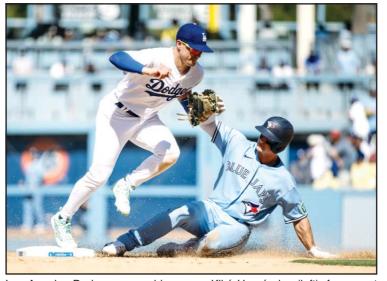
Eflin was hurt while attempting to field Garrett Hampson's bunt single leading off the fourth and will undergo tests.

Miami's Luis Arráez went 2 for 4 and had his major league batting average go from .375 to .376. He drove in a run with a double in the fourth and hit a run-scoring, sixth-inning single.

The Marlins are 2-9 since the All-Star break, while Tampa Bay is an ALworse 5-15 in July. Miami is just 3-19 against the Rays since May 14, 2019.

Rangers 13, Astros 5

In Houston, Adolis García hit a grand slam to highlight a seven-run fifth inning and the AL West-leading Texas Rangers slugged four homers in



Los Angeles Dodgers second baseman Kiké Hernández (left), forces out Toronto Blue Jays' Matt Chapman during the ninth inning of a baseball game in Los Angeles. (AP)

In Chicago, Christopher Morel drove in two runs during a six-run fifth inning that featured only three hits, and the streaking Chicago Cubs beat the crosstown White Sox 10-7.

Ian Happ and Cody Bellinger hit back-to-back homers in the eighth for the Cubs (50-51), who erased a fiverun deficit on the way to their fifth straight win and seventh in eight games overall. They also moved within 4 1/2 games of an NL wild card, continuing their bid to stay together through Tuesday's trade deadline.

After Marcus Stroman struggled again, four Cubs relievers combined for 5 2/3 innings of one-hit ball. Javier Assad (1-2) got five outs for the win, and Adbert Alzolay worked the ninth for his 11th save.

Eloy Jiménez had four RBIs and Jake Burger homered for the White Sox (41-62), who are 5-14 in July after dropping their fifth straight game. Taking the mound amid trade rumors, Lance Lynn was charged with seven runs and seven hits in 4 2/3 innings.

Jiménez and Burger helped the South Siders build a 7-2 lead, but that advantage evaporated in the fifth. The Cubs used three singles, three walks, two hit batsmen, one error and one wild pitch to move in front on a humid night at Guaranteed Rate Field.

Giants 8, Athletics 3

In San Francisco, Pinch-hitter Austin Slater hit a tiebreaking two-run homer in the sixth, Alex Wood earned the win with three scoreless innings of relief and the San Francisco Giants beat the Oakland Athletics 8-3.

Wood (5-4) entered to start the fifth in a tie game and allowed just one hit making his fifth relief outing of 2023 to go with 11 starts.

Slater connected against Hogan Harris (2-5) after J.D. Davis hit a two-run homer in the first against A's opener Freddy Tarnok.

Shea Langeliers hit a tying single in the fourth for Oakland following Aledmys Diaz's RBI single and an errant throw by center fielder Luis Matos that allowed a second run to come home.

Patrick Bailey and Mike Yastrzemski added RBI doubles in the eighth as the Giants swept the quick two-game Bay Bridge Series after snapping a sixgame losing streak with a 2-1 victory Tuesday night.

Phillies 6, Orioles 4

In Philadelphia, Edmundo Sosa hit a tiebreaking solo homer to the opposite field with two outs in the seventh inning to help the Philadelphia Phillies beat the Baltimore Orioles 6-4

J.T. Realmuto knocked in two runs with an RBI double while Bryce Harper added an insurance run with a seventh-inning RBI single to allow the Phillies (55-47) to win the best of three series against their I-95 neighbors.

Change Name Collier stars as Lynx down Mystics

I, QUTBUDDIN HOLDER OF INDIAN PASSPORT NO. \ 14533621 HAVING PERMANENT ADDRESS 25, DURGA COLONY NEEMUCH KHEDA, UDAIPUR, PIN: 313001, DAJASTHAN, INDIA RESIDING IN KUWAIT AT PRESENT, HEREBY DECLARE THAT HENCEFORTH MY NAME WILL BE READ AS UNDER: GIVEN NAME QUTBUDDIN AND SURNAME RAJNAGAR.

MINNEAPOLIS, July 27, (AP): Napheesa Collier had 24 points and 11 rebounds for her sixth double-double of the season, Diamond Miller added 21 points and nine assists and the Minnesota Lynx beat the Washington Mystics 97-92 on Wednesday night.

Minnesota (11-13) won its second game in 11 attempts against a team with a winning record this season. Washington (12-11) lost its fifth straight road game.

Collier put Minnesota ahead 87-79 with 5:48 left in the fourth quarter, but she hobbled off the court less than two minutes later after appearing to injure her right ankle. She did not return

Washington rookie Li Meng was left open in the corner and sank a 3-pointer to pull within 91-90. But Nikolina Milic scored the next four

BASKETBALL

points to extend Minnesota's lead to 95-90. Miller sealed it with a wide open layup, off a nice assist by Milic, with 47.1 seconds left.

IOC favors allowing athletes to compete as 'neutral athletes'

Ukraine eases sports boycott policy to compete against some Russians

KYIV, Ukraine, July 27, (AP): Ukraine has signaled it will no longer bar its athletes from competing against Russians who are taking part in sporting events as "neutral athletes," a significant easing of its boycott policy a year before the Paris Olympics.

A decree dated Wednesday says Ukrainian athletes and teams will only be required to boycott if competitors from Russia or Belarus are competing under their national flags or other symbols, or have signaled allegiance to either of those countries in another way. The change in policy could smooth the way for Ukrainians to compete at next year's Paris Olympics. Ukrainian athletes previously boycotted events which allowed Russians and Belarusians as "Individual Neutral Athletes," the preferred term of the International Olympic Committee.

It wasn't immediately clear how the decree would be implemented in practice, but at least one leading Ukrainian athlete competed against a "neutral" Russian competitor on Thursday.

Olympic champion Olga Kharlan competed against officially-neutral Russian opponent Anna Smirnova at the

world fencing championships - an Olym-pic qualifier - on Thursday in Milan, Italy, winning their bout 15-7. However, Smirnova refused to leave after the bout for more than 50 minutes, sitting on a chair on the fencing piste in an apparent protest because Kharlan refused to shake hands at the end.

Kharlan was later listed as excluded from the event in the tournament bracket. It was not immediately clear why. Smirnova was not reinstated and Bulgarian fencer Yoana Ilieva, who Kharlan had been due to face next, advanced by walkover.

Leon & McIntosh pick up big wins

at swimming world championships

Another Ukrainian, Igor Reizlin, withdrew from his event at the same world championships when he was drawn to compete against a Russian in the men's epee tournament on Wednesday, before the decree was published.

The IOC favors allowing Russians and Belarusians to compete as "neutral athletes" without national symbols in Olympic qualifying events. The governing bodies of most Olympic sports have either adopted the IOC policy already or are working on plans to do so. The IOC still recommends barring Russia and Belarus from team sports and excluding athletes who are contracted to the military or security forces

The IOC - which initially recommended that sports bodies exclude Russian and Belarusian athletes on safety grounds last year - says it has not taken a final decision on allowing "neutral" Russian and Belarusian athletes at next year's Paris Olympics.

Ukraine had previously objected strongly to the policy, with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy saying in Janu-ary that "any neutral flag of Russian athletes is stained with blood" and that Russia would exploit their presence for propaganda.

15

Ukrainian teams in fencing and judo already boycotted events which included Russians following last year's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. A government decree in April made that state policy as IOCbacked efforts to reintegrate Russian and Belarusian athletes gathered pace.

Some Ukrainian athletes publicly disagreed with the boycott policy, saying that it was better to ensure Ukraine was still represented even if they would prefer Russians did not compete.

Silva ends career

UEFA 'clears' Barca for Champs League

NYON, Switzerland, July 27, (AP): UEFA confirmed Barcelona's place in the next Champions League on Thursday though said an investigation into more than \$7 million paid to a refereeing official could be reopened if more evidence emerges.

Barcelona's place in the Champions League group stage worth tens of millions of euros (dollars)

earned by winning the Spanish league last season could have been risk from the so-called "Caso Ne greira'

at

case.



Silva

Court documents show Barcelona paid 7.3 million euros (\$7.7 million) from 2001-18 to the company of José María Enríquez Negreira, the former vice president of Spanish soccer's refereeing committee.

Prosecutors in Spain formally accused Barcelona of corruption in sports, fraudulent management and falsification of business documents.

However, no clear allegations of any specific fixed games or referees who were influenced have emerged since UEFA opened its investigation in March.

SOCCER

UEFA competition rules require teams to be removed from one season of European competition if they are implicated in fixing any domestic or international game since April 2007. Further disciplinary punishments could also follow.

UEFA said Thursday that Barcelona is now "provisionally admitted to take part" in the Champions League though a "future decision on admission/ exclusion" is still possible. The Champions League group-stage draw is on Aug. 31.

Summer McIntosh, of Canada, competes in women's 200-meter butterfly final at the World Swimming Championships in Fukuoka, Japan. McIntosh won gold. (AP)

McKeown dominates backstroke

FUKUOKA, Japan, July 27, (AP): Watch out for mers when you take in next year's Paris Olympics: 21-year-old 21-year-old Leon Marchand of France and 16-yearold Summer McIntosh of Canada.



Staying at PSG or going somewhere else?

Mbappé's transfer saga rumbles on

PARIS, July 27, (AP): Kylian Mbappé finds himself in the unique position of training alone at home while his Paris Saint-Germain teammates are playing abroad.

Denmark feeling 'more' calm and

Marchand won his third gold medal at the swimming world championships, taking the 200-meter individual medley on Thursday in 1 minute, 54.82 seconds.

Add this to his earlier gold in the 200 butterfly, and his world record in the 400 IM - the last individual record held by Michael Phelps. Marchand obliterated it by more than a second, finishing in 4:02.50.

"It was amazing, and I'm very proud of it," said Marchand, who pushed British teammates Duncan Scott to silver (1:55.95) and Tom Dean to bronze (1:56.07).

"It was a very painful race, but exciting," Marchand added. "Almost killed me, but it was good.

Marchand trains at Arizona State University under Bob Bowman, who coached Phelps to 23 Olympic gold medals.

SWIMMING

McIntosh won her first gold after coming up short in two earlier races where some billed her as a favorite. She was fourth in the 400 freestyle and took bronze in the 200 free.

McIntosh won the 200 butterfly in 2:04.06, repeating her title from last year's worlds. She also set a world junior record. She is only 16, remember.

Elizabeth Dekkers of Australia took silver in 2:05.46 and Regan Smith of the United States earned bronze in 2:06.58

"Going into tonight I just wanted to see how hard I could push and how much I could hold on in the second half," said McIntosh, who won by a full body length.

It's unfair to say that McIntosh's first two races were disappointing, but she did lose her world record in the 400 free to Ariarne Titmus of Australia.

Another one to watch is 18-yearold David Popovici of Romania. But he was disappointing at the worlds in southwestern Japan.

Popovici is the world-record holder in the 100 free with a time of 46.86, but in that race on Thursday he was sixth behind winner Kyle Chalmers of Australia (47.15), silver medalist Jack Alexy of the United States (47.31), and Maxime Grousset of France (47.42). Popovici finished in 47.83.

Popovici was fourth earlier in the meet in the 200 free.

He suggested he might have raced too much, and will need to train hardGold medalist Leon Marchand of France celebrates on the podium during the medal ceremony for the men's 200m individual medley at the World Swimming Championships in Fukuoka, Japan. (AP)

er to stay on top. Getting there was the

easy part. "I feel good. I feel good that it's over," he said. "After I take some time off for myself and clear my head - reflect on this very busy and weird year - I'm going back to the pool. And fortunately for me, what hasn't gone perfectly here is trainable. I'm going to be just fine.'

Popovici's 200 was a red flag.

"As soon as I touched the wall in the 200, this thought flashed in my head, which was: I need to train better. I need to train more," he said. "And more importantly, I need to be more consistent. That's the glue that holds it together."

The other end of the emotion spectrum was Chalmers, who won Olympic gold in the 100 free in Rio de Janeiro when he was 18. Now's he's finally added the world title, which completes the the gold set.

He referred to going through shoulder surgery, heart surgery and "some pretty bad mental health times" in his seven-year return to gold.

"In 2016 I was an 18-year-old and I probably didn't know what I had achieved," he said. "For me, I've had to work so hard for seven years and sacrifice so much. I wanted to make sure that the early-on wasn't a fluke.

"There were times I thought I'd never get back to swimming fast," he added.

Kaylee McKeown led from start to finish to pick up gold in the women's 50-meter backstroke. The 22-year-old Australian got off to a fast start and held on to prevail in 27.08. Smith won another medal and took silver in 27.11, and Lauren Cox of Britain got bronze in 27.20.

Australia won the women's 4x200 freestyle relay in a world-record time of 7:37.50. The United States took silver in 7:41.38, and China grabbed bronze in 7:44.40.

The top three finishers automatically qualified for the Paris Olympics.

Speculation is mounting as to where Mbappé will play his first game of the season. Will he stay at PSG, go to Real Madrid or fly far away to Saudi Ara-bian club Al-Hilal?

While soccer fans in Japan are disappointed not to see the superstar after he was left out of the club's preseason tour, PSG fans may have to brace themselves for a similar scenario when the French champions open their league campaign on Aug. 12

The 24-year-old Mbappé is locked in a contract standoff and neither side seems prepared to give ground.

PSG is finally standing up to one of its big-name stars - after years of pandering to the likes of Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Neymar - while Mbappé is determined to do things on his own terms

Mbappé has already told the club he won't trigger a 12-month extension on his contract, which expires at the end of next June. He has until Monday to change his mind and sign the extension, but that looks increasingly impossible

Mbappé has already made it clear he intends to play only this season with the French champions, and then leave. That means he could join long-time suitor Real Madrid for free. With no transfer fee involved, Madrid can offer him a lucrative signing bonus and a massive salary.

SOCCER

PSG is having none of it, and says the top scorer at last year's World Cup will either sign the current extension offer in place, sign a new contract altogether, or prepare to be sold.

That has opened the door for Saudi team Al-Hilal to make a world record \$332 million bid for Mbappé - a huge amount under any circumstances, but even more so for a player in the final year of his contract. By comparison, Madrid offered 180 million euros (\$200 million) for the striker in 2021.

But money is seemingly no object in the oil-rich kingdom and the promise of inflated wages means players are flocking there from Europe. Cristiano Ronaldo reportedly earns up to \$200 million a year, despite being close to 40 years old, while the Saudi-funded LIV Golf tour has shaken up professional golf and the country hosts a glitzy Formula One race.

The moves are part of efforts by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to leverage the kingdom's oil wealth to provide new jobs and opportunities at home.

Al-Hilal failed to sign Lionel Messi. The Argentina great instead joined In-

confident ahead of England match

scored her first international goal with a header in the 89th minute

"I couldn't be happier for her,

for the team, that she decides to

score the first goal in exactly this

game, against China," Denmark

coach Lars Søndergaard said. "It

means a lot for her, it means a lot

do have significant international

experience, with 10 players with

over 30 caps. Sixteen of the play-

ers at the Women's World Cup

were on the roster for the 2022

Euros, where Denmark went 1-2.

on this stage since 2007 and has

never won more than one match

at the tournament, Friday's match

against England could make a

d'Or winner Karim Benzema.

pean Cup titles, and fans would see

him as an ideal replacement for Ballon

sign a new contract by leaving him out

of the team when the season starts. But

given that PSG only won the league by

one point last season, that appears to

be a risky strategy and might displease

fans. It would also create a potentially

toxic atmosphere for new PSG coach

mates to return, he works out alone at

the training complex in the quiet sub-

will keep getting louder, however, un-til a final decision is made.

While Mbappé waits for his team-

The noise surrounding his transfer

PSG could try pressuring Mbappé to

statement for Denmark.

Luis Enrique.

urb of Poissy.

For a nation that hasn't played

Several of Denmark's players

off a corner kick.

for the team."

SYDNEY, July 27, (AP): Going into this year's Women's World Cup, the entire Denmark national team had played in a World Cup for a combined zero minutes. After not qualifying for the tournament the past 16 years, the Danes are back.

The Red and White got off to a nice start in Group D, with a 1-0 victory over China. Now the team is feeling more calm and confident ahead of its match Friday against European champion England at Sydney Football Stadium.

"We know what to expect now," Denmark captain Pernille Harder said. "We definitely settled our nerves a bit."

That win was thanks to one of the players with little international experience at all, striker Amalie Vangsgaard. In just her 10th international appearance, she

ter Miami, so the Riyad-based club has turned its attentions to Mbappé.

It seems unlikely, however, that Mbappé will be lured just yet. Unlike Ronaldo or Messi, he has never won the Champions League, let alone the Ballon d'Or - Ronaldo and Messi have won 12 Ballon d'Or trophies and nine Champions League titles between them.

Mbappé became only the second player in history to score a hat trick in a World Cup final last year in Qatar, and he seems to have unfinished business at the highest level of European soccer. So that makes Madrid the favorite to sign him.

He would join the most decorated club at European level with 14 Euro-



In this file photo, PSG's Kylian Mbappe celebrates after scoring his side's opening goal during the French League One soccer match between Troyes and Paris Saint Germain, at the Stade de l'Aube, in Troyes, France. (AP)

Spain great David Silva announced the end of his career Thursday at age 37, one week after suffering a serious knee injury

"Today is a sad day for me," Silva said in a video posted on his social media accounts. "It is time to say goodbye to what I have dedicated my whole life to.'

He had been preparing for another Champions League campaign after helping Real Sociedad finish fourth in Spain's La Liga last season. He damaged the ACL in his left knee in training last week.

Silva is in the elite group of Spain players that was on each title-winning squad from the 2008 European Championship, the 2010 World Cup and Euro 2012.

In that 2012 final he scored the opening goal with a header in a 4-0 rout of Italy in Kyiv. It was arguably the peak performance of Spain's dominant era playing the high-tempo, possession-based style known as tiki-taka.

Weeks after luring Liverpool great Steven Gerrard to join as manager, Saudi Arabian soccer club Al-Ettifaq signed Jordan Henderson on Thursday.

The England international, who was captain of Liverpool when the club won the Premier League and Champions League titles, is the the latest star to head to the oil-rich kingdom. He will reportedly earn 700,000 pounds (\$900,000) per week.

"Liverpool Football Club can confirm Jordan Henderson has completed a transfer to Al-Ettifaq," the team said in a state-ment. "The move to the Saudi Pro League side sees the midfielder bring an end to his 12year Reds career, during which he lifted eight trophies, all but one of which as club captain."

The Saudi league has targeted a slew of leading players from Europe as part of an ambitious recruitment to raise the profile of soccer in the country. Cristiano Ronaldo moved to Al-Nassr in December and has been followed by stars like Karim Benzema, N'Golo Kante and Roberto Firmino during the offseason



Netherlands' Damaris Egurrola (left), and United States' Lindsey Horan compete to head the ball during the Women's World Cup Group E soccer match between the United States and the Netherlands in Wellington, New Zealand. (AP)



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Members of the Pakistan team pose with the trophy after their win over Sri Lanka in the fourth day of the second cricket Test match between Sri Lanka and Pakistan in Colombo, Sri Lanka. (AP)

Ali shines for tourists with career best 7-70

Pakistan hand Sri Lanka worst home Test match defeat to sweep series

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, July 27, (AP): Pakistan handed Sri Lanka its heaviest home test defeat on Thursday to wrap up the second match at Sinhalese Sports Club inside four days and sweep the series 2-0.

Chasing a first-innings deficit of 410, Sri Lanka were shot out for 188 runs in their second innings with Noman Ali and Naseem Shah sharing all 10 wickets to fall.

The innings and 222-run loss eclipses Sri Lanka's previous worst at home of an innings and 208 runs against South Africa at SSC in 1993.

It was also Pakistan's first test series win since December 2021.

"Very proud to win this series and all credit to the boys and support staff working very hard," Pakistan captain Babar Azam said. "We had some good camps before coming here and all our hard work paid off I must say on this tour. We have ticked all the boxes. The way our bowlers went about things was very satisfying to see.

Left-arm spinner Noman Ali was the hero for the Pa-

kistanis, claiming a career best 7-70. It's the second best total by a Pakistani against Sri Lanka, just behind Imran Khan's 8-58 in Lahore in 1982.

Naseem Shah reverse swung the old ball to deadly effect and was unlucky to have two leg before decisions overturned after review. But he made his presence felt

CRICKET

knocking off the tail in double quick time as Sri Lanka lost the last three wickets in six balls that Naseem sent down.

"Our batting has been horrible," Sri Lanka captain Dimuth Karunaratne said. "In both tests we won the toss and had to put up good totals. "But we threw away our wickets and paid the price.

"Feel very disappointed. Not many positives in this se-

ries for us."

It was another shocking batting display by Sri Lanka after starting off well. The opening pair had added 69 for the first wicket and Sri Lanka carried hopes of taking the game to the final day when lunch was taken at 81-1.

But Noman turned the game on its head between lunch and tea as Sri Lanka lost the cream of its batting with five wickets falling.

Noman, who took a wicket off his first ball, accounted for the top seven wickets to fall before Naseem polished off the tail.

Bowling unchanged from the South End, Noman didn't do anything extraordinary nor did he posses any variations. He just pitched on one spot and the Sri Lankan batters' options against the ball that was turning away from them were pretty ordinary. It didn't help that six of the top seven batters were right-handed.

All the wickets that fell after lunch were due to poor strokes as Sri Lankan batters didn't trust their defenses

and only Angelo Mathews showed some fight. He remained unbeaten on 63 having batted for three-and-a-half hours

Sri Lanka's last four wickets fell in the final session of the day for just 11 runs.

Sri Lanka had also collapsed in the first innings, where it were bowled out for 166 runs after electing to bat first and another shocking batting display followed in the second essay

Abdullah Shafique, who posted a maiden double hundred was named Man of the Match while Agha Salman, who contributed with 221 runs and picked up three wickets was named Player of the Series.

"We are really thrilled that we won a test series. It's been a while since we won one," Shafique said. "Good confidence booster for all the players.

"I am very pleased to have played a big part in this series. I have done well in Sri Lanka. It's been a good place this country for me."

Saudis path starts with Jordan, Tajikistan

Kuwait in Group A with India, Qatar for World Cup & Asia Cup qualifiers

KUALA LUMPUR, July 27, (Agencies): The joint draw for AFC FIFA World Cup 2026 qualifiers and Asia Cup 2027 was held on Thursday at headquarters of the Asian Soccer federation in the Malaysian capital, where the State of Kuwait came in Group A along with Qatar and India.

The draw distributed 36 teams to

Argentina 2-1 to open last year's tournament in Qatar - will prepare for the next edition training and playing with a slew of global stars like Cristiano Ronaldo and Karim Benzema lured to the multi-billion dollar project that the Saudi league has become.

Saudi Arabia's extra interest in World Cup qualifying is that the top two teams in each of the nine four-

team groups also goes direct to the

2027 Asian Cup, a tournament that

Nigeria upset Australia, US eke out draw against Dutch

Portugal knock Vietnam out of WWC

BRISBANE, Australia, July 27, (AP): Asisat Oshoala had to watch from Nigeria's bench for an hour, desperate to get into the action, before getting a chance to unleash all her pent up energy against cohost Australia at the Women's World Cup.

The Barcelona striker entered the game in the 63rd minute and Nigeria took the lead two minutes later for the first time, 2-1. Within nine minutes, Oshoala scored a goal that sealed an upset victory, sparked her jersey-shedding celebration and left Australia in a must-win sce-

nario for World Cup survival. After losing 3-2, an Australian squad dealing with injuries to striker Sam Kerr and understudy Mary Fowler needs to beat Olympic champion Canada in Melbourne on Monday to control its own fate for a spot in the round of 16.

Nigeria and Canada opened with a 0-0 draw and both teams now have four points. Australia has three from its open-

SOCCER

ing 1-0 win over Ireland. Nigeria next faces winless Ireland, which is making its debut in the tournament.

Nigeria coach Randy Waldrum said he benched Oshoala at the start of the game to manage her long-term injury, but always intended to send her on when it was most needed.

The pivotal moment against the injury-plagued Australians was in the 72nd minute when Oshoala swooped on a defensive mixup and beat three Matildas to the ball, sneaking a right-foot inside the near post from a tight angle.

She peeled off her jersey and sprinted to the right corner to celebrate scoring in three consecutive World Cups, getting a yellow card in the process. After controlling much of the game, Australia was stunned by the two-goal burst from Nigeria.

Australia went into the game with 10 wins in its previous 11 international matches, including an away win over European champion England, and had seven clean sheets in their previous nine games.

They had more shots on goal (28-10) and more on target (8-5) but missed the clinical finish of its world-class strikers

Editor-in-Chief

ARAB C TIMES

AHMED AL JARALLAH

and was rarely able to breach Nigeria's disciplined defense.

possession Australia dominated throughout the first half and had 10 shots on goal to one, but it was tied 1-1 at halftime after the teams traded goals in stoppage time.

Emily van Egmond scored the opener for Australia and Uchenna Kanu equalized seconds before halftime when she tapped in a floating, deflected cross from to the blue-haired Rasheedat Ajibade.

Oshoala replaced Kanu in a double switch for the Nigerian attack swung the momentum of the game. Nigeria scored from a corner with

three players heading the ball in se-quence, starting with Michelle Alozie and going recalled midfielder Ajibade, who angled it across for veteran Uchiobe Ohale beside the post.

Ohale nodded it in and took the brunt of Alanna Kennedy's attempted clearance kick simultaneously.

The Australians threw everything into attack in front of a parochial 49,156 crowd but only managed to pull one goal back with Kennedy's header deep in added time.

The Matildas have generated unprecedented exposure for women's soccer in Australia and were widely expected to reach the knockout rounds. Now coach Tony Gustavsson has to turn around an upset quickly

ÚS 1, Netherlands 1

In Wellington, the United States was desperate for a spark and Lindsey Horan channeled her anger into a much-needed goal to keep the Americans unbeaten at

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Nigeria's Christy Ucheibe (right), battles for the ball with Australia's Caitlin Foord during the Women's World Cup Group B soccer match between Australia and Nigeria In Brisbane, Australia. (AP)

the Women's World Cup.

Horan was fuming after she was knocked over by Danielle van de Donk in the second half of Thursday's rematch of the 2019 women's final, when the United States beat the Netherlands to win their second consecutive World Cup title.

She got her revenge minutes after the tackle in a sequence that included Horan cursing about van de Donk before shoving her, as well. The two trash-talked and were separated by a referee before Horan scored the game-saving goal for the United States.

Horan scored on a well-timed header off a corner kick from Rose Lavelle in the 62nd minute to give the Americans the goal they needed to sneak out a 1-1 draw with the Netherlands. The United States remained unbeaten in 19 consecutive matches

Horan and van de Donk were smiling after the game - van de Donk was wearing a swimming cap because of a cut to her head from a later collision - but almost anything goes in the World Cup. The two are professional teammates for French club Lyon.

Horan already has one yellow card from the opening win over Vietnam, and she had to be calmed by American defender Julie Ertz.

Portugal 2, Vietnam 0

In Hamilton, Telma Encarnacao scored one goal and assisted on another as Portugal defeated Vietnam 2-0, a win that ensured Vietnam will not advance to the knockout stage.

Portugal jumped ahead in the seventh

WC Standing

						_	
BRISBANE, July 27, (AP): Women's World Cup standings on Thursday.							
	Р	W	D D	Ĺ	GF	GA	Pts
Nigeria	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
Canada	2	i	i	õ	2	1	4
Australia	2	1	Ó	1	3	3	3
Ireland	2	0	0	2	1	3	0
			up B				
	Ρ	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
q-Spain	2	2	0	0	8	0	6
q-Japan	2	2	0	0	7	0	6
Costa Rica Zambia	2 2	0 0	0 0	2 2	0	5 10	0
Zamula	2	-	up C	_	0	10	0
	Р	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Denmark	1	1	õ	0	1	0	3
England	1	i	õ	Õ	1	õ	3
China	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Haiti	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
	_		up D				_
	Ρ	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
United States	2	1	1	0	4	1	4
Netherlands	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Portugal	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
e-Vietnam	2	0	0	2	0	5	0
	Р	W	D D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Brazil	1	1	0	0	4	0	3
France	i	Ó	1	õ	0	õ	1
Jamaica	i	ŏ	i	õ	ŏ	õ	i l
Panama	1	ŏ	Ó	ĭ	ŏ	4	ò
		Gro	oup F				
	Ρ	W	Ď	L	GF	GA	Pts
Sweden	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Italy	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
South Africa	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Argentina	1	0	0 up G	1	0	1	0
	Р	W	D D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Germany	1	1	0	0	6	0	3
Colombia	i	i	õ	õ	2	õ	3
South Korea	1	ò	õ	ĭ	0	2	ŏ
Morocco	1	Ō	Ō	1	Ō	6	õ
Note 1: Standings read as played, won,							
drawn, lost, goals for, goals against and points.							
Note 2: q denotes qualified for the knockout							
stage.							
Note 2: e	der	note	es el	imir	nated	k	
	_	_		_		_	

minute following a quick series of decisive passes through the Vietnamese defense. Lucia Alves dropped in a perfect cross to Encarnacao at the top of the sixyard box for a simple finish.

Portugal still has a shot to advance out of the group stage but will need to win or draw against the United States, with a Netherlands loss next Tuesday against Vietnam.

In the 21st minute, Portugal turned a goal kick from Vietnam into a chance, taking possession and moving downfield. Encarnacao slipped the ball to Kika Nazareth as she raced through defenders, and the 20-year-old forward slotted the second goal of the night to the left of goalkeeper Tran Thi Kim Thanh.

nine groups, each comprising four teams, set to compete between November 2023 and June 2024.

The Kuwaiti team will play its first match against India on November 16. The first and second will qualify for the Asia Cup 2027 due in Saudi Arabia and finals of the World Cup 2026, scheduled in Canada, Mexico and the US.

The 2026 edition of the World Cup will be an expanded 48-team affair hence forty-AFCfive affiliated nations will have the chance to qualify for the tournament. The qualification process will be played

Klinsmann over five rounds while the first two will also double up

as the AFC Asian Cup qualifiers. The 45 AFC (Asian Football Confederation) teams will be segregated into four pots and will be drawn into nine groups of four teams each. The 18 teams from pot 4 will compete in the first-round qualifiers in October, where

qualify for the second round. Saudi Arabia's path to the 2026 World Cup in North America will start in a first qualifying group with neighboring Jordan, Tajikistan, and either Cambodia or Pakistan.

Players in the Saudi national team which upset eventual champion

WC/Asia Cup Draw

Group A: Qatar, India, Kuwait, Afghanistan/Mongolia Group B: Japan, Syria, DPR Korea, Myanmar/Macau Group C: Korea Re-ublic, China PR, public, Thailand,Singapore/Guam Group D: Oman, Kyrgyz Republic, Malaysia, Chinese

Taipei/Timor-Leste **Group E:** IR Iran, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Hong

Kong/China v Bhutan

Group F: Iraq, Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia v Brunei Darussalam

Group G: Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Tajikistan, Cambodia/ Pakistan

Group H: UAE, Bahrain, Yemen/Sri Lanka, Nepal/ Laos

Group I: Australia, Palestine, Lebanon, Maldives v Bangladesh. (KUNA)

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will be hosted in the oil-rich kingdom. None of Asia's eight direct qualifying places to the expanded 48-team World Cup - co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico - are on offer from this group stage.

The 18 teams advancing from the first group stage foom November to June 2024 will enter another round of six-team groups next year.

In other groups from Thursday's



draw, Japan will face Syria, North Korea plus either Myanmar or Macau, who have a two-leg playoff in October.

The current security situation in Syria, and also Afghanistan and Yemen, means those teams are likely to play "home" games in neutral countries.

Australia's home-based players will have at least one round trip of about 25,000 kilometers (15,000 miles) in a group with Palestine, Lebanon and either Maldives or Bangladesh.

South Korea, whose run of 10 straight qualifications started at the 1986 World Cup, is in a group with China, Thailand and either Singapore or Guam. South Korea is now led by Jurgen Klinsmann, who is aiming for a third World Cup as coach after his native Germany in 2006 and the United States at the 2014 tournament.

they will face off in a two-legged tie to