



baseball

Page 15



tennis

Page 16

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FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES DOWN 3.84 pct IN JUNE

Sovereign Fund lags behind neighbors

Minister acts to impose better control over commodity prices

KUWAIT CITY, July 12: The Minister of Commerce and Industry and the Minister of State for Youth Affairs Muhammad Al-Aiban issued two ministerial decisions to impose more effective control on the prices of consumer goods and food commodities and products, and develop direct and immediate solutions to confront the problem of price manipulation or any unjustified price hike, reports Al-Qabas daily

In a press statement, Al-Aiban explained that the ministerial Resolution No. 99/2023 requires the establishment of a national database for goods and products to be regularly updated and stored electronically. It should contain all goods and products manufactured locally or imported, along with their addresses, types and prices in order to activate consumer participation with

Continued on Page 4

Investment down

KUWAIT CITY, July 12: The Kuwaiti Sovereign Wealth Funds, the oldest and largest funds in the world, are outperformed by its more ambitious neighbors in neighboring countries and according to "Bloomberg" news agency the sovereign wealth funds in the Middle East are emerging as investors heading to acquire some of the largest investment deals, reports Al-Anba daily.

Bloomberg indicated that the Kuwait Invest-

ment Authority (KIA), which manages the \$700 billion sovereign wealth fund, invested only \$2.8 billion last year, compared to \$25.9 billion by the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority and \$20.7 billion by the Saudi Public Investment Fund, the agency quoted Diego Lopez, a consultant at data firm SWF Global as saying.

The Future Generations Fund managed by the Kuwait Investment Authority reported returns of 33% for the year ending in March 2021, the latest data available to the public. This included a return of 38% from the Kuwait Investment Office in London, an arm of the Kuwait Investment Authority.

Many of the world's dealmakers are turning to the region's sovereigns, which collectively control no-

less than \$3 trillion in assets, as a major source of funding while other investors back off.

Although Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA) officials could not be reached for comment, those familiar with the fund's strategy say its current investments are doing well and that it prefers to remain modest and conservative.

The dearth of high-profile deals represents a sea turn for the Kuwaiti fund, which was once among the most active in the region. Until recently, KIA was a leading global investor, with holdings in companies such as BlackRock Inc and Mercedes-Benz Group AG.

During the 2008 crisis, it bought into banks,

Continued on Page 4

Opinion

Will the municipality or 'Awqaf' supervise our sovereign fund?

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

IN less than three months, the government witnessed a setback represented by the resignation of the Minister of Finance due to the assignment of Kuwait Investment Authority to the Minister of Oil. This indicates that wrong remedies lead to more instability.

The National Assembly, in its first session, was also affected by what could be called a defect, which undoubtedly will later lead to conflicts between parliamentarians and ministers, as if it is written that Kuwait will not witness any stability.

It is important to stress that the Sovereign Wealth Fund is the foreign investment arm after oil. It has great importance in countries that realize its mission to preserve and enhance their wealth, as is the case in the Norwegian Pension Fund, which within 27 years has become the first in the world, and invests its assets in 9,000 companies in 75 countries.

Kuwait was the first to establish a sovereign fund in the year 1961, and its assets were supposed to be greater than its Norwegian counterpart, but as it appears that the Kuwaiti mentality and the saying that "all is well" as well as the interventions that took place led to problems that the fund continues to suffer from.

It is historically known that this fund belongs to the Ministry of Finance, although this is wrong because the sovereign money of the state must be directly under the command of either the head of state, or the prime minister.

Assigning the matter to the Minister of Oil indicates that the practice is not sound. If the Minister of Oil is better than the resigned minister, why was he not originally appointed in the Ministry of Finance?

As for making the most important state institutions a field for testing, this is a disaster, because it is not a field for experiments, and it does not work with the logic of favoritism.

Unfortunately, these practices have made the parliamentarians, since 1992 to this day, i.e. throughout 14 parliaments, impose their authority on the executive body, which has not realized that its main mission is good management and strengthening of institutions through the selection of qualified and experienced people, instead of turning into farms for some personalities.

In the past 20 years, several scandals have been discovered in the country, such as the Malaysian fund, and the Eurofighter deal, as well as embezzlement in several major institutions and projects, in the health offices, the office of the Kuwait Investment Authority in London, and others. This undoubtedly not only affects Kuwait's international reputation, but also makes the citizens fear for their fate and the fate of their children.

Many sovereign funds in the world are managed directly by the head of state, and include the best minds and experienced experts. Work is done with great transparency.

This must be considered with great importance in a manner that the National Assembly should work to amend the Sovereign Fund Law so that it falls under the supervision of the Head of State or the Prime Minister.

This will stop the interference in it so that we do not wake up one day and find the sovereign fund being under the supervision of the Ministry of State for Municipal Affairs or the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, as both institutions suffer from rampant corruption. We will then end up crying over spilled milk, which will not help at all.

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Quran burning sparks UN move

Nod to resolution on religious hate

GENEVA, July 12, (KUNA): United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) approved Wednesday a resolution condemning and rejecting religious hatred.

The approval came after recent incident of Holy Quran desecration in Sweden.

The resolution was approved by 28 member states including India, China and Latin American countries whereas it was opposed by several western countries including the United States, Germany, Belgium and Britain, while also seven countries abstained.

This resolution underscores the necessity of accountability as it urges countries to adopt laws and policies countering acts of religious hatred acts, acts that incite discrimination or violence, and stipulates prohibiting or prosecuting such acts and taking immediate measures to ensure accountability.

It also urges UN human rights chief and other related parties to make their stance against religious hatred widely known, and put forth recommendations to address this phenomenon.

The resolution requires the UN human rights high commissioner to present a report on the various incentives and root causes of such behavior as well as the toll of religious hatred on human rights, highlighting the loopholes in laws and policies that allow for such practices.

An interactive discussion panel on experts' level to examine cause and effect of desecrating religious sanctities, is also specified in the resolution.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk stated earlier Wednesday that speech and inflammatory acts against Muslims, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and minority groups are manifestations of utter disrespect, as they are offensive, irresponsible and wrong.

This came in a speech Volker gave at the Urgent Debate on "the alarming rise in premeditated and public acts of religious hatred as manifested by recurrent desecration of the Holy Quran in some European and other countries".

"This Urgent Debate is prompted by recent incidents of burning of the Quran, which is the core of faith for well over a billion people", explained Volker, adding "these and other incidents appear to have been manufactured to express contempt and inflame anger; to drive wedges between people, and to provoke transforming differences of perspective into hatred and, perhaps, violence".

He added that religious symbols have deep significance as the repository and incarnation of an immense history, a far-reaching system of values, a foundation of collective community and belonging, and the essence of their identity and core beliefs.



Turk



In this undated photo released Tuesday, July 11, 2023, by the Indonesian Maritime Security Agency (BAKAMLA), Iranian-flagged, MT Arman 114, right, and Cameroon-flagged tanker, MT S Tinos are seen after they were caught conducting illegal oil transfer near Natuna waters, Indonesia. Indonesian authorities said Wednesday they seized an Iranian tanker and arrested its crew members for illegally transferring oil to another vessel in the country's exclusive economic zone. (AP)

Indonesia seizes Iranian tanker

Indonesian authorities said Wednesday they seized an Iranian tanker and arrested its crew members for illegally transferring oil to another vessel in the country's exclusive economic zone.

The Iranian-flagged - MT Arman 114 - transporting 272,569 metric tons (2.3 million barrels) of crude oil worth 4.6 trillion rupiah (\$305 million) was seized on Friday while carrying out illegal transshipment of oil to the Cameroon-flagged tanker - MT S Tinos - in Indonesia's exclusive economic zone near Natuna waters, said Aan Kurnia, Indonesia's Coast Guard chief.

An Indonesian coast guard vessel detected suspicious activities at dawn and tried to approach the two tankers. The Iranian tanker fled toward Malaysian territorial waters spilling oil as the hose connecting the two tank-

ers came loose. The tanker ignored various signals to stop, ranging from horns and warnings via loudspeakers to shots in the air, Kurnia said.

He added that the Iranian tanker, which was also carrying three passengers besides its crew, was later arrested by Indonesian Coast Guard with the help of its Malaysian counterpart. The Cameroon-flagged tanker managed to escape.

Authorities were still questioning the tanker's Egyptian national captain and 28 Syrian crew members, Kurnia said.

Kurnia said the tanker was facing a variety of violations, including not displaying a national flag, shutting off their identification systems, anchoring illegally, as well as the illegal transfer of fuel between ships and spilling oil. (AP)

Concern voiced over Iran's malicious activities

NATO, GCC to deepen cooperation

BRUSSELS, July 12, (KUNA): Leaders of the 31-member NATO Tuesday stressed the Middle East and Africa are "regions of strategic interest", underlining commitment to boost cooperation with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI).

"We will deepen our political engagements and public diplomacy outreach to our long-standing partners in the Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative," they said in a communique released on the first-day of the two-day summit in Vilnius this afternoon.

"We will also increase our outreach to relevant regional organizations, including the African Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council," said the communique.

"We are implementing the Defence Capacity Building packages for Iraq, Jordan, Mauritania, and Tunisia. We will also explore with the Jordanian authorities the possibility of establishing a NATO Liaison Office in Amman," it noted.

"Allies remain committed in our support to Iraq and its ability to stabilize the country. We recognize the continued efforts and progress of the Government of Iraq and the Iraqi Security Forces to combat ISIS/Daesh. We encourage further progress in Iraq's fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations," it said.

Further, the communique pointed to "Iran's support to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine has an impact on Euro-Atlantic security," calling upon

Continued on Page 4

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwaiti Finance Minister Manaf Al-Hajeri's resignation was accepted on Wednesday through a decree, which named the country's oil minister as the Acting Finance Minister.

As per the decree, signed by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister, Oil Minister and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Saad Al-Barak has been appointed as acting Finance Minister. (KUNA)

DUBAI: Iran summoned Russia's ambassador on Wednesday after Moscow released a joint statement with Arab countries earlier this week challenging Iran's claim to disputed islands in the Arabian Gulf. It marked a rare spat between Iran and Russia, which have deepened ties since Moscow invaded Ukraine, with Iran supplying killer drones that have been used to devastating effect there. Iran and Russia are also strong backers of President Bashar Assad in Syria's civil war.

Iran's official IRNA news agency said the ambassador was summoned over a joint statement released Monday after a meeting in Moscow between Russia and the Gulf Cooperation Council, which includes the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Ku-

wait, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman. (AP)

JERUSALEM: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas briefly visited the occupied West Bank's Jenin refugee camp Wednesday in the wake of a devastating Israeli offensive last week, marking his first visit to the camp since 2005.

The visit, which lasted just over an hour, came at a time of seething discontent among Palestinians in the West Bank toward Abbas and the Palestinian Authority, the autonomous government which administers parts of the West Bank but has largely lost control over several militant strongholds in the region, including Jenin. The 87-year-old president is widely seen as out of touch with the public and rarely ventures outside of his Ramallah headquarters. (AP)

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden met with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey at the NATO Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania.

President Biden congratulated President Erdogan on the agreement he reached with Swedish Prime Minister Kristersson and NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg to send Sweden's NATO accession protocol to parliament for ratification. (KUNA)

IDLIB: Youssef al-Ramadan says he always feels guilty for having to put his wife and three children to work in order to survive - and now they might not be able to get by since international aid could stop flowing from Turkey.

Standing outside his tent in a displacement camp in northern Idlib, he is worried that their income might not be sufficient to make ends meet if the United Nations Security Council cannot renew a humanitarian border crossing that has been a critical lifeline for him and some 4.1 million people in Syria's rebel-held northwest. The vast majority live in poverty and rely on aid to survive. (AP)

BRUSSELS: The second Senior Officials' Meeting between the European Union and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was held Tuesday in Brussels in a "very constructive spirit," according to a statement released by the European External Action Service (EEAS).

The meeting offered a platform to consolidate further the enhanced bilateral cooperation between the two sides at experts level, in line with the EU Joint Communication for a Strategic Partnership with the Gulf, noted the statement. (KUNA)



Polish Army veteran Slawomir Wysocki, 50, places the country's flag at a memorial site in Kyiv, Ukraine, Wednesday, July 12, 2023, to honor a Polish paramedic killed in Ukraine's war against Russia. (AP)

Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:24 Asr 15:28
 Sunrise .. 04:57 Maghrib .. 18:50
 Zohr 11:53 Isha 20:21

Local

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

Weather

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

By Day: Very hot with moderate to fresh northwesterly wind with speeds of 20-45 km/h causing rising dust.

By Night: Hot to rather hot

weather with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind with speeds of 15-42 km/h with a chance for rising dust.

Station **Max Exp** **Min Rec**
 Kuwait City 47 35

Kuwait Airport	47	36
Abdaly	48	31
Jahra	50	36
Salmiyah	42	34
Ahmadi	41	36
Nuwaisib	47	32
Wafra	48	30



Photo by Leah Qurtal
 Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah upon receiving Egyptian Ambassador Osama Shaltout, Consul General Dr. Heba Zaki, Counselor Ahmad Abu Al-Majid, Bassam Al-Qassas and Hamada Al-Amir.

Arab Times Editor-in-Chief receives Egyptian ambassador

Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers, received in his office at Dar Al-Seyassah the Egyptian Ambassador

to the State of Kuwait, Osama Shaltout, and the Consul General of Egypt in Kuwait, Ambassador Heba Zaki.

Friendly conversations were exchanged, and common issues were discussed, especially with regard to the media field.



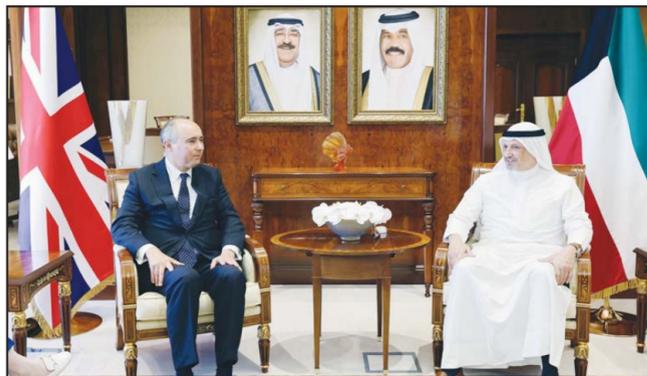
Photo by Leah Qurtal
 Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah in a group photo with Egyptian Ambassador Osama Shaltout, Consul General Dr. Heba Zaki, Counselor Ahmad Abu Al-Majid, Bassam Al-Qassas, Hamada Al-Amir, and Hussein Ibrahim.

'No time to waste on disputes'

Assembly will cooperate with govt: MP Ma'arafi

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
 Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 12: The National Assembly deliberated on various proposals during its supplementary session Wednesday, as well as the MPs' response to the Amiri speech that HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah delivered on behalf of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at the inaugural session of the legislature.



KUNA photo
 The Minister of Foreign Affairs during his meeting with the Minister of State for Investment at the British Ministry of Business and International Trade.

FM meets UK trade minister

Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met Wednesday with British Minister of State for Investment in the Department for Business and International Trade, Lord Dominic Johnson and his accompanying delegation on the occasion of his official visit to the country. During the talks, the historical ties and

the strategic partnership between the two friendly countries were touched on.

The two sides also emphasized on encouraging investors and attracting British companies to invest and establish their business in the State of Kuwait.

Moreover, they discussed latest regional and global political developments. (KUNA)



PAFN inspectors at one of the local markets.

PAFN conducts raids in markets

277 tons of spoiled food wasted

KUWAIT CITY, July 12: Farwaniya Inspection Department of the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) affirmed that it destroyed 277 tons of food items, which were spoiled and unfit for human consumption, during the four-month period from the beginning of January to the end of April 2023, reports Al-Rai daily.

On Tuesday, the department carried out an inspection tour of some central markets in continuation of efforts to ensure the safety of the food items.

According to the Acting Director General of PAFN Dr. Mishaal Al-Zoubi, the tour is part of the series of tours carried out by PAFN in various areas. Specialized inspectors who hold the status of judicial officers participated in the tour. It resulted in issuing citations against some food establishments and making some observations to those in charge of these establishments.

He stressed that the authority's inspectors

perform their role 24 hours a day.

Meanwhile, Acting Deputy Director General of PAFN Sattam Al-Jalal affirmed that the inspection tours of the central markets for food items are ongoing in all governorates to ensure the safety of the food items and the application of the health requirements.

He called on the owners of food establishments not to employ any worker without a health certificate, and to activate the supervisory role to follow up food facilities and ensure their safety.

In addition, Director of the Farwaniya Inspection Department Dr. Nawaf Al-Enezi affirmed that the tour is part of the ongoing efforts to control food items and ensure their safety in all parts of the governorate, adding that the inspection teams work around the clock in a shift system with the aim of controlling food safety by ensuring the proper application of health and technical requirements in this regard.

Several MPs stressed the importance of a practical and clear government program. They said the government's performance will be the basis of the Assembly's cooperation.

MP Dawoud Ma'arafi pointed out that individual work does not yield the desired fruits. He affirmed the Assembly will cooperate with the government in the interest of citizens. He added there is no time to waste on disputes and instigating crises.

MP Falah Al-Hajri urged the government to speed up the completion of its program, which must realize the ambitions of citizens. He stressed the need to amend the National Assembly Law in order to allow holding parliamentary sessions without the government. He also called for addressing the Bedouns issue and to grant them their civil rights.

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of State for National Assembly and Cabinet Affairs Essa Al-Kandari confirmed that the government is ready to cooperate with the Assembly. He revealed the program of the government will be completed within a few days, including the strategic alternative to the salary scale and the timetable for implementation.

MP Abdullah Al-Mudhaf stated that the amendment of the Constitutional Court Law is the basis of political reform, and a way to enhance the monitoring and legislative roles of the Assembly. He added that educational, health and economic reforms necessitate the issuance of decisions by the government, indicating such decisions does not require new legislation.

MP Muhannad Al-Sayer said the State must focus on the reform project, emphasizing that the bills on amending the Constitutional Court Law and establishment of the high commission on legislative elections will be ratified this summer.

He accused the government of manipulating the strategic alternative to the salary scale. He added the MPs will try their best to obtain any information from the ministers, considering the importance of the strategic alternative for the citizens due to rising prices.

MP Mubarak Al-Hajraf said the people are optimistic even if this is the fourth government headed by Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf in one year, indicating this could be considered a form of failure. He criticized the government for not issuing any statement about the strategic alternative; thereby, putting the citizens in the midst of rumors spread on social media.

"The government should not manipulate the citizens' feelings.

It should heed the directive in the Amiri speech to improve the standard of living. The speech highlighted the importance of protecting the national fabric. National unity has been affected by the attempt of some parties to divide the society and classify the citizens according to their citizenship category.

Leadership

What could be the reasons behind the delay in filling up vacant leadership positions? The appointment of acting officials is hypocrisy as the latter are most likely to be servile, such that they remain silent over certain violations. Is the government ready to deal with the entry of about 200,000 citizens into the labor market in 10 years?

"On the other hand, the country has the best medicine prices in the Gulf. Minister of Health Abdulwahab Al-Adwadi was courageous enough to reduce the prices, but the medicines 'mafia' withdrew many medicines from the pharmacies to instigate a crisis. Al-Adwadi deserves commendation for combating money laundering, as pharmacies have become money laundering centers.

Efforts must be intensified to fight against the medicines 'mafia'. It has also been reported by Bloomberg that Kuwait Investment Authority lost momentum, because of the exodus of efficient and experienced officials. The government must have its own spokesperson," he asserted.

MP Mehalhal Al-Mudhaf describes the current government formation as "catastrophic", wondering why Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahd was appointed Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense even if the court sentenced him to prison. "We are waiting for the final ruling that could be in his favor or against him; while Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of State for National Assembly and Cabinet Affairs Essa Al-Kandari was accused of buying votes and investigations are still ongoing," he lamented.

Al-Kandari responded, stressing the Public Prosecution informed him that he was proven innocent prior to his appointment to the ministerial position. He reiterated that he is not involved in the case, pointing out that vote buying accusation is common during elections.

Al-Mudhaf argued it is unacceptable that the appointment happened while the hearing on the case is ongoing. "Even an ordinary official is suspended until completion of investigations," he stressed.

He also criticized HH the Prime Minister for being silent all time and for the delayed presentation of the government program. He claimed there is no harmony in the government, citing the contradictory statements of the Foreign Affairs and Defense ministers regarding the Durra oilfield issue. He thinks the dispute among members of Sabah Family reflected negatively on all fields.

He added other Gulf countries have been moving forward, because they are keen on "putting the right man in the right position; that is, based on competency rather than loyalty. The presence of royal family members in the government has become part of the problem, not the solution. The current legislature must address this issue."

MP Hassan Jawhar pointed out that the new era should not just be a slogan, so all concerned authorities must exert tremendous efforts to turn the slogan into reality. He emphasized the need to take advantage of the unprecedented compromise between the legislature and government. He said the government must present long and short term strategies, adding it is unacceptable to focus on daily life while ignoring the future.



Photos by Rizk Taufiq
 Top and above: Pictures taken during the parliamentary session.

Other Voices

Shall we boycott them or listen to Al-Bukhaiti?

By Ahmad alsarraf

Human priorities differ, in terms of importance, from one person to another, affected by personal values and beliefs, the culture and the environment in which he lives. However, there are some priorities shared by the majority, such as safety and security, health and well-being, communication and interaction with others, learning and personal development, and the achievement and fulfillment of goals and dreams.

A few European countries have recently been subjected to a barrage of criticism and attack for their stances towards some Muslim symbols, and for the excessively violent manner in which the police dealt with lawbreakers or demonstrators, describing Europeans in general as immoral and decadent, and showing a great deal of hatred and hostility towards them, especially towards the countries that are most generous with them.

Arab Muslim immigrants, who have never hidden their desire to control the political situation of the countries to which they emigrated, in any legitimate way or reverse it, and strive to increase their numbers, bearing in mind that their numbers exceeding 10% would represent a real danger to the European way of life, and to its principles; liberalism, its laws and its secular, or rather irreligious, way of life.

In the pursuit of some Muslims to achieve their goal of reproduction, they do not hesitate to commit various violations, and even "crimes" against the countries that sheltered them, and all this under the cover of religion, such as repeating marriage and divorce several times, in order to obtain the state's generous social aid for children and divorced women, and increase it through having the largest number of children, in an evil attempt that other minorities or communities, es-

pecially non-Arabs and non-Muslims, do not know about, and this is only one way of taking advantage of the loopholes in the laws of those countries, and it will not be long before these tricks are discovered and stop their generosity, or grant their nationality for these immigrants.

But sometimes it seems that it is too late, as the integration of these immigrants, who are ideologically overly naive, into their new societies has become an almost impossible process, and they will soon be involved in acts of vandalism unprecedented in their violence, with the government almost completely absent from monitoring what is going on in Arab Muslim schools, and what they receive from religious lessons in mosques and clubs, even sports.

What some ignorant religiously obsessed people in our societies do not know is that the call to boycott countries such as France and Sweden will reflect negatively on the millions of Arab Muslims who live in these two countries. In addition, the majority of Gulf countries invest their surplus funds in major European companies, and they will be among the first to be affected by any boycott!

The Yemeni thinker Ali Al-Bukhaiti says:

They flee from the countries of Islam in droves to the countries of disbelief, so they secure them from fear, feed them from hunger, give them shelter from cold, treat them from illness, and teach them to get rid of their ignorance, and when their return becomes severe, they demonstrate, demanding respect for their backward culture, because of which they fled their homelands!

Returning to the introduction whose topic is related to the priorities of the "normal person", we find that European countries provide all these priorities, whether for their citizens or for those who emigrated or sought refuge in them. At a time when the countries from which they emigrated or fled are not satisfied with depriving those who emigrated or sought refuge in them of any priorities, but rather reject them even their citizens!

□ □ □

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'Blinken's visit to China – correcting the course of strategic competition'

"THE US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken paid an official visit to Beijing on the nineteenth of last June, during which he met with the Chinese president, his counterpart, the Chinese foreign minister, and some senior officials of the ruling Communist Party. Blinken's visit is the highest visit by a US official to Beijing since President Joe Biden took office," columnist Dr. Dana Al-Enzi wrote for Al-Rai daily.



DR. Dana Al-Enzi

"Blinken's visit -- which is considered historic -- comes amid severe tension in US-Chinese relations, starting with the visit of former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan in August 2022, then the tension took a dangerous escalating turn against the background of Washington's discovery of the Chinese spy balloon, and the severing of military communications, banning the sale of American technological products to China, Beijing's military escalation in Taiwan, and the recent skirmishes between the two sides in the South China Sea.

"These developments indicate that the path of relations between the two countries is moving in the direction of escalation and dangerous hostility, and may quickly develop into a limited or broad military confrontation. This is what Biden absolutely does not want, and we believe that China does not want that either.

"Since assuming his position in the White House, Biden announced a clear approach towards China based on 'strategic competition', that is, recognizing that China is the main strategic competitor of the United States, but managing this competition in various fields, and the possibility of opening areas for cooperation between the two countries in other areas, to prevent without the relations slipping to the level of 'acute strategic conflict' or 'strategic hostility'.

"This is due to the extremely dire consequences of this escalating hostility on the two countries and the world, in addition to the fact that both powers need rational joint cooperation to address many of the global challenges and risks facing the world, such as the issue of climate change, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and the Ukrainian war.

"It appears from the joint statements of Blinken and Chinese officials including the Chinese president, that China has understood the significance of Blinken's visit, which aims to persuade China to manage the competition, and to return to freezing the thorny contentious files pending between the two countries.

"The two sides agreed to restore contact and engagement, to restore economic relations and to respect the interests of each party. Likewise, agreement on continuous joint arrangements between officials of the two countries to discuss differences in several files especially the economic file. The two sides were also keen to stress that relations between the two countries should not descend to the level of the Cold War.

"However, this did not prevent Blinken from emphasizing Washington's constants regarding controversial files, especially the Taiwan file, by affirming the Biden administration's continued adherence to the one-state, two-system policy, and its categorical rejection of any violent attempts to annex Taiwan. He also expressed Washington's concern about human rights violations, and refused to export advanced technology used for purposes that harm US national security.

"Washington and Beijing implicitly agree on the 'strategic competition' approach, based on close strategic considerations and calculations for both sides. Both sides, especially China, believe it is the best approach for a long-term soft bone-breaking without a precipitous, devastating early military clash.

"Both countries are in a state of semi-balance of power, especially military, and China is firmly convinced that the economic power in which it is relatively superior to Washington will enable it to dominate and break Washington's will in the long run.

"On the other hand, the United States, especially the Biden administration, relies on this approach with its various tools, especially the policy of mobilizing alliances with the aim of undermining China's broad economic and diplomatic power in a soft, gradual manner without provoking it to a military confrontation.

"On this basis, the main bet on the continuation of this approach remains the continuation of freezing the differences between the two countries over thorny files, especially the Taiwan file, until a major development occurs in the balance of power gap between the two countries resulting from the optimal exploitation of the era of strategic competition between the two sides."

Also:

"Will the ambitions of the 'Bani Faris' and the manipulation of the 'Bani Faris' fed and 'deceived' from the West, and specifically from America, return to the Arab and Gulf arena, since its inclusion goes back to skirmishes and quarrels, and we return to square one before the agreements concluded between Saudi Arabia and Iran with Chinese mediation? ... and on Chinese soil, and Chinese efforts and guarantees," columnist **Salah bin Abdullah Al-Muslem** wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"And did this agreement anger the 'American friend' and the strategic ally of Iran, and from there, from Congress and the White House, shouts of disapproval and secret and public plans against this agreement erupted, and this rapprochement is not under the umbrella, instructions and efforts of the 'world policeman America', and it is bound to fail and return events as they were?"

"Hence, we find that the White House and the US Treasury gave free rein to all banks to release any sums of money and assets to Iran as a state, and individuals who were wanted by Washington and whose assets were frozen, and suddenly these people and their assets became free of hands and minds after the 'Saudi-Iranian agreement'?"

"The Durra field has existed since 1960, so it is not born today, and it is located in the submerged waters between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, meaning that it is a field wholly owned with all its contents of gas and other derivatives for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the State of Kuwait, and no other country has the right to an inch in this field that it is considered one of the largest gas fields in the world (about a trillion cubic meters of gas, in addition to the rest of the matters and the rest of the derivatives. Where did Iran get the argument and claims for a share in this field, and does Iran have any pretext to be part of the conversation, dialogue or discussions about this field?"

"The most important question: Who instructed Iran at this particular time? After the renewed agreements between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait 2021/2022 on partnership and parity, and working to invest the products of this field after it was idle for security reasons, and because there was no need -- at that time -- that oil was abundantly available and required, and now and after the need has become urgent to benefit from the gas of the Durra field naturally, the owners have all the rights to use what they own, at the time they want and specify.

"Look for America, it is a saying that is always repeated, and it is logical and realistic. America does not

dispense with wars, and it cannot live without them, and it is lost without wars. Will the United Nations, allied and friendly countries, and those who possess reason and logic intervene in order for the region to avoid wars and calamities, whose negative effects will undoubtedly be stronger than any previous period?"

"Our problem in Kuwait is that all of us have become ministers of defense, foreign affairs and interior, as each of us has an opinion about the Durra oilfield that we are enthusiastic about, write about and defend on social media. The oilfield is located within the Kuwaiti borders, and there has been a lot of talk about it such that we no longer know which is true or not," columnist **Talal Al-Saeid** wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"Those who are not qualified to discuss the issue dragged it into the circle of discussion, and each one claims he is right, that his words are correct, and that he is the only one who knows what is happening!"

"We no longer know who to believe after so much talk on this sensitive subject!"

"We have to ask: Why is the issue not left to the people in charge, while they act according to what they consider the supreme interest of the country? The Parliament itself is accountable to the voters. This means that the role of the citizen is not now, but later. Disturbing the decision-makers is not in the interest of the public.

"No one can imagine that there is a Kuwaiti in a position of responsibility who will forfeit our national rights -- whether small or big. Everyone should know this. The role is currently played by officials, while the citizen's role is limited to standing behind his government, fully supporting it and putting all his capabilities at its disposal. The role of accountability comes only if it is proven that our national rights were neglected, but today, let us leave the issue to those in charge!"

"Unfortunately, it is true that we have been interfering in what does not concern us. We have allowed ourselves to direct government policy according to what we see, not the international situation we are going through and the balance of power around us, which requires more wisdom in dealing with the course of events."

"The Ministry of Social Affairs has agreed to employ 10th and 11th graders in cooperative societies with a salary of KD200 per month in July and August," columnist **Nafeia'a Al-Zouwaied** wrote for Al-Anba daily.

"This is an unprecedented step aimed at encouraging our students to spend their free time in worthwhile activities during summer, so they are not exposed to certain acts with unbearable consequences.

"This step has many advantages for the students, as it boosts their self-confidence, while teaching them how to manage time, deal with others, and respect the specified working hours through the fingerprint attendance system.

"In addition, the identity and personality of the students will be developed, while gaining practical experience. No one objects to making students take various jobs in cooperatives societies. They can work in the catering, library, printing and photocopying sections.

"They can also work in the central markets of the cooperatives to monitor the prices of goods and products on the shelves, as well as the family supplies section. In this manner, our students will feel it is their responsibility to protect their homeland.

"Personally, I wish the work is not limited to cooperative societies. It should include other areas of practical life. Students in seventh to 11th grades should undergo training through summer handicraft workshops, such as carpentry, electrical, sanitary and air conditioning maintenance works.

"I also hope these courses will be conducted from mid-June until the end of August. After several years, we wish to see a group of students with experience in handicraft and manual work, taking responsibility for themselves, country and homes. We hope they will be proud of themselves in front of their families, because they found their hobbies in these practical workshops."

"I worked with Indonesian Airlines for years -- mostly from Bali and Jakarta to Tokyo, Japan. I noticed that the Japanese do not shop in Indonesia, even though it is one of the cheapest countries in the world, and their country is one of the most expensive," columnist **Sami Al-Nisf** wrote for Annahar daily.

"I asked them why and most of them responded: 'Whatever we spend in our country remains with us, but we do not benefit from what we spend abroad besides traveling for pleasure, rest and enjoyment of natural places, so why wander in the markets?'"

"The private sector in Kuwait builds the most beautiful and wonderful markets. Kuwait has no taxes. It is the only Gulf country that does not apply the Value Added Tax (VAT).

"We are obliged to restrict our purchases in Kuwait, since whatever we spend here will return to us in one way or another, unlike what we spend abroad. Moreover, most of the goods purchased in western countries are made in Asian countries that are near and far from us, so why buy in other countries instead of our own?"

"Hats off to every Kuwaiti businessman who spends his money in his country and builds for us the most beautiful and wonderful markets and malls, which have become our only refuge during the scorching heat in summer and the cold weather in winter.

"The men of the three authorities are duty-bound to support everyone who invests in Kuwait -- whether Kuwaiti, Gulf, Arab or foreigner, instead of fighting against the latter and make him 'run away' quickly. In this manner, we will not turn into the twin sister of North Korea, in which the State owns everything."

"The reasons behind the deterioration of the administrative situation in many countries include the fight against incompetencies, and putting incompetent people in positions based on relationships, such that the governmental position is now subject to bargaining and concession," columnist Dr **Hisham Kalinder** wrote for Al-Anba daily.

"Sometimes, there is interference in decision making to serve personal interests, not that of the country or its people. They do not fulfill the conditions for countries to develop and maximize incomes and savings to be for all circumstances and crises.

"The big problem is that despite many changes, we find some positions in ministries changing names and titles without any development. Some do not want to be absent from the arenas, even if they do not contribute to reforming the paths. They cling to positions until the last moment.

"The problem lies in choices that are often not based on the principle of selecting competencies, which results in failure and regression in indicators. Some use the position to serve the interests of a certain group, at the expense of the State and the people.

"This is a message to the one appointed through 'wasta' (influence). He is unworthy and unable to perform the duties entrusted to him in this position. He uses his position for his own benefit, not in the interest of work."

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary



KUNA photo

Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Dr. Fatema Al-Salem received Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Morino Yasunari.

KUNA chief, Japan envoy eye closer cooperation

Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Dr. Fatema Al-Salem discussed means of enhancing bilateral ties in various fields, mainly media, with Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Morino Yasunari on Wednesday.

This came during Al-Salem's reception of Yasunari in her office where the two sides shared ideas

and views on a set of issues and topics of common concern, including keeping pace with technological media advancement.

Al-Salem stressed keenness of KUNA on developing its varied sectors, mainly media, by modernizing regular techniques and methods, and using growing technological progress and inven-

tions, particularly in artificial intelligence.

She lauded technological potential of Japan as one of the pioneering countries in scientific and industrial research and technology, while stressing the necessity of taking advantage of Japan's experiments in using technology in the medical field. (KUNA)

'Those with new Turkish nationality face hurdles'

'Each case will be studied separately'

KUWAIT CITY, July 12: The General Administration for Residence Affairs affirmed that it will not accept any change in the nationalities of individuals holding suspended nationalities to the nationality of Turkey except after studying each case separately; accordingly, measures will be taken in this regard, reports Al-Anba daily.

It justified its opinion by stating that when an individual acquires the nationality of a particular country, he becomes a citizen of that country, enjoys all the rights granted to the citizens of that country, and bears all the obligations resulting from that.

The administration explained that many people holding the suspended nationalities are seeking to obtain Turkish citizenship after which they obtain passports stating their affiliation to Turkish citizenship. This is happening due to the ease of obtaining that nationality. Also, the Republic of Türkiye (Turkey) is officially among the countries whose citizens can enter Kuwait using entry visas that are issued to them directly from the port of entry. Therefore, many people belonging to the suspended nationalities seek to obtain Turkish citizenship so that they can enter Kuwait using the visas received upon arrival.

After obtaining Turkish citizenship, many of these people, who are residents of Kuwait, may not be able to renew their Turkish passports after expiry. This results in a problem, which is the existence of a category of foreigners whose residency cannot be renewed by the General Administration of Foreign Affairs due to the expiry of their passports and their inability to renew those passports or leave the country. It will also become impossible to expel these people from the country if necessary.

Some of the countries to which many of these people belonged before obtaining Turkish citizenship may refuse to take them back.

'Nazaha' praised: Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) praised the Ministry of Interior's commitment to the principles of transparency and

Rising heat pushes use of electricity

KUWAIT CITY, July 12: With the intense summer heat, the electrical load index responded to temperature indicators that reached 50 degrees Celsius, touching the yellow zone that rings the warning bell of reaching the maximum consumption, and recording a number close to last year's record. Meanwhile, the water production rate exceeded 21 million gallons, reports Al-Rai daily.

The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy is working to reduce the power consumption. For this purpose, it is seeking to address a number of government agencies to activate methods for rationalizing their electricity and water consumption during the summer months.

Last Thursday, the electric load index recorded the highest consumption rate during the current summer with 15,900 megawatts, approaching the highest record recorded last summer, which was 16,180 megawatts. Informed sources in the ministry

said, "At a time when the electric load index is recording high numbers due to the high temperatures these days, the rate of water consumption exceeded the production amount by 21 million gallons, recording 503 million gallons, while the ministry's water production is 482 million gallons."

They said the load index is expected to set a record on Sunday, in line with the temperature expected to reach 52 degrees Celsius in some areas, adding that the ministry is preparing to address a number of authorities, particularly the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, to adhere to the instructions for rationalizing consumption during the summer.

The sources added, "Although the rate of water consumption exceeded more than half a billion gallons on Friday, the strategic stock is still reassuring, as the stock capacity is 3,897 million gallons."

justice in conducting a public lottery for applicants to join the 48th batch of trainee officers who hold a secondary school certificate at Saad Al-Abdullah Academy for Security Sciences, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Chairman of the Board of Directors of the authority Attorney Muhammad Al-Otaibi disclosed that they closely followed up the lottery procedures, in addition to contacting a number of candidates and accepted students.

He confirmed in a press statement after completing the report on the lottery: "First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled and the ministry officials strictly followed the standards of integrity and equality in selecting the trainees."

He explained that the lottery is one of the methods in ensuring integrity and justice in the selection process; away from personal preference. He added the lottery is flawless, while the statement of the ministry after the lottery was logical and transparent.

Bachelors' power cut: The Committee for Combating the Phenomenon of Singles Housing in the Kuwait Mu-

nicipality announced that the electricity supply has been cut off from 101 properties in different areas of Kuwait out of the 157 properties that were discovered in cooperation of the Kuwait Municipality, the ministries of Interior, Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Public Works; the Public Environment Authority, and Public Authority for Manpower, reports Al-Rai daily.

The committee's Rapporteur, Zaid Al-Enezi, affirmed that "campaigns are continuing to monitor sites infested with the so-called 'singles' in private and model housing areas," pointing to the discovery of several properties that tamper with electrical connections and the current has been cut off, and warnings have been issued in line with the Ministerial Resolution 206 of 2009 regarding the building system and Decree 105 of 1980 regarding the state property system.

He pointed out that "the campaigns are under the direct supervision and follow-up of the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, Fahd Al-Shula, and the Director General of the Municipality, Eng. Saud Al-Dabbous, according to a work mechanism and a plan to combat bachelors' housing."

90 cases of power and water 'theft'

KUWAIT CITY, July 12: The Judicial Enforcement Team at the Ministry of Electricity and Water recently carried out extensive campaigns in the six governorates; targeting infringements on electric and water networks, during which 90 violations were recorded, reports Al-Anba daily.

Deputy head of the team Ahmad Al-Shammari revealed these cases were recorded through intensive and preemptive inspection rounds, with the aim of reducing loads on the network caused by violations in the installations and others.

He affirmed these campaigns will resume after the Eid Al-Adha holiday through the coordinated efforts of the ministry's sectors, and in cooperation with the joint committee to combat the phenomenon of bachelors living in private housing areas.



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5 exceptions to decision against visa issuance to pregnant women

Teachers submit grievances letters to ministry



HH the Crown Prince receives the two invitations addressed to HH the Amir.

Crown Prince receives Saudi 'invitations' for GCC, Gulf-Central Asia meetings due July 19

KUWAIT CITY, July 12, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Wednesday received two invitations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah from Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud to attend the 18th consultative meeting of the GCC leaders and the Gulf-Central Asia

summit, due in Jeddah on July 19. His Highness the Crown Prince received the two invitations from Saudi Ambassador in Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khaled Al-Saud at Bayan Palace.

His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Chief Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Ab-

dullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Amiri Diwan and His Highness the Amir's Office Director Ambassador Ahmad Fahad Al-Fahad, His Highness the Crown Prince's Office Director Retired Gen. Jamal Mohammad Al-Thiab and Undersecretary of His Highness the Crown Prince for Foreign Affairs Mazen Isa Al-Isa were present at the meeting.

KUWAIT CITY, July 12: The Ministry of Interior is inclined to adopt five exceptions to the decision to not grant entry visas to women except after the visitor provides a recognized medical certificate stating that she is not pregnant, reports Al-Anba daily.

The concerned authorities submitted a request to the Assistant Undersecretary for Citizenship and Residency Affairs at the Ministry of Interior, stressing that there are some special cases that the administration must consider exempting from the requirement of presenting a medical certificate.

The cases to be excluded from requirement are - domestic workers who are accompanied by citizens of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, domestic workers accompanied by diplomats coming to Kuwait, girls under the age of 16 and women over the age of 50 years, and foreigners who are granted entry visas electronically (online), as they are linked to the agreements signed with Kuwait for granting them entry visas directly upon their arrival in the country.

Grievance letter: Scores of teachers have submitted grievance letters to the Ministry of Education, requesting that frontline rewards be paid for their work during the Covid-19 pandemic, reports Al-Anba daily.

HH Amir congratulates Kiribati, Sao Tome and Principe on national days

KUWAIT CITY, July 12, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations Wednesday to President of the Republic of Kiribati Taneti Maamau on the occasion of his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished the president long healthy life and his country further progress and prosperity.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to President Taneti Maamau on the occasion of his country's National Day.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to President Taneti Maamau on the occasion of his country's National Day.

of his country's National Day.

Also, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Wednesday a cable of congratulations to Sao Tome and Principe President Carlos Vila Nova on the occasion of his country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir wished the president everlasting health and further progress and prosperity for his country.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to President Carlos Vila Nova on the occasion of his country's National Day, wishing him good health and wellness.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to President Carlos Vila Nova on the occasion of his country's National Day.

KD 55mln total cost of project: Al-Kandari

MPW forms panel to study bids related to new airport terminal

KUWAIT CITY, July 12: The Minister of Public Works Dr. Amani Boughmaz issued a ministerial decision to form a fact-finding committee regarding the tender for the construction, development and maintenance of roads and intersections to serve the new passenger terminal at Kuwait International Airport on Al-Muqawa Road, and the tender for the construction, furnishing and maintenance of plot No. 3 for parking lots, aircraft taxiways and service buildings, in the same terminal, reports Al-Rai daily.

The decision specified the terms of reference of the committee with four main tasks, which are:

1. Reviewing all papers and documents related to the two aforementioned tenders.
2. Ensuring the integrity and correctness of the procedures taken by the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) and the Ministry of Public Works in that regard.
3. Indicating the integrity of technical reports issued by the technical committees formed for the purpose of studying the offers made.
4. Examining the complaints issued by the bidders applying for the two tenders, and the responses issued by the Ministry of Public Works and the Public Authority for Roads to those complaints, as well as the extent to which they meet the contractual and legal aspects.

The tasks also include providing an explanation for the reasons behind the delay in offering the two tenders and the awarding procedures, with an indication of the cause, if any.

In the matter of the decision, informed sources explained that the minister's issuance of the decision to form the committee confirms her keenness to ward off any suspicions or doubts in the course of the procedures for issuing and awarding the two tenders, which enhances the concept of transparency that Dr. Boughmaz is keen to pursue in all issues related to the ministry's projects.

The decision gave the committee the freedom to set the system it deems appropriate to carry out its work so that it can address the sectors, departments and relevant authorities, summon and hear the statements of those it deems necessary for its work inside or outside the ministry, and review and request documents related to the subject of the committee.

The decision also specified two weeks from the date of the first meeting of the committee to submit its special report, including the findings and recommendations.

Meanwhile, Project Manager for the development of Mubarakiya Hassan Al-Kandari disclosed that the total cost of the project is KD55 million for built-up areas of about 131,000 square meters and 21,000 square meters of which are for commercial spaces, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Al-Kandari confirmed the project will be put up for bidding for the private sector, explaining that it will address issues affecting the value and economic viability of the area.

Sovereign Fund

Continued from Page 1

including Citigroup Inc, and achieved notable successes in the past, as it sold its stake in Citigroup Banking Group in 2009 for \$4.1 billion, with profits exceeding \$1 billion. The KIA was also a prolific investor, participating in the US listing of the private equity firm TPG Inc.

"Bloomberg" said the KIA does not officially disclose the value of its assets or the details of its investment strategy, and the data and interviews show that the fund's activity has witnessed ups and downs in recent years rather than the information being completely absent, but the authority is still weak compared to regional competitors.

Global SWF estimates that the \$2.8 billion invested by the KIA in 2022 increased from \$100 million in 2021.

It should be noted that the Kuwait Investment Council was established in London in 1953, 8 years before the country's independence, to invest surplus oil revenues and help diversify the economy. The KIA is also the General Reserve Fund.

"Bloomberg" said that since the beginning of the epidemic, most of the KIA investments have been made by its subsidiaries in the sectors of infrastructure, small investments in IPOs or listed companies and commitments to fund managers such as Invesco Ltd, BlackRock and Northern Trust Corp, according to Lopez.

He added that over the past three years, SAGIA has been focusing more on selling assets rather than acquiring them, as it has divested from holdings in companies such as Viesgo in Spain, Rialto and Transgrid in Australia, and Thames Water in the United Kingdom.

In March, it sold Euros 1.4 billion worth of shares in Mercedes-Benz after holding them since 1974. The fund said the sale of Mercedes-Benz shares was part of an effort to diversify its portfolio.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's foreign exchange reserves at the end of last June was 13.44 billion dinars, a monthly decline of 3.84%, a decrease of 538 million dinars during the month, compared to 13.98 billion dinars in May, reports Al-Anba daily.

The country's foreign exchange reserves represent the total cash balances, accounts, bonds, certificates of deposit, treasury bills, and foreign currency deposits with the Central Bank of Kuwait. By calculating the liquid reserves, we find that they cover Kuwait's import needs for more than 13 months, which exceeds the global average by 4 times, as the safe limit is considered to be Liquid foreign exchange reserves, excluding gold, cover 3 months of the average value of imports.

Minister acts

Continued from Page 1

all data of goods and products, and compare some of them with each other either in local or international markets.

This rule will be simplified to enable the average consumer to analyze data, and ensure the ability to compare prices of goods

and products between local and foreign stores. The rule will contain an icon to receive all substantive and procedural suggestions from everyone, including the government and the consumers.

This decision will increase the imposition of consumer control, as well as the supervision of Ministry of Commerce and Industry's employees on the prices of goods and products in order to find any manipulation or artificial increase, through the integration of data between suppliers and distributors of goods and products, and between consumers.

The ministerial resolution No. 100/2023 regarding the formation of a committee to regulate the items of food and discounted items for a period of one year aims to introduce the largest amount of basic commodities and complementary products into the supply branches at a price lower than the central or parallel markets by 25 percent.

The decision will result in the following:

1. Listing the materials listed in the ration card system in which the discount rate is less than 25 percent of the fixed price of the cooperative societies.

2. Obligating the supplier companies to provide the prices of their products to be at least 25 percent compared to the price fixed in the cooperative societies. In the event of non-compliance, the supply of their products will be canceled.

3. Taking into consideration the ministerial decisions that regulate the materials included in the ration card system, and making a recommendation to amend or cancel some of them.

4. Following up the study of market prices and comparing them with the discounted prices of food supplies, through the national database of commodities and products.

NATO, GCC

Continued from Page 1

Iran to cease its military support to Russia, in particular its transfer of Drones, which have been used to attack critical infrastructure.

"We express our serious concern over Iran's malicious activities within Allied territory. We also call upon Iran to refrain from destabilizing actions, including seizures of maritime vessels, and to play a constructive role in fostering regional stability and peace."

The Communique carried on reading that "we reiterate our clear determination that Iran must never develop a nuclear weapon. We remain deeply concerned about Iran's escalation of its nuclear program." The NATO summit also called on Iran to stop all ballistic missile activities inconsistent with UNSCR 2231.

The Communique went on to say that "NATO's southern neighborhood, particularly the Middle East, North Africa and Sahel regions, faces interconnected security, demographic, economic, and political challenges.

"Conflict, fragility and instability in Africa and the Middle East directly affect our security and the security of our partners. Countering terrorism in all its forms and manifestations is essential to our collective defence," it said.

July

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Kuwait to attain strategic objective of turning into a regional financial and commercial hub

Capital Markets Authority credited for promoting Kuwait to emerging market status

By Mohammad Kamal

KUWAIT CITY, July 12, (KUNA): Kuwait has been taking steady steps to attain its strategic objective of turning into a regional financial and commercial hub.

The Gulf state has set up supervisory and regulatory authorities to back up a domestic market capable of attracting investments locally and from abroad.

Capital Markets Authority's establishment (2010) was on the basis that the financial sector was one of the key fundamentals of the national economy, that it would play a vital role in investing funds, enriching savings, offering credit tools, diversifying income resources and creating jobs for nationals.

The CMA, since its establishment according to Law 7/2020, adopted by the National Assembly in February 2020, has taken charge of organizing and overseeing securities, ensuring transparency, justice and competence, obliging companies listed in Boursa Kuwait to adhere to governance and protecting traders from unjust and irregular practices.

Credited

CMA's five-member board of commissioners is largely credited for promoting Kuwait to the emerging market status, as declared by the FTSE Russel index in September 2017, S&O in December 2018 and MSCI in June 2019.

The promotion has contributed to luring foreign traders including those with huge assets and some USD five billion into the local stock market, particularly between 2018 and 2020. It also impacted positively the daily trade volume that reached, 2020, some KD 62 million (USD 187.8 million), compared to KD 18 million (USD 54.5 million) in 2018.

Currently, the CMA is a member of the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO) and seeks expertise and consultation from various international agencies and institutions, namely the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision, the European Commission, the Financial Stability Board (FSB), Internal Audit and the World Bank (WB).

Dr. Ahmad Al-Melhem, CMA Board Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, said in an interview with KUNA that the authority would present various financial services, in



Photos during the celebration of Argentina's Independence Day.

Photos by Iehab Qurtal

the foreseeable future, namely a digital platform for stock and sukukus' listing and trading, funds, financial derivatives and re-purchase transactions.

In addition to the above-mentioned services, the CMA has already set up profiting realty funds, and launched margin trading, short selling, lending and borrowing. Al-Melhem adds that the authority has recently launched its third strategy (2023-2024) and (2026-2027) to stay abreast of forecast requirements, local and international trends.

Moreover, the authority that has been upgrading its strategies since 2020 is seeking to draw up a national inclusive financial strategy.

Argentine embassy celebrates Independence Day

KUWAIT CITY, July 12: The Argentine Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Claudia Alexandra Zampieri, said her country's relations with Kuwait are built on solid grounds over the past 50 years, pointing to the common values that unite the two friendly countries, including their interest in humanitarian work and helping the needy and those affected by disasters around the world, reports Al-Qabas daily.

On the sidelines of the celebration of Argentina's Independence Day, which was attended by the Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister, Ambassador Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Zampieri said despite the geographical locations of both countries, there is similarity and close cooperation between the two countries politically and socially, noting that the procedures for Kuwaitis and residents to obtain a visa are easy and convenient, and its issuance does not exceed more than a week.

She indicated that the consular section at the embassy issues about 10

visas per month, pointing out that Kuwaitis enjoy an adventurous spirit and wish to visit Argentina.

Zampieri also referred to great cooperation between Argentina and the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, which granted her country 7 loans, worth about 105 million dinars, to finance infrastructure projects, "the value of each loan is about 15 million dinars," indicating that her country and Kuwait have a common vision regarding many issues in the regional and international arenas, and exchange support in international forums.

The Argentine envoy pointed out that there are 20 agreements and memorandums of understanding that guide bilateral relations between the two countries, and represent their legal framework, referring to an agreement between the two countries regarding cooperation between diplomatic institutes and the training and preparation of diplomats, but it needs renewal.

Cost of contracts expected to increase by about 400% from current cost

Increase in Kuwaiti workers affects cost of contracts

KUWAIT CITY, July 12: According to informed sources in Kuwait Municipality, a study was prepared by a number of project departments regarding the extent to which the increase in the proportion of Kuwaiti workers affects the cost of contracts, according to the administrative circular issued on January 15, 2023 related to the technical and supervisory department for private contracts in the municipality, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The circular highlighted an increase in the expected cost of the contracts by about 400 percent from the current cost, with the percentage of national labor not being less than five percent for each contract.

According to the Director of the Environmental Affairs Department Adnan Sayed, the circular includes the technical and special conditions for projects to be put forward, and the binding legal text that the number of Kuwaitis in the technical supervisory and advisory positions in each contract should not be less than 50 percent of the total manpower.

Regarding the studies and projects related to the Department of Environmental Affairs, the nature of the studies and projects related to waste management, which were put forward by the Department of Evidence Affairs, are projects of a vital nature. They have been offered for the first time in the country, and require the participation of foreign companies along with the local offices and companies due to the lack of local expertise in this regard. In consideration of this fact, it therefore is not possible to provide Kuwaiti cadres according to this percentage of the local market with the expertise required for this

type of distinguished projects.

Sayed explained that most of the jobs and specializations required in management projects are specialized jobs. Therefore, their salaries will be very high. When 50 percent of the work team are Kuwaitis, the financial offers submitted will exceed the estimated cost of these projects and studies. Their costs are exaggerated to carry out the required work, and this undoubtedly imposes huge financial burdens on public money.

National labor

The percentage of national labor, as per the law of the Public Authority for Manpower, is five percent of the total number of offices and companies. It includes all workers in all specialties, due to which it is difficult to provide 50 percent of national labor for each contract separately. This results in the difficulty in preparing and completing offers proposed by companies and institutions.

Sayed stressed the need for contracts to include binding clauses for offices and companies to train cadres of national workers among the employees in the concerned departments of the municipality who are not included in the training programs in those contracts in order to provide them with the necessary experience.

He also stressed the need for including such training programs in these contracts.

Meanwhile, Bashayer Al-Awadhi explained that the justifications and reasons for requesting an amendment to the decision are as follows:

1. In the event that the provisions of the decision are applied, specifically the first item (which

includes the technical conditions for the projects to be put forward, the legal text obligating that the number of Kuwaitis in the supervisory or advisory technical staff for each contract should not be less than 50 percent of the total manpower, provided that the project contract manager is a Kuwaiti), it will raise the value of contracts by up to 700 percent of the estimated value of the project. The projects most harmful to the decision are those for which a financial appropriation has been allocated, and are in the final stages of offering to the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT).

2. Most of the technical staff for construction and service contracts consists of technical workers (sign workers), and the majority of those workers are non-Kuwaitis.

3. Contracts for consultation services for design work and various consultancy services, whereby the technical requirements in these contracts require contracting with an experienced and specialized technical staff in the field of work in technical projects contained in the contract.

4. The lack of availability of Kuwaiti cadres with long enough experience in the private sector in the fields of the current and proposed contracts with CAPT due to the lack of job security and financial incentives, the length of the official working hours, the lack of guarantee of job continuity and fixed income, the lack of a law to secure unemployment in the event of sudden termination without warning, and the lack of employment of Kuwaiti cadres by companies and consulting offices due to the high salaries of Kuwaitis compared to expatriate workers.



4th of July celebration photos

Event features array of activities

ABCK-AmCham Kuwait hosts annual 4th of July celebration

KUWAIT CITY, July 12: ABCK-AmCham Kuwait hosted its annual 4th of July celebration, in honor of the United States' Independence Day. The first part of the celebration took place on June 23rd at Hilton Kuwait Resort and offered an evening of patriotic festivities, entertainment, and networking opportunities, bringing together the American service members and the local community.

The event kicked off with opening remarks by officials from the American Chamber and the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait, in which they spoke about the meaning of freedom as well as the meaning of Independence Day. The service members were welcomed and thanked for their sacrifice and valor, as AmCham Kuwait hosts this event on an annual basis in order to honor those who serve in the U.S. Military.

The event featured an array of activities and attractions designed to celebrate the spirit of the 4th of July celebrations, and it was commemorated with a cake-cutting ceremony which was done by Pete Swift, Chairman of AmCham Kuwait, James Holtsnider, Charge d'Affaires of the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait, and Col. Rolandis J. Crawl, Defense Attaché of the U.S. Embassy and the Overseas Military Cooperation in Kuwait.

Attendees also enjoyed live music, and various traditional American food and beverages, and took part in different games such

as mini golf, beach volleyball, soccer, and other team-building activities throughout the day.

AmCham Kuwait's Chairman, Pete Swift, and Executive Director, Paola de la Roche, recognized the sponsors: the Platinum Sponsor and Champions, KGL and The Bridge Company; Gold Sponsors: American International University and Lockheed Martin (Champion), and the Silver Sponsor: Mike Da Jeweler.

The AmCham Kuwait team held a raffle for participants to finalize the evening. The 1st gift was a Metro medical care exclusive package. The second prize included safety kit gift bags from Safety & Fire Experts. The 3rd prize was gift bags with essential oils and beauty kits from Be Organic Kuwait. The 4th prize included an array of fresh-fruit baskets from the Sultan. The 5th prize included vouchers from Tory Burch redeemable in-store or online after. The 6th prize included special vouchers from Michael Kors; both prizes were provided to the Chamber by Habchi & Chalhoub Group. The last prizes were provided by the Hilton Kuwait Resort, including invitations to their paddle court, invitations for their beach and pool, and invitations to Family Friday Brunch.

This special occasion aimed to express deep gratitude for the sacrifices made by the service members to protect and defend the values and freedoms cherished by all Americans.

'Wafra station project expected to be completed on time'

KUWAIT CITY, July 12: The CEO of the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority, Ahmed Al-Ibrahim, said the Wafra station project will be completed as per the schedule in December 2024, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Al-Ibrahim after his inspection tour of the project site said the percentage of completion of construction and civil works, which include building concrete bases for electric towers, was 15 percent, while the percentage of completion of the construction of overhead power lines has reached 27 percent.

He stated that the existing cooperation between the Authority and the Kuwait Fund for Development in implementing the Wafra station project is "very excellent," indicating that the Authority seeks to build greater cooperation with the Fund in implementing other vital and strategic projects that are in the interest of



The Electricity Interconnection Authority of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development are conducting an inspection visit to the Wafra station project.

Kuwait and the GCC countries.

He explained that he had examined the conditions on the ground and listened to the reports and opinions of engineers, consultants and contractors, stressing that things are

going well in terms of direct coordination with the joint operations teams and the request for materials and their arrival in a timely manner.

He pointed out that the Linkage Authority and the Kuwaiti Fund are

working as one team in the success of this project, which is a common goal, expressing his sincere thanks to the Fund for its continuous support and continuous follow-up to the project.

KUNA photo

Anchor Brewing halting operations after 127 years

San Francisco's 127-year-old Anchor Brewing Co. will shut down after years of declining sales, citing tough economic conditions.

"We recognize the importance and historic significance of Anchor to San Francisco and to the craft brewing industry, but the impacts of the pandemic, inflation, especially in San Francisco, and a highly competitive market left the compa-

ny with no option but to make this sad decision to cease operations," spokesperson Sam Singer said in a written statement Wednesday.

Anchor said that it made repeated efforts over the past year to find buyers for the brewery and its brands, but that it was unable to find one. The company said that it is still possible that a buyer will come forward as part of the liquidation process.

Anchor recently announced that it would limit sales of its beers to California and that it would cut production of its Anchor Christmas Ale, a popular beer in many parts of the country, in an effort to cut costs.

The company has stopped brewing and will continue packaging and distributing the beer on hand while available or through around the end of the month. (AP)

Gas Storage Denmark: Call for interest

With its project Gas Storage Denmark A/S (GSD) intends to establish onshore CO₂ storage at the Stenlille facility - and expects to offer both injection and storage capacity for CO₂ from ultimo 2025. The rate of expansion of GSD's CO₂ capacities will depend on customer demand. GSD would therefore appreciate feedback from potential customers with regards to such storage needs. Stenlille facility in

Denmark onshore CO₂ storage (Photo: Business Wire)
Companies with an interest in storing CO₂ at Stenlille are therefore encouraged to write to co2rylus@gasstorage.dk to inform GSD about their interest. All inquiries will be treated with confidentiality. GSD expects to be open for input from market actors until at least the 15th of August 2023.
The CO₂-project in Stenlille is known under the name CO2RY-

LUS. Based on continuous investigation of the reservoir the expectations to the storage capacity is a minimum of 10 million tons of CO₂. Gas Storage Denmark has 30+ years of experience with underground storage in Stenlille due to the existing methane gas storage facility. Thus, GSD has extensive knowledge of the underground and thorough practical experience with safety and monitoring. (Business Wire)

Market Movements

12-07-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
UAE - DFM	+0.04	3,987.07	JAPAN - Nikkei	-0.81	31,943.93
PAKISTAN - KSE 100	+0.89	45,581.13	EGYPT - EGX 30	-0.06	17,144.22
PHILIPPINES - PSEi	+1.07	6,466.85			
SAUDI - Tadawul	+0.54	11,727.19			

Business

Another Takata air bag inflator death reported

Owners of some 2003 Ram pickups urged to not drive them

DETROIT, July 12, (AP) - Stellantis and the U.S. government are urging the owners of some 2003 Dodge Ram pickups to stop driving them after a passenger was killed by an exploding Takata air bag inflator.

The company says owners of the pickups should contact a dealer or the company to find out if their trucks are part of a 2015 Takata recall. Stellantis says the trucks shouldn't be driven until repairs are made.

The company says the person was killed in a May 13 crash that caused the air bags to inflate. Neither Stellantis nor the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration would say where the crash happened or identify the victim. The person "succumbed to a serious injury consistent with those observed in previous Takata inflator failures," Stellantis said in a prepared statement Tuesday.

The death is the 26th in the U.S. since May of 2009, and more than 30 people have been killed worldwide. NHTSA said the death was the first due to an exploding front passenger air bag inflator. The rest of the deaths were drivers.

Takata used ammonium nitrate to create a small explosion to inflate air bags in a crash. But the chemical can become more volatile over time when exposed to

moisture in the air and repeated high temperatures. The explosion can rupture a metal canister and hurl sharp shrapnel into the passenger compartment.

Most of the deaths and about 400 injuries have happened in U.S., but they also have occurred in Australia and Malaysia.

Malfuction

Potential for the dangerous malfuction led to the largest series of auto recalls in U.S. history, with at least 67 million Takata inflators involved. The U.S. government says that millions have not been repaired. About 100 million inflators have been recalled worldwide. The exploding air bags sent Takata Corp. of Japan into bankruptcy.

Stellantis says it will provide free transportation to help people and their vehicles get to and from dealerships.

The company says 29,000 of the recalled pickups are still on the road but haven't been repaired. However NHTSA estimates that there are 84,000. In 2015 the company recalled more than 385,000 of the trucks.

"The older a defective Takata air bag inflator gets, the more dangerous it becomes," Acting NHTSA Administrator Ann Carlson said in a written statement. "Please get your air bag replaced now for your sake, and for the sake of those who love you." The agency says even minor crashes can make the air bags explode and kill people or cause serious injuries.

Stellantis, formerly Fiat Chrysler, says the May death is the fourth in its vehicles. It says that six notices were sent to the owner's home, but the recall repairs weren't done.

Last year Stellantis told owners of Chrysler 300s and Dodge Magnums, Chargers and Challengers from model years 2005 through 2010 should stop driving them after three other deaths were reported.

The company says about 233,000 of the vehicles haven't been repaired and remain on the road despite numerous attempts to reach owners.

NHTSA is urging owners of all vehicles to check to see if they have an unrepaired Takata air bag recall. Owners can go to <https://www.nhtsa.gov/recalls> and key in their 17-digit vehicle identification number.

Wall Street rises after inflation cools a bit more than expected



Currency traders work at the foreign exchange dealing room of the KEB Hana Bank headquarters in Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday, July 12, 2023. Asian shares were mostly higher on Wednesday after stocks advanced on Wall Street as investors awaited an update on U.S. inflation that will hopefully show a smaller increase in pain for everyone. (AP)

Asian shares mixed ahead of update on US consumer prices

NEW YORK, July 12, (AP): Wall Street is rising Wednesday after a report showed inflation cooled a bit more than expected last month, which hopefully takes some more pressure off the economy.

The S&P 500 was 0.6% higher in midday trading and was up more than 1% earlier in the morning. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 163 points, or 0.5%, at 34,424, as of 11:40 a.m. Eastern time, and the Nasdaq composite was 0.8% higher.

The rally was widespread, and everything climbed from stocks of flashy Big Tech behemoths to banks to staid utility companies.

The U.S. government's latest update on inflation showed that consumers paid prices for gasoline, food and other items that were 3% higher overall in June than a year earlier. That's down from 4% inflation in May and a bit more than 9% last summer. Perhaps more importantly, it was a touch lower than economists expected.

High inflation has been at the center of Wall Street's problems because it's driven the Federal Reserve to jack up interest rates at a blistering pace. Higher rates undercut inflation by slowing the entire economy and hurting investment prices, and they've already caused damage to the banking, manufacturing and other industries.

The hope on Wall Street is that a continued cooldown in inflation will convince the Federal Reserve to put an end to its rate hikes soon.

"They'll probably still pull the trigger on a hike, but it will be based on symbolism more than substance," said Brian Jacobsen, chief economist at Annex Wealth Management. He pointed to another report earlier this month that showed a slowdown in U.S. jobs growth, which could also take some pressure off inflation.

Traders remain nearly convinced the Fed will raise the federal funds rate at its meeting in two weeks to a range of 5.25% to 5.50%, which would be its highest level since 2001. But expectations are also climbing for that to be the final increase after rates started last year at virtually zero.

Treasury yields tumbled in the bond market after the cooler inflation data pushed traders to trim bets for Fed action later this year.

The 10-year Treasury yield fell to 3.86% from 3.98% late Tuesday. It helps set rates for mortgages and other important loans.

The two-year Treasury yield dropped to 4.72% from 4.89%. It tends to follow expectations for the Fed more closely.

To be sure, even if the Fed does halt its hikes, analysts warn the economy and financial markets still haven't seen the full effect of all the past increases. Rate hikes take a notoriously long time to filter through the system, and unanticipated pain can occur.

That's what happened in March, when high rates helped cause the failure of three U.S. banks and rattled faith in the system.

"Despite today's deceleration, we continue to expect inflation to remain above the Federal Reserve's 2% target, making it unlikely that we see policy easing soon," said Gargi Chaudhuri, head of iShares Investment Strategy, Americas.

That means she expects rates to stay high a while. That's also why many investors say the waiting game is still on to see if one of the longest-predicted recessions in memory will actually happen.

In the meantime, though, stocks that tend to benefit the most from lower interest rates are leading the way. That includes big technology and other high-growth stocks.

Microsoft and Nvidia were the two strongest forces pushing up the S&P 500, and each rose at least 1.9%.

Banks were broadly rallying on hopes for a halt to rate hikes. Earlier rate increases strained their business by knocking down the value of loans and bonds bought when rates were ultra low. Following the March collapses of three banks, their stocks tumbled as Wall Street hunted for the industry's next potential weak link.

Comerica rose 4.7%, and KeyCorp. rose 4.7% for two of Wednesday's bigger gains in the S&P 500.

Domino's Pizza jumped 11% for the biggest gain in the index after it announced a partnership where customers can order its pies through Uber Eats.

Europe

Germany's DAX picked up 0.8% to 15,921.12 and the CAC 40 in Paris also rose 0.8%, to 7,278.85. Britain's FTSE 100 jumped 1.1% to 7,361.14. The future for the S&P 500 was up 0.2% while the contract for

the Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 0.1%. On Tuesday, the .

The Bank of England warned Wednesday that households are facing increasing problems from sharply rising interest rates but expressed hope that the country's biggest banks were resilient enough to offer more help than they could before the global financial crisis 15 years ago.

Later Wednesday the U.S. government will report inflation at the consumer level. Economists expect to see another slowdown, with prices 3.1% higher in June than a year earlier, down from inflation of 4% in May and just above 9% last summer.

The hope on Wall Street is that a continued easing in inflation will convince the Federal Reserve to stop its hikes to interest rates soon. High rates have helped pull down inflation, but they've also caused cracks in the banking, manufacturing and other industries while also hurting prices for stocks and other investments.

Asia

Asian shares were mixed Wednesday after stocks advanced on Wall Street ahead of an update on U.S. inflation that investors hope will show a smaller increase in pain for everyone. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index jumped 0.9% to 18,827.66 and the S&P/ASX 200 in Australia added 0.4% to 7,135.70. In Seoul, the Kospi rose 0.5% to 2,574.72.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 dropped 0.8% to 31,943.93 after North Korea launched a long-range ballistic missile toward its eastern waters Wednesday, two days after the North threatened "shocking" consequences to protest what it called provocative U.S. reconnaissance activity near its territory.

The Shanghai Composite index sank 0.8% to 3,196.13. Shares rose in Taiwan but fell in India.

Oil

In other trading Wednesday, benchmark U.S. crude oil gained was unchanged at \$74.83 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It gained \$1.84 on Tuesday. Brent crude oil, the price basis for international trading, was up 3 cents at \$79.43 a barrel.

Currencies

The dollar fell to 139.65 Japanese yen from 140.36 yen. The euro rose to \$1.1027 from \$1.1006.

'Double-dipping' fees, fake accounts cited

Bank of America hit with \$250m in fines & refunds

NEW YORK, July 12, (AP) - Bank of America will reimburse customers more than \$100 million and pay \$150 million in fines for "double-dipping" on overdraft fees, withholding reward bonuses on credit cards and opening accounts without customer consent.

Combined, it is one of the highest financial penalties in years against Bank of America, which has largely spent the last 15 years trying to clean up its reputation and market itself to the public as a bank focused on financial health and not on overdraft fee income and financial trickery.

BofA must refund \$100 million to customers, pay \$90 million in penalties to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and \$60 million to the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency. "Bank of America wrongfully withheld credit card rewards, double-dipped on fees, and opened accounts without consent," said CFPB Director Rohit Chopra, in a statement. "These practices are illegal and undermine customer trust."

Mandate

Empowered by a broad mandate from the White House, Chopra and the bureau have focused heavily in the past year on the issue of "junk fees" - fees charged to Americans that are often seen as unnecessary or exploitative by banks, debt collectors, airlines and concert venues. Banks such as BofA, JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo and others have been a target for the bureau under the Biden administration.

Part of the fines and penalties come because Bank of America had a policy of charging customers \$35 after the bank declined a transaction because the customer did not have enough funds in their account, the CFPB said. The agency determined that the bank double-dipped by allowing fees to be repeatedly charged for the same transaction.

The fees often came when customers had routine monthly transactions, like a gym membership. If a customer had too low of a

balance to cover the transaction, it would be declined and BofA would charge the customer a \$35 fee. The business, who hasn't been paid, often would recharge the customer's account, resulting in another \$35 non-sufficient funds fee.

The bank ended this practice last year, but will still have to repay customers who got charged before the policy was changed.

Overdraft

BofA has been cutting down on its reliance on overdraft fee revenue for more than a decade, and cut how much it charges customers for an overdraft to \$15 last year. Brian Moynihan, the bank's CEO and chairman, told The Associated Press in 2022 that under these new policies, overdraft fee income was down 90% from 2021. The bank said that it voluntarily reduced overdraft fees and eliminated all non-sufficient fund fees in the first half of last year.

Bank of America also offered people cash rewards and bonus points when signing up for a card, but the CFPB said the bank illegally withheld promised credit card account bonuses.

The CFPB also found that, since at least 2012, Bank of America employees illegally applied for and enrolled consumers in credit card accounts without their knowledge or authorization. It is a similar to, but smaller than, a charge that was made against Wells Fargo, which paid billions in fines after it was determined that the San Francisco bank opened millions of unauthorized bank accounts in order to meet unrealistic sales goals.

In 2014 the CFPB ordered Bank of America to pay \$727 million for illegal credit card practices. Last year it was ordered to pay a \$10 million civil penalty over unlawful garnishments. Also in 2022, the CFPB and OCC fined Bank of America \$225 million and required it to pay hundreds of millions of dollars in redress to consumers for botched disbursement of state unemployment benefits at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.



A customer uses an ATM at a Bank of America location in San Francisco, Monday, April 24, 2023. Bank of America is being ordered to pay more than \$100 million to customers for double-dipping on some fees imposed on customers, withholding reward bonuses explicitly promised to credit card customers, and misappropriating sensitive personal information to open accounts without customer knowledge or authorization. (AP)

US probes complaints that Ford Escape doors can open while being driven

DEARBORN, Mich., July 12, (AP) - U.S. auto safety regulators are investigating complaints that the doors on some Ford Escapes can open while the SUVs are being driven.

The investigation by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration covers 346,000 Escapes from the 2020 and 2021 model years.

The agency says in documents posted Tuesday on its website that it has 118 complaints that spot welds in a door assembly bracket can fail. Investigators contacted some of the owners and found 25 reports of minor injuries.

Many reported a popping noise when they opened the door as a bracket begins to separate. The agency

says continued use could dislodge the door, and it could fail to latch when closed.

Ford says it's working with the agency to support the investigation.

NHTSA says the probe will determine whether the problem creates an unreasonable risk to highway safety. The agency could seek a recall.

ABK announces winner of Alfouz Weekly Draw Prize of KD 10,000

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced Bader Al Sayed Hashem Al Reafee as the KD 10,000 Alfouz weekly winner on Monday, 10 July 2023, whereby the draw was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Since its launch, the Alfouz account continues to offer an impressive weekly draw of KD 10,000.

The Bank has recently expanded its offering by adding a new allur-

ing monthly draw of KD 20,000 and an exceptional quarterly draw of KD 100,000.

The account also retains its hallmark mega annual draw of a KD 5,000 monthly salary for ten years. Furthermore, the Bank now offers customers an increased opportunity to win for every KD 10 as opposed to KD 100 previously.

ABK encourages everyone to open an Alfouz draw account and/or in-

crease their balances to have more chances in winning in the upcoming weekly draw, which will take place on Monday, 17 July 2023. The higher the deposits are, the higher the chances to win.

For more information about ABK, please follow the Bank's Instagram account @abk_kuwait, visit eahli.com, contact Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit one of the Bank's branches across Kuwait.



AlFouz weekly draw prize winner

NWTN signs MoU with Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development to promote the Auto Industry in the Emirate

DUBAI, July 12, (PRNewswire): NWTN Inc., an eco-conscious mobility technology company bringing passenger-centric green premium mobility solutions to the world, today announced that NWTN Technologies Industries - Sole Proprietorship LLC., NWTN's wholly-owned subsidiary, signed a non-binding memorandum of understanding ("MOU") with the Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development ("DED") to enhance cooperation and contribute to the development of the automotive industry in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Under the terms of the MOU, NWTN has agreed to establish and construct an integrated production line, as well as to expand its factory in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi in adherence to the highest international standards. The MOU also entails mutual cooperation between the parties to expedite the advancement of the modern automobile industry and transportation in Abu Dhabi, in alignment with the goals set forth in the Industrial Vision 2031. Furthermore, the MOU aims to foster an innovative community that actively contributes to automotive technology trends, while strengthening collaboration in the green economy and environmental sectors.

Within the framework of the MOU, the DED has committed to cooperation and coordination in order to devise a streamlined work system that simplifies, facilitates, and enhances the necessary procedures for NWTN to obtain industrial licenses. The DED will ensure that these procedures adhere to the required technical, organizational, and procedural standards.

The DED has agreed to promote and support the integration of Emirati nationals into the workforce of NWTN and NWTN has agreed to provide necessary training and professional development opportunities to the Emirati candidates.

Eng. Arafat Al Yafei, Executive Director of Industrial Development Bureau of the DED, said: "This MOU with NWTN is part of our efforts to enhance Abu Dhabi's competitiveness, equip talent with necessary skills, and develop automotive and transportation industry in line with the ob-

jectives of the Abu Dhabi industrial strategy. As talent development is a top priority for us, we are pleased to collaborate with NWTN to train and create new opportunities for Emirati talent and to drive innovation in the industrial sector. We believe this step will help in attracting new quality investments to benefit from growth opportunities in Abu Dhabi's manufacturing sector."

Paul Lin, President of Automotive at NWTN commented, "We are excited about the prospects of expanding our operations in Abu Dhabi and contributing to the growth of the auto industry. This partnership aligns with our commitment to both local talent development and technological advancement."

The MOU is valid for an initial period of two years, with the option to renew upon mutual agreement between the parties.

About NWTN

NWTN is a pioneering green energy company dedicated to providing passenger-focused, premium electric vehicle products and green energy solutions to customers worldwide.

Headquartered in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), NWTN has a full vehicle assembly facility in Abu Dhabi and a supply chain manufacturing base in Jinhua, China.

NWTN is committed to the future of mobility solutions that integrate pioneering design, personalized lifestyles, Internet of Everything (IoT), autonomous driving technology and the eco-system of green energy.

In addition to the offering of new energy vehicles, NWTN is exploring opportunities in the entire clean energy value chain, including photovoltaics, green hydrogen power and energy storage in the UAE, the Middle East, North Africa, China, other Asian countries, and Europe.

For further information, please visit: <https://www.nwtnmotors.com>.

Forward-looking statements

This press release may contain forward-looking statements with-

in the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. Such forward-looking statements are characterized by future or conditional verbs such as "may," "will," "expect," "intend," "anticipate," "believe," "estimate" and "continue" or similar words. You should read statements that contain these words carefully because they discuss future expectations and plans, which contain projections of future results of operations or financial condition or state other forward-looking information.

Forward-looking statements are predictions, projections and other statements about future events that are based on current expectations and assumptions and, as a result, are subject to risks and uncertainties. Actual results (including, without limitation, with respect to the expected benefits from the collaboration with DED as provided under the MOU, the construction of production lines and factory expansion in Abu Dhabi, and anticipated results of integration of Emirati nationals into the workforce of NWTN) may differ significantly from those set forth or implied in the forward-looking statements. Many factors could cause actual future events to differ materially from the forward-looking statements in this press release, including but not limited to the risk factors contained in NWTN's filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, which are available for review at www.sec.gov. Forward-looking statements speak only as of the date they are made. New risks and uncertainties arise over time, and it is not possible for NWTN to predict those events or how they may affect NWTN. If a change to the events and circumstances reflected in NWTN's forward-looking statements occurs, NWTN's business, financial condition and operating results may vary materially from those expressed in NWTN's forward-looking statements.

Readers are cautioned not to put undue reliance on forward-looking statements, and NWTN assumes no obligation and does not intend to update or revise these forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

Challenges remain

Iraq moves toward 'easing' energy crisis with \$27b TotalEnergies deal

BAGHDAD, July 12, (AP): A multi-billion-dollar agreement signed with France's TotalEnergies could help resolve Iraq's longstanding electricity crisis, attract international investors and reduce its reliance on gas imports from neighboring Iran, a point of tension with Washington.

The \$27 billion agreement signed in Baghdad on Monday after years of negotiation marks the largest foreign investment in Iraq's history. It could even help combat climate change by reducing oil flares, and relieve some of the stress on Iraq's dwindling waterways through a new desalination plant.

But that's only if the parties implementing the agreement can overcome the endemic corruption and political instability that has undermined Iraq's oil sector for more than two decades.

The Gas Growth Integrated Project focuses on bolstering the country's oil-rich but underdeveloped Basra province. TotalEnergies would take on a 45% stake in the Basra Oil Company, with Iraq holding 30% and Qatar's state-owned petroleum company taking the other 25%.

It would recover natural gas from three oil fields and use it to generate electricity. Because Iraq lacks the necessary infrastructure, that gas is currently being burned off into the atmosphere. The World Bank estimates Iraq flares around 16 billion cubic meters of gas per day.

The project also includes the construction of a seawater treatment plant that would relieve the pressure on Iraq's water resources, and a solar power plant to be built with Saudi Arabia's ACWA Power that would supply the local grid.

Iraq is an OPEC member with some of the world's largest oil reserves. But its electricity grid has suffered from decades of mismanagement and damage from various conflicts. Power outages are common, especially in the scorching summer months, forcing many Iraqis to rely on diesel generators or suffer through temperatures that exceed 50 degrees Celsius (122 degrees Fahrenheit).

Iraq also relies heavily on gas imports from Iran, with which it has had close ties since the 2003 U.S.-led invasion. The U.S. has been forced to grant some exceptions to the sanctions it maintains on Iran over that country's disputed nuclear program. Budgetary shortfalls and surging demand have meanwhile forced Iran to reduce the supply in recent years, com-

pounding Iraq's woes and fueling violent protests.

Iraq's energy problems stem from its troubled politics.

The power-sharing arrangement set up in the wake of the U.S.-led invasion divides the state and its institutions along religious and ethnic lines. Sectarian-based political parties bicker over ministries, install loyalists at top positions and dispense public sector jobs to their supporters. The system breeds widespread corruption, inefficiency and political gridlock.

ExxonMobil, which saw a similar multi-project deal fall through after years of negotiations, announced in 2021 that it would be selling its shares from the West Qurna 1 oil field. London-based BP is spinning off development of the Rumaila field, Iraq's largest.

Iraq signed an initial contract with TotalEnergies in 2021, but political disputes delayed the final signing for another two years.

TotalEnergies CEO Patrick Pouyanné nevertheless struck an upbeat tone at the signing ceremony, saying the agreement would boost Iraq's economy and create jobs, with Iraqis making up at least 80% of the project's workforce.

"It's a very strong signal, not only to TotalEnergies to encourage to invest, but also to all other foreign investment," he said in a statement. The company did not respond to several requests for additional comment.

The state-run Iraqi News Agency said work would begin "in a matter of days," with the Oil Ministry expecting tangible results in three years.

Oil Ministry spokesman Assim Jihad said the ministry has been trying to launch such projects for over a decade but was held back by political gridlock, the COVID-19 pandemic and the war against the Islamic State extremist group, which at one point controlled much of northern and western Iraq.

"Now there is political will to speed up implementing these kinds of projects," he said.

Bachar El-Halabi, an energy markets analyst at London-based Argus, says the megaproject "gives the country a breather" after recent years saw some oil majors pull out of Iraq.

"This should, in theory, help decrease Iraq's dependency on Iranian gas imports, which remains a sticky point between Baghdad and Washington," he said.

Egypt announces deals to sell \$1.9 bn in state assets in its privatization push

CAIRO, July 12, (AP): The Egyptian government said Tuesday that it had inked a series of deals to sell off \$1.9 billion worth of stakes in state-owned companies, in a move that promises to bolster Egypt's ailing private sector.

Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly said in a televised news conference that the government received \$1.65 billion and the equivalent of \$250 million in Egyptian pounds in the sales. Madbouly said the sales included an unspecified amount of shares in the country's large state-owned communications company, Telecom Egypt.

Among the other sales outlined in Tuesday's presser was a deal to sell off stakes from 25% to 30% in the chemicals company Elab, petrochemicals firm Ethdyco, and petroleum firm Egyptian Drilling Company to the Abu

Dhabi Development Holding Co. for \$800 million, according to Planning Minister Hala el-Said.

Neither minister specified how many state companies were involved in the \$1.9 billion worth of sales or when the agreements were reached.

The move is part of a major privatization reform to sell stakes in at least 32 state-owned companies, from petrochemical firms to major banks, in a bid to downsize Egypt's public sector. The plan was first unveiled in January.

The program is a key goal of a \$3 billion bailout package that Egypt secured from the International Monetary Fund in December to help the cash-strapped North African economy weather recent shocks to the global economy, including the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war in Ukraine.

Address Hotels and Resorts announces opening of Address Jabal Omar Makkah

A spiritual haven in the heart of Holy City unveiled

MAKKAH, Saudi Arabia, July 12, (Business Wire): Address Hotels and Resorts is thrilled to announce the opening of its latest architectural and hospitality masterpiece, Address Jabal Omar Makkah, in the holy city of Makkah, Saudi Arabia. Nestled in the iconic Jabal Omar development, this landmark property offers a truly unforgettable experience for pilgrims and travellers alike.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20230711493267/en/>

Panoramic Kaaba view from Address Jabal Omar Makkah (Photo: AETOSWire)

The largest hotel within the Address Hotels and Resorts portfolio, Address Jabal Omar Makkah boasts an impressive 1,484 rooms and suites. With its striking architectural design, a seamless fusion of ancient Arabian charm and contemporary opulence, the hotel is the tallest building in Jabal Omar and is a breathtaking sight.

One standout feature of Address Jabal Omar Makkah is its proximity to the sacred Holy Kaaba and Al Masjid Al Haram, along with the Makkah Museum, Masjid Al Jinn, Jamnat al-Mu'alla Cemetery, and the iconic Abraj Al Bait Towers. Designed by the world-renowned architects Foster & Partners, the towers of Address Jabal Omar Makkah span over 5,000 sqm and the development includes a commercial area featuring a diverse range of shops, showcasing local, regional, and international brands.

Address Jabal Omar Makkah offers a range of exquisitely designed accommodations to suit every traveller's needs. From luxurious Deluxe Rooms, which provide splendid views of the Holy Kaaba or the Holy City, to indulgent Suites and the magnificent three-bedroom Presidential Suite and four-bedroom Penthouse, guests can immerse themselves in comfort and elegance.

With four restaurants, two lobby lounges, and two club lounges, guests can also savour a wide range of delectable cuisines. The hotel's signature dining venue offers traditional Hejazi cuisine and other Saudi Arabian specialties, where live cooking stations showcase international flavours alongside time-honoured delicacies.

The spa and wellness offerings, including the first-ever Foot Spa by Address Hotels and Resorts, at the hotel are designed to provide guests with a truly holistic experience. With a complimentary Fitness Centre, equipped with the latest Technogym equipment on hand as well, guests can maintain their well-being during their stay.

Address Jabal Omar Makkah is also a premier destination for conferences



A photo from the event.

KFH keen on 'sponsoring' graduates in the Engineering Design Exhibition

KUWAIT CITY, July 12: As part of its ongoing support of youth, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has sponsored the graduation projects of College of Engineering and Petroleum students in the 44th Engineering Design Exhibition at the Cultural Center of Sabah Al Salem University City, which was held under the patronage of the Prime Minister His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

The winning projects were announced during the closing ceremony in the presence of His Excellency Minister of Education, Dr. Hamad Al-Adwani, representing His Highness the Prime Minister, and in the presence of Her Excellency the Minister of Public Works, Dr Amani Bugammar, in addition to a number of officials and participants.

KFH Group Deputy General Manager Public Relations and Media, Yousef Al-Ruwaieh stated that KFH has sponsored over 50 projects participating in the exhibition and more than 100 graduation projects during the academic year.

He stressed KFH's commitment to encourage scientific initiatives of Ku-

waiti youth which contributes to creating ideas that enrich the economy, adding that achieving development and economic integration can be attained only through a fruitful social and scientific environment by providing the necessary support for the development of scientific capabilities.

Al-Ruwaieh pointed out that KFH has also organized a special ceremony for the Environmental Sustainability Award to recognize the top three projects focusing on sustainability and environmental issues, noting that the award which the Bank has allocated for the second consecutive time, is an extension of its integrated sustainability strategy and part of (Keep it Green) campaign.

He stated that KFH's annual sponsorship for the Engineering Design Exhibition reflects its social commitment towards the community, its comprehensive social responsibility and sustainability strategy, as well as its active collaboration with different academic and educational institutions.

He went on to say that KFH takes pride in supporting hundreds of engineering projects, stressing the Bank's

keenness to encourage all scientific projects and innovations of Kuwaiti youth in general, and students of College of Engineering and Petroleum in particular.

Further, he expressed KFH's confidence in the capabilities of Kuwaiti youth and their projects that contribute to finding innovative solutions to overcome challenges in the work environment and contribute to construction, development projects.

It is worth noting that KFH has recently participated in the orientation session organized by the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University, in which the Bank sponsors 50 graduation projects from various engineering disciplines. During the extended partnership with Kuwait University, the total number of projects sponsored by KFH each year amounts to over 100 covering nearly 400 students.

Meanwhile, officials and participating students from College of Engineering and Petroleum expressed their sincere gratitude and appreciation for KFH's continuous support of students and youth.

and events. Whatever the occasion, the hotel's unparalleled settings and services help create cherished moments. The property's multifunctional meeting spaces are designed to cater to events of any scale. The hotel's creative chefs curate menus tailored to individual preferences, ensuring a flawless and memorable event.

"We are delighted to announce the opening of Address Jabal Omar

Makkah. Its prime location makes it the preferred choice for those seeking to deepen their spiritual connection. With spacious rooms and suites, multiple dining options, and state-of-the-art prayer facilities, the hotel offers all the amenities necessary for a meaningful and unforgettable pilgrimage experience. Whether guests are here for Hajj, Umrah, or to enhance their spiritual connection,

Address Jabal Omar Makkah Hotel is the optimal starting point for their journey."

The hotel is proud to be a part of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which aims to transform the country's tourism landscape.

To reserve with a 15% discount, click the link, visit our website, or email stay@makkah@addresshotels.com or call +966-0125531444.



A flyer of AUB campaign.

AUB continues its electronic waste recycling efforts

As part of its incessant CSR efforts to reduce electronic waste, Ahli United Bank continues its community role in e-waste recycling. In this endeavor, AUB encourage collecting e-waste and converting it into useful and environment friendly products. This initiative comes in collaboration with Enviroserve that specializes in recycling and managing e-waste according to the best environmental practices. In this context, AUB collected a new batch of end-of-life electronic devices and delivered them to Enviroserve for recycling. Enviroserve in turn, recycles and disposes of this e-waste safely according to the

best environmentally friendly practices. Regarding this initiative which the Bank is proud of its success and continuity, Mrs. Faten Al-Tamimi; Head of corporate Communication at AUB said in a press release: Securing a green and healthy environment is a main pillar of AUB's CSR program. She highlighted that the e-waste recycling program in partnership with Enviroserve aims to contribute to preserving the safety and protection of the environment. It also targets to provide awareness of the best practices used in the disposal of electronic waste.

Al-Tamimi warned of the aggravation of e-waste problem and its danger to human health and the environment if dealt with irresponsibly and dispose it in trash. Al-Tamimi explained that e-waste is hazardous because of the toxic, dangerous and flammable chemicals it contains. Moreover, there is a concern that its danger may extend to the soil and groundwater. Especially in light of the increasing number of electronic devices in the world that reach the end of their useful life annually. This requires concerted efforts to reduce the hazards of e-waste resulting from the disposal of these devices.

The Conversation

Over 1,000 companies said they will divest

Liberal CEOs were more likely to exit Russia following its invasion than more conservative corporate leaders

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

By Yannick Thams, Florida Atlantic University and Luis Alfonso Dau, Northeastern University

The Research Brief is a short take about interesting academic work. Companies led by liberal-leaning CEOs were more likely to leave Russia following its invasion of Ukraine in 2022 than those helmed by conservatives, according to our new study. We measured their political leanings based on how much they donated to the two main U.S. political parties over five recent federal election cycles.

versus Republicans. We then looked at how the companies responded during the war's first 40 days, relying on the Yale database, with a focus on whether they chose to abandon Russia or not.

A tad over 30% of companies in our sample chose to leave Russia at the onset of the conflict, while 39% suspended their operations at least temporarily and another 8% scaled back their investments. On the other hand, 14% put new projects on hold but carried on existing operations, and 8% carried on business as normal.

Overall, we found that companies with more liberal CEOs - including ride-hailing app Uber, vacation rental company Airbnb and computer maker Apple - were more likely to either leave or suspend their operations. Conservative-led businesses, such as hotel chain Hilton and consumer goods company Procter & Gamble, tended to be the ones that maintained business as usual or did little more than pause new investments.

We didn't track corporate actions after the first 40 days, but we do know that some of these companies continue to do business in Russia - despite pressure to cease operations. We also considered 18 other variables that may have had some impact on a company's decision to stay or go, such as their industry, size and board composition. We found that although CEO ideology had one of the strongest impacts on the decision, some other factors mattered more, such as industry.

Companies have traditionally made most business decisions - including whether or not to abandon an entire

market - by gauging economic or financial factors. And they've tended to stay out of politics to avoid alienating their customers.

In recent years, corporate CEOs have become more willing to disclose their ideological position on controversial social issues. And increasingly, political ideology of the CEO has become another key factor driving business decisions, as our own research confirms.

Because the U.S. appears increasingly polarized along a conservative-liberal axis, it's important to be aware of how corporate leaders' personal politics are affecting their decisions. And that creates the possibility that such decisions are informed by ideological biases rather than purely objective economic data.

The costs of these choices are high, as some companies said they lost billions of dollars in revenue because of their decision to leave the Russian market.

A big question remains over what this means for the role of corporations in society.

On the one hand, corporations have long been expected to put the interests of shareholders - and their profits - above pretty much everything else. On the other, there's growing evidence that companies are taking a much broader perspective on the purpose of the corporation, notably expressed in a 2019 pledge by 131 companies to "promote an economy that serves all Americans."

Liberal CEOs are more likely to take on that broader perspective than conservative executives, who still tend to put a greater emphasis on shareholder wealth.

Semi-annual Al-Danah Millionaire draw

Gulf Bank to announce the 20th millionaire

KUWAIT CITY, July 12: As part of its keenness to reward its customers, and to encourage a culture of saving in society, Gulf Bank will be announcing the 20th millionaire in the semi-annual Al-Danah Millionaire draw today, July 13, 2023.

The draw will be held at the Avenues Mall in the presence of representatives from both the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and Ernst & Young, which will also be broadcasted live across GulfBank's various communication channels.

The AlDanah account is one of the most rewarding savings accounts in Kuwait, with periodic draws that award account holders with valuable prizes and multiple benefits. Gulf Bank's AlDanah account offers 10 lucky winners an opportunity to win KD 1,000 on monthly basis, in addition to two quarterly draw prizes of KD 100,000 each, a semi-annual draw prize of KD 1 Million, and a grand draw prize of KD 2 Million.

In celebration of the AlDanah account's 25th anniversary, Gulf Bank has recently announced an increase in the annual grand prize value of the Al Danah account - increasing the value from KD 1.5 million, to KD 2 million - making it the world's largest cash prize linked to a bank account.

To enter the upcoming draws, Gulf Bank customers can open an AlDanah account at any given time, and in order to increase their chances of winning, account holders must either maintain the minimum deposit amount of KD 200 or increase their AlDanah savings. Hence, the higher the balance in an account, the more chances of winning. Additionally, opening an AlDanah account is now easier than ever - with customers having the option to open an account through Gulf Bank's Online and Mobile Banking services.

The Al Danah Millionaire account is one of the oldest and most prestigious savings accounts in Kuwait and was



AlDanah - PR banner - Avenues Announcement

designed to encourage a culture of savings in society, and reward customers for their commitment to saving on a regular basis. Therefore, Gulf Bank encourages everyone to open an AlDanah Millionaire account to start saving and to enjoy the multitude of benefits the account has to offer.

Amongst the many advantages enjoyed by Al Danah Millionaire account, is that it is the only account that rewards customers for their loyalty, by providing loyalty chances. The loyalty chances are the total chances gained in the previous year, which are then transferred to the current year. This means that all chances gained by existing AlDanah clients in 2022 (from January 1 to December 31, 2022), have been transferred and added into 2023 AlDanah draws (Terms and Conditions apply).

The AlDanah account provides a multitude of valuable services to its customers, including access to an exclusive AlDanah ATM card, that is ideal for depositing money into their accounts, any time. Account holders can also calculate their chances of winning the monthly, quarterly, and annual draws using the AlDanah calculator, which is available on Gulf Bank's Online website and Mobile Application.

Customers can visit one of Gulf Bank's branches or transfer directly through Gulf Bank's Online or Mobile Banking services. They can also direct their queries via WhatsApp on 1805805 for round-the-clock assistance from Gulf Bank representatives or call the Customer Contact Center on the same number. Moreover, customers can visit the dedicated AlDanah account website to learn more about the account and its winners.

China-based hackers have breached govt, individual email accounts, Microsoft says

Investigation is ongoing: US National Security Adviser

HONG KONG, July 12, (AP): China called a Microsoft report that a China-based hacking group breached government-linked email accounts "disinformation," saying Wednesday that the accusation was meant to divert attention from U.S. cyber activities.

In a blog post published Tuesday, Microsoft said the group, which it identified as Storm-0558, gained access to email accounts linked to 25 organizations, including Western European government agencies. The breach was detected weeks later when customers complained to Microsoft about abnormal mail activity.

"We assess this adversary is focused on espionage, such as gaining access to email systems for intelligence collection," Charlie Bell, Microsoft's executive vice president of security, said in a separate Microsoft post.

A Washington Post report cited a statement from U.S. officials claiming Storm-0558 also breached unclassified email accounts linked to the U.S. government. A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman, Wang Wenbin, said the accusation was "disinformation" aimed at diverting attention from U.S. cyberattacks on China.

"No matter which agency issued this information, it will never change the fact that the United States is the world's largest hacker empire conducting the most cyber theft," Wang said in a routine briefing.

"Since last year, the cybersecurity organizations of China and other countries have issued many reports exposing the cyberattacks on China by the U.S. Government over a long period of time, but the U.S. has not made a response so far," he said.

US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan, who is at the NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, where President Biden is, told ABC's "Good Morning America" that the investigation is ongoing.

"We detected it fairly rapidly and we were able to prevent further breaches," Sullivan said. "The matter is still being investigated, so I have to leave it there because we're gathering further information in consultation with Microsoft and we will continue to appraise the public as we learn more."

The Storm-0558 hackers used forged authentication tokens - pieces of information used to verify the identity of a user - required to access the email accounts, Microsoft said. It said it has dealt with the attack and



A presenter talks about Microsoft in the Information Age during the World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai, Thursday, July 6, 2023. A China-based hacking group has breached email accounts linked to government agencies in Western Europe, Microsoft Corp. said in a blog post published Tuesday, July 11. (AP)

'Companies share a commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions'

ESAB Corporation enters partnership with GRI

NORTH BETHESDA, Md., July 12, (AP): ESAB Corporation, a world leader in connected fabrication technology and gas control solutions, and GRI Renewable Industries, a global leading manufacturer of wind turbine components, have entered a new partnership to collaborate on green projects in support of their mutual commitment to running sustainable businesses. The partnership will leverage each company's expertise in the fabrication and wind power industries to drive initiatives such as the transition to green energy and the reduction of each company's environmental footprint.

ESAB Corporation announced it has entered a new partnership with GRI Renewable Industries, a global leading manufacturer of wind turbine components. The two companies will collaborate on green projects in support

of their mutual commitment to running sustainable businesses, including the transition to green energy and the reduction of each company's environmental footprint.

"ESAB is thrilled to build on our relationship with GRI, one of our long-standing customers, to develop and implement innovative solutions that will decrease our environmental impact," said Shyam P. Kambeyanda, President and CEO, ESAB Corporation. "Our two companies share a commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and creating eco-friendly products that make our world a better place to live, which aligns with ESAB's purpose of

Antonio Barbosa, CEO at GRI Renewable Energy Industries, said: "The renewable energy sector is a pillar in the decarbonization of the economy,

and GRI Renewable Industries, as a committed player in this sector, considers the value chain greenhouse gas emission reduction in the wind energy sector as a key element in the company strategy and purpose. This partnering agreement with ESAB will enable us to develop processes and products together."

Founded in 1904, ESAB Corporation (NYSE: ESAB) is a world leader in connected fabrication technology and gas control solutions. Its rich history of innovative products, workflow solutions, and business system (EBX) allows the company to realize its purpose of Shaping the world we imagine. ESAB Corporation is based in North Bethesda, Maryland and employs approximately 9,000 associates, and serves customers in approximately 150 countries. To learn more, visit

impacted affected customers.

Microsoft said it is working with the Department of Homeland Security and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, among others, to guard against such attacks. It also said it would continue to monitor Storm-

0558's activities.

Last month, Google-owned cybersecurity firm Mandiant said suspected state-backed Chinese hackers broke into the networks of hundreds of public and private sector organizations globally by using a security hole in a popular email security tool.

Earlier this year, Microsoft said state-backed Chinese hackers were targeting U.S. critical infrastructure and could be laying the technical groundwork to disrupt critical communications between the U.S. and Asia during future crises.

'Innovative spirit part of our culture'

New NTT joint venture to 'advance' sustainable food security worldwide

TOKYO, July 12, (AP): NTT Corporation President and CEO Akira Shimada, formally launched NTT Green & Food Corporation, a company using artificial intelligence, IoT and other information communications technologies to develop more efficient and sustainable food production systems. Through the creation and implementation of carbon dioxide conversion processes, the new organization, a joint venture with Regional Fish Institute, initially aims to solve future food shortages while mitigating negative environmental impacts associated with onshore seafood production.

The newly launched NTT Green & Food Corp., in collaboration with @regionalfish, aims to create more sustainable food production systems - and help overcome food shortages - with the latest #AI and #IoT technologies. #TechForGood

The commercialization of NTT Green & Food's carbon dioxide conversion system is divided into three processes:

Algae use carbon dioxide through photosynthesis while they grow. By utilizing NTT technologies including algae breeding technology - mass cultivation technology that adjusts to achieve the optimal temperature, humidity, nutrients and light intensity for algae production - it is possible to engineer the algae to store more carbon dioxide in their bodies than usual while also activating photosynthesis and increasing the growth rate of the plants.

Algae, which contain DHA and EPA, are used as food for fish and shellfish, as well as an agricultural fertilizer due to their high nutritional value. NTT Green & Food will initially provide algae to aquaculture operators and farmers facing soaring feed and fertilizer costs due to recent price surges in raw materials.

By utilizing the algae developed in Process A as a food fish source, NTT Green & Food aims to increase the growth rate for regional fish. In addition, by utilizing breeding-improvement technology in land-based aquaculture facilities, NTT Green & Food can reduce the impact of natural disasters, parasites such as Anisakis and the risk of infec-

tious diseases on production. Furthermore, recycling breeding water containing excrement from fish and shellfish as nutrients for algae will minimize water waste. The seafood produced from this project will be provided to distributors, wholesalers and processors.

Finally, the company will develop a holistic, land-based aquaculture system to produce the consumables outlined in processes A and B. This system will consist of three plants: a plant that produces fish and shellfish, a plant that produces the algae to feed them and a water purification plant that purifies fish and shellfish excrement.

Full commercialization would include sales of the system to third parties through NTT Corporation and its operating companies.

By collaborating with local companies in production, processing and sales, the NTT Green & Food aims to create jobs, promote local industries and contribute to the development of sustainable local communities by providing educational opportunities for cutting-edge aquaculture and environmental protection technologies. In addition to reducing the impact on the natural environment, it will also reduce the risk of parasites and infectious diseases, thereby enabling safe, secure and high-value-added seafood production.

NTT believes in resolving social issues through "our business operations by applying technology for good. An innovative spirit has been part of our culture for over 150 years, making breakthroughs that enable a more naturally connected and sustainable world. NTT Research and Development shares insights, innovations and knowledge with NTT operating companies and partners to support new ideas and solutions. Around the world, our research laboratories focus on artificial intelligence, photonic networks, theoretical quantum physics, cryptography, health and medical informatics, smart data platforms and digital twin computing. As a top-five global technology and business solutions provider, our diverse teams deliver services to over 190 countries and regions."

UK banks are resilient enough to offer households support: Bank of England

LONDON, July 12, (AP): The Bank of England warned Wednesday that U.K. households are facing mounting financial difficulties from the sharp increase in interest rates but expressed hope that the country's biggest banks are resilient enough to offer more help than they could before the global financial crisis 15 years ago.

In its half-yearly financial assessment, the central bank said British households are facing higher debt burdens because of rising interest rates, particularly people whose fixed-rate mortgage deals have come to an end or

soon will. However, the Bank of England said several factors should limit the number of people who default on their mortgages. It noted, for example, that U.K. banks have more capital and are carrying far less debt than they did 15 years ago, allowing them to offer struggling households more financial options. That includes permitting borrowers to vary the terms of their loans.

The average household also is carrying less debt than then during the financial crisis, the central bank added.

NerdWallet

Be prepared for add-on fees

Behavioral economics can help you save on airfare

By Sam Kemmis
NerdWallet

It's not just you: Shopping for airfare is harder than ever. Choosing between basic economy and regular economy fares and navigating add-on fees makes booking more complicated, and that's no accident. Airlines are harnessing lessons from a still-emerging academic field known as behavioral economics to nudge customers into spending more.

"Behavioral economics was developed by incorporating ideas from psychology into standard economic theories," says Cait Lambertson, a professor of marketing at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. "If you see a deal that is available for only a short amount of time, and you pay more than you usually would, standard economics would say you've made an irrational decision. Behavioral economics says that no, what your brain is doing is

responding to scarcity."

These seemingly irrational choices are called "biases," many of which can affect how we shop. For example, "loss aversion" makes us hypersensitive to losing money and more likely to buy something like trip protection. The "decoy effect" makes us more likely to choose between two suboptimal options when a third, even worse option is presented. For example, airlines may offer a decoy like an expensive premium ticket with fewer amenities, which may make the cheaper premium ticket with more benefits look more appealing.

Airlines are well aware of these tendencies and how they drive our decisions. So to save money on flights, customers need to understand how the airfare shopping experience has been engineered to exploit our biases.

Don't buy

Airlines will use a technique called "social proof" to upsell certain prod-

ucts, such as trip protection, by suggesting that many other travelers are adding it to their itineraries. Yet these marketing tactics don't offer much real-world value for consumers, according to experts.

Lamberton explains that those messages during the checkout process, like the number of people who have insured their trip today, shouldn't sway your decision to purchase because they often lack context. "Is that a lot of people or a few people?," she says.

Be prepared

Another bias that should ring true for anyone trying to buy an airline ticket: "decision fatigue." That is, we tend to make worse decisions when we have to make several of them in a row.

This airline or that? Early flight or later? Pay for a window seat? Pay now for a checked bag? Upgrade to premium economy? With each decision, our ability to make ideal choices

diminishes.

"Once I'm four or five clicks into purchasing this, the price has changed completely," Lambertson says, suggesting that airlines will withhold information until later in the process, when consumers are less likely to start over.

Indeed, a 2020 study published in Marketing Science found that customers made suboptimal decisions when prices were "dripped" throughout the checkout process, largely because of their unwillingness to start over.

Overcoming decision fatigue isn't easy. Realizing a flight is more expensive than you imagined and then starting over takes time and energy, so consider booking flights at a time when you're not in a rush and you can spend more time doing comparison shopping.

"If you want to overcome these biases, you will have to slow down and give yourself the space to pay at-

tention to these things," Lambertson suggests.

Know your preferences

Budget airlines like Spirit and Frontier offer rock-bottom fares while charging more for basic add-ons like carry-on bags and seat selection. Skipping the extra fees means forgoing amenities that many travelers consider vital.

The trick is to determine ahead of time what you really need. Otherwise, you could get swayed by the upsell.

"My doctoral advisor gave me a great piece of advice: Know your own utility function," Lambertson says, referencing an economic term for the satisfaction you gain from a certain product. "You have to know what actually matters to you."

For example, travelers with small children may be more willing to pay for seat selection to ensure the family sits together. For solo travelers, pay-

ing \$15 to select a seat might not be worth it.

The same holds for basics like when to fly. An early flight might be cheaper, but how much is a few more hours' sleep worth? The answer will vary from person to person, and even then, there are unconscious behaviors preventing us from making the best decision.

"We don't know what we're going to prefer in the future - we're terrible forecasters," Lambertson says. "I always think, 'I won't mind taking that 4:30 a.m. flight.' But of course I do."

As a general rule, if an airline seems to be pushing an option - whether it's upgrading your seat or adding a bundle of benefits - go back to your original preferences. Do you need it?

If you take the time to evaluate your own biases and the airline's incentives, you might realize you don't need to pay as much to travel. (AP)

Vehicles provide distinct qualities

5 hidden automotive gems with X factor overlooked by buyers

By Michael Cantu
Edmunds

In the new car market, there exist some hidden gems - excellent vehicles with a lot to offer that are overlooked by many shoppers. These vehicles provide a distinct combination of qualities that make them an attractive choice. They may be underappreciated because of branding misconceptions or vehicle type or overshadowed by popular models, but they can potentially please savvy shoppers who want to stand out from the usual mainstream choices. Edmunds explores five of these hidden gems, shedding light on the X factor that makes them special. We list our choices by price and include destination.

Mazda 3 hatchback

Mazda's compact 3 isn't a top seller, but it offers a trio of qualities that most small cars don't: distinctive styling, a refined interior and a pleasing driving experience. Its somewhat high price tag is one reason for its low sales, but we think you're truly getting your money's worth here.

The Mazda 3's base engine makes a respectable 191 horsepower, and there's an optional turbocharged unit that churns out to 250 horsepower. This turbo engine comes standard with weather-beating all-wheel drive, too. Pick the hatchback version of the 3 and you also get a helpful amount of practicality to go along with this car's style and personality.

Starting hatchback price: \$26,855

Hyundai Santa Cruz

Many people are unaware that Hyundai produces a truck, even though the Santa Cruz has been on the market for over a year and competes with the Ford Maverick, the only other compact truck. The Santa Cruz is more of a lifestyle vehicle than a true pickup truck because it's essentially an SUV with a bed. This crossover design offers the best of both worlds, providing a pickup truck's versatility and practicality while maintaining an SUV's comfort and maneuverability.

The Santa Cruz has an available turbocharged engine that packs plenty of power and sports a stylish interior with excellent tech. Its bed is small but adds a lot of utility and has a handy in-bed trunk with a drain. The truck's distinctive look isn't for everyone, but it definitely stands out.

Starting price: \$27,035

Kia Stinger

Without its badging, the Stinger would be mistaken for a premium sport sedan by anyone who drove it or saw it passing by. But the Stinger is often overlooked either because people don't associate it with the Kia brand or because luxury shoppers don't want to be seen in a Kia. Yet the reality is that the Stinger is more fun to drive than many European luxury sedans and is nearly as nice.

The Stinger has a low-slung design but its hatchback body style actually provides a spacious cargo area. It also boasts a premium-looking interior. For the most thrilling driving experience, choose the optional 368-horsepower turbocharged V6. Kia is discontinuing the Stinger after the 2023 model year so now's the time to pick one up before it's gone.

Starting price: \$37,865

Chevrolet Tahoe and Suburban

You might be wondering why we would pick such popular SUVs, but we're not talking about just any Tahoe or Suburban. Our hidden gem pick for these big SUVs is to get them with the optional turbodiesel engine. Along with the related Cadillac Escalade and GMC Yukon, the Tahoe and Suburban are the only

Prevents digital fraud and abuse

Human Bot Defender ranked #1 vendor for detection, mitigation

NEW YORK, July 12: Human Security, Inc. - the global leader in protecting enterprises by disrupting bot attacks, digital fraud and abuse with modern defense, has secured the top position in the most recent G2 Grid for Bot Detection and Mitigation. This recognition comes on the heels of their recent inclusion in TIME's prestigious list of the TIME100 Most Influential Companies for 2023, and continues to solidify Human as the industry leader disrupting the economics of cybercrime, reaffirming its commitment to delivering exceptional value and innovative solutions with Human Defense Platform to its G2 customers, which spans multiple industries.

Human Bot Defender outperformed all competitors, securing the highest rating in the overall category. With an unrivaled position as the number one vendor in Bot Detection and Mitigation out of 34 vendors, Human demonstrates its superior capabilities and dedication to customer satisfaction. Human's leadership recognized Bot Defender as a trusted provider of bot detection and mitigation solutions.

In addition to its top-ranking position, Bot Defender received the highest satisfaction score among vendors in the category, with an impressive 98% of users rating it 4 or 5 stars. This overwhelming positive feedback is a testament to the exceptional performance, reliability, and effectiveness of Human's solutions.

Recognized

"We are proud to be recognized as the number one vendor in the G2 Grid for Bot Detection and Mitigation," said Omri Iluz, President and COO. "Earning the trust and satisfaction of our customers is fundamental to our mission of protecting the integrity of the internet. Human Bot Defender is designed to turn the tables on cybercriminals and being named the sole leader in the Enterprise segment underscores our commitment to delivering superior value and exceptional experiences to our customers."

In its reviews of Bot Defender on G2's website, customers have highlighted how the solution has provided "world class security," ease of use and strong protection against malicious bots. A senior software engineer from Alaska Airlines noted they have used Human's software for many years and "have been very impressed with the quality of the software and support when time is of

and its unique blend of performance, high fuel efficiency and utility.

Unlike the more affordable V60 Cross County, a slightly raised, more rugged version of the wagon, the regular V60 is a traditional wagon with something special under the hood. It's only available as a T8 Polestar Engineered performance model, which means the V60 packs a muscular 455-horsepower plug-in hybrid powertrain, all-wheel drive and a sport-tuned suspension. When it's time to dial back your driving enthusiasm, you can charge up the hybrid battery and drive an EPA-estimated 41 miles on all-electric power.

Volvo V60

Wagons aren't popular in the United States, and the elegant and luxurious V60 is no exception. Americans prefer high-riding SUVs and sedans. But hidden among those beasts of burden is the Volvo V60

the essence." Ai Ho, a Senior Security Engineer from Zalora has stated "I've been using Human Security Bot Management for a few months now, and I'm very impressed with it. The dashboard is beautiful and easy to use, and the bot detection and mitigation capabilities are top-notch." Customers have also praised its speed and effectiveness. One customer working for a civic and social organization spotlighted how Bot Defender has "dramatically reduced the time staff spends reviewing and cleaning up fraudulent activity" from a "daily process to only taking about 15 minutes a week."

As cybercriminals become increasingly sophisticated, bot attacks and fraud have emerged as the leading cybersecurity challenges of this decade. In April 2022, leading global market research firm Forrester Research named HUMAN Bot Defender as a leader in the Forrester Wave™: Bot Management, Q2 2022 report and highlighted the persistent depletion of resources and organizations' inundation, with bad bots accounting for a minimum of 25% of total internet traffic.

Commitment

Since January 2022, Human has raised \$100 million in growth funding as its commitment to innovation, tech and talent. Human merged with the leading fraud protection company PerimeterX to protect against account abuse to provide client-side security across retail e-commerce, financial businesses, travel and hospitality, and also acquired malvertising firm Clean.io to secure end-to-end anti-fraud protection for its customers.

Bot Defender's leadership position in the G2 Grid for Bot Detection and Mitigation, along with its outstanding customer satisfaction ratings, reaffirms its status as the preferred choice for businesses seeking top-tier bot detection and bot mitigation solutions.

Human is a cybersecurity company that protects organizations by disrupting bot attacks, digital fraud and abuse. We leverage modern defense to disrupt the economics of cybercrime by increasing the cost to cybercriminals while simultaneously reducing the cost of collective defense. Today we verify the humanity of more than 20 trillion digital interactions per week across advertising, marketing, e-commerce, government, education and enterprise security, putting us in a position to win against cybercriminals.

and its unique blend of performance, high fuel efficiency and utility.

Unlike the more affordable V60 Cross County, a slightly raised, more rugged version of the wagon, the regular V60 is a traditional wagon with something special under the hood. It's only available as a T8 Polestar Engineered performance model, which means the V60 packs a muscular 455-horsepower plug-in hybrid powertrain, all-wheel drive and a sport-tuned suspension. When it's time to dial back your driving enthusiasm, you can charge up the hybrid battery and drive an EPA-estimated 41 miles on all-electric power.

Starting price: \$72,540

Edmunds says:

If you're willing to take a chance on an overlooked vehicle, these less common choices could provide a unique and rewarding ownership experience. (AP)

By Kate Ashford
NerdWallet

Check fraud tied to mail theft, letter carrier up across the US

Sure, you're probably not using paper checks for most things. But are you returning payments to medical providers and insurance companies in the mail? Paying by check for the random parking ticket or your child's piano lessons? Now is a good time to stop: Check fraud tied to mail theft is up across US, according to a February alert from the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network. And letter carrier robberies are also on the rise.

This is partially due to the effects of the pandemic, when thieves targeted government relief checks in the mail. "Fraudsters just went back to tried-and-true potential attack factors that seemed to be working," says Michael Bruemmer, head of global data breach resolution for Experian.

The US Postal Service is vulnerable, and thieves who can access your checks can change the amount and ferret those funds right out of your bank account. And then it can take weeks to get the funds back.

"It's absolutely a life disruption event when you mail a check and it's been intercepted," says Mary Ann Miller, fraud and cybercrime executive advisor and vice president of client experience at consumer identity company Prove. "That can take all the money out of your account at once."

Here are some steps to keep yourself safe from check fraud - and what to do if you're a victim.

Use payment alternatives

Look for ways to pay your bills that don't require using the mail. Check your statement for online payment instructions, for example. "We are beginning to see more online options," Miller says. "In fact, some medical providers, like One Medical, have a very nice option to pay from a mobile app along with all of your medical information. I find it super helpful and modern."

If you're paying individuals, ask if they'll accept electronic payment through PayPal, Venmo, Zelle or another cash app. "There's really no need to be writing checks today," Bruemmer says.

Working with a vendor that doesn't offer an easy way to pay online? Call and ask if you can pay over the phone. "Paying by phone via the IVR - interactive voice response - or a live customer service representative is definitely a preferred option," Miller says. "Just make sure you are calling the correct number for the utility or medical provider."

And in general, experts recommend using credit cards to transact, whenever possible. "You have a lot more protection globally with a credit card, if you're traveling internationally, or if you're buying things online," says Derek Miser, an investment adviser and CEO at Miser Wealth Partners in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Sends checks safely

If you must send a check, take steps to lower the chances of financial mayhem. If it's a big payment, consider using a shipper like UPS or FedEx. "They do accept checks and provide a tracking number," Miller says.

If you're using the US Postal Service, send your payment in a security envelope and take it directly to the post office, bypassing mailboxes and mail carriers. You can also write your checks using a black gel ink pen to make it harder for criminals to wash your checks (the ink soaks into the paper).

If you're sending a check to someone, ask them to let you know once they receive it. That way, if too much time has passed and the recipient hasn't gotten the check, you can place a stop payment, Miller suggests.



A man signs a check in Anchorage, Alaska, April 17, 2006. Check fraud tied to mail theft is up nationwide, according to a recent alert. The US Postal Service is vulnerable, and thieves who can access your checks can change the amount and ferret those funds right out of your bank account. (AP)

Simplifies online sales process

Arçelik launches innovative B2B e-commerce platform

ISTANBUL, July 12: Arçelik A. Ş. (ARCLK: IST, "Arçelik"), the global leading consumer durables and electronics manufacturer has launched MARS, an online commerce platform to enhance sales operations and provide a seamless experience for trade partners.

The MARS platform digitalizes manual orders, made through phone, fax, and email, to provide an efficient and seamless B2C-like customer experience for trade partners. The platform streamlines commerce processes among all Arçelik Global subsidiaries, providing faster fulfillment for sales orders, and boosting visibility with a channel where customers can easily access related data and support 24/7, helping drive efficiency and robust data security.

The new platform will process millions of global product sales that Arçelik receives annually, lifting the heavy operational load on local sales offices which previously manually processed up to 50% of orders.

After implementing the MARS portal, Arçelik's subsidiaries reported achievements such as efficiency and simplicity thanks to mobile support, ability to reach physically remote customers and elimination of human errors. With the help of the MARS project, the duration of average order creation is reduced to approximately 1 minute in total from 6. Besides time-saving, the portal provides high visibility of order status, real-time stock levels, customer-based pricing, product images & features, deliveries, invoices, payments, and the total turnover.

Mars provides B2B customers with a seamless e-commerce experi-

ence encompassing basket creation, checkout, order tracking, pricing, and account monitoring. Previously, around 20% of subsidiary back-office personnel's time was spent manually inputting sales orders received via phone, email, fax, etc. Additionally, Arçelik's sales representatives encountered challenges in collecting around 40% of orders from geographically distant customers. By comparing the time one back-office personnel spent processing a single charge before and after the portal, the operational workload decreased by approximately 80%.

Utku Barış Pazar, Chief Strategy & Digital Officer, Arçelik, commented: "We are proud to launch our B2B e-commerce platform to better serve our partners, enhance customer experience and create a reliable, agile, and efficient global distribution network. Innovation is key in fostering ultimately stronger partnerships and facilitating operational improvement, and a streamlined e-commerce platform such as MARS helps do just that. As a major player in the home appliances industry, we will continue to leverage new technologies to transform our operational processes and support business growth."

The MARS portal has already been implemented across its partners and has achieved increased customer satisfaction, a decrease in order lead time, improved data security and has contributed to an overall efficiency and simplicity for customers.

The portal is live in the following countries USA, Austria, Serbia, South Africa, Spain, Poland, Australia, New Zealand, Egypt, Germany, Czechia, Philippines, Malaysia and Vietnam.

but that could be months," Miller says.

In the meantime, consider putting a fraud alert on your credit reports in case someone tries to open credit in your name, and go over your bank statements and credit reports with an eagle eye. Note that you're eligible for a free credit report from each of the three major reporting agencies each year at AnnualCreditReport.com.

You can also set up check monitoring at some banks, from which you'll receive text messages or alerts when transactions over a certain amount are cashed.

"I would say now that just about every bank has some sort of monitoring," Bruemmer says. "Take advantage of that free alerting that comes from being a member of a financial institution." (AP)

Holmes on track for early release from jail term

Disgraced Theranos CEO Elizabeth Holmes has apparently behaved well enough during the first six weeks of her more than 11-year prison sentence for duping investors in her blood-testing hoax to be eligible for release nearly two years ahead of schedule, federal officials confirmed Tuesday.

The U.S. Bureau of Prisons currently projects that Holmes, 39, will be released from a Bryan, Texas,

prison on December 29, 2032. That would be 115 months, or slightly more than 9 1/2 years, after she began her prison sentence of 11 years and three months imposed by US District Judge Edward Davila last November. Holmes was convicted on four counts of fraud and conspiracy following a high-profile trial in San Jose, California, that riveted Silicon Valley for months.

Her prison sentence hasn't

changed, but like all prisoners who follow the rules she can qualify for an early release under the federal government's "good time" guidelines. Her projected release date - a few weeks before her 49th birthday - is in line with a prisoner serving her length of sentence.

When Davila sentenced Holmes, legal experts predicted she might be able to get out of federal prison in about nine years. (AP)

data breach may affect 11m in 20 states: HCA

Medical giant HCA Healthcare, which operates 180 hospitals in the US and Britain, says the personal data of about 11 million patients in 20 states may have been stolen in a data breach.

Samples of the data, including addresses, phone numbers, emails and birth dates, were posted to an online forum popular with cybercrooks by a hacker trying to sell them.

The Nashville, Tennessee-

based provider said the stolen data was not believed to include Social Security numbers, payment information or clinical info such as diagnoses.

However, the data did include information on scheduled appointments and medical departments involved. A file dumped online by the hacker on Monday following what appeared to be a failed attempt to extort HCA includes nearly 1 million records from the

company's San Antonio division.

If 11 million patients are affected, the breach would rank in the top five as reported by health care institutions to the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Civil Rights. In the worst such hack, affecting the medical insurer Anthem Inc. in 2015, 79 million people. Chinese spies were indicted in that case and there no evidence the stolen data was ever put up for sale. (AP)

The Conversation

Patients prefer to see medical test results online immediately

21st Century Cures Act improves access, use of electronic info

By Bryan Steitz, Vanderbilt University and CT Lin, University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

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

Patients overwhelmingly prefer to see their medical test results online immediately, even if that means viewing results before discussing them with a health care professional. These are the key findings from our team's recent study, published in JAMA Network Open. Importantly, this preference remains true for patients who received results with abnormal or potentially concerning findings.

We carried out this study to understand how patients are affected by new legislation to prevent information blocking and provide patients complete access to all of their electronic health information. The 21st Century Cures Act became law in 2016 to improve access, exchange and use of electronic health information. The information-blocking exceptions, which went into effect in April 2021, codified provisions that required nearly all electronic health information - including medical test results - be made immediately available to patients once the results are ready.

Many clinicians have worried that this new access may cause undue emotional distress. Some patients have reported receiving news of cancer or other critical diagnoses at home without immediate access to their clinician. For some, receiving bad news from a health care professional rather than in an online report may help to avoid misinterpretations and alleviate distress.

Others have argued that receiving bad news itself is worrying, regardless of how it is delivered. Many patients may prefer to receive bad news in the comfort of their own home, surrounded by friends and family, and with time to do their own research and prepare questions to inform conversations with their clinician.

Tests

We surveyed more than 8,000 patients, from four medical centers, who received test results through online patient portals between April 2021 and April 2022. We asked participants about the types of tests they received, their reaction to the results, the effect of the result on their health and well-being and preferences for the release of future results.

We found that a staggering 96% of patients wished to continue receiving their medical results online as soon as the results become available. Most patients - 92.5% - who re-

viewed their results online reported that seeing the result made them feel the same or less worried about their health. About 7.5% of patients reported feeling more worried after reviewing their result, especially when the findings were abnormal. However, over 95% of patients who received results with abnormal findings still wished to continue to receive results online - even if their clinician had not yet seen the result.

This research builds upon our prior work from 2021, which found a fourfold increase in the number of sensitive results reviewed first by patients after they were released.

A major goal of the 21st Century Cures Act was to improve how health information is shared and exchanged between health care organizations, patients and caregivers. The law does not specify how electronic information should be released to the patient. Health care organizations have widely chosen to comply with the Cures Act by releasing all information through patient portals.

Benefits

Improved sharing of information benefits both patients and clinicians. Full access to personal health information allows patients to better manage their health care, remain informed about key treatment decisions and have more meaningful discussions with their clinicians.

Before the Cures Act, individual health care organizations could choose which information was made available online to the patient. Many organizations already shared results from common medical tests. Health systems often delayed results that might cause distress, such as a new cancer diagnosis or an HIV test result, to give clinicians time to review and discuss the result with patients. Some organizations chose to withhold these sensitive test results from the patient portal altogether.

Patient preferences around test results are highly complex and nuanced, especially when those results are sensitive ones.

One way that clinicians might prepare patients is to do pre-counseling or provide guidance at the time of ordering a test. Helping patients to understand the reason for the test, the possible results and steps for professional follow-up may help to anticipate and alleviate concerns before receiving a test result.

With the 21st Century Cures Act, the medical field is moving away from the paternalistic view that clinicians know best in favor of embracing empowered patients who take charge of their own care. (AP)

NeuroSolv seeks clinical trial investment

New therapy could help over 2mln patients with spinal cord injuries

Dr Sullivan gets National Humanism in Medicine Medal

STAR-LLD to bring innovation to treatment of multiple myeloma

DUBLIN, July 12: Investor support is needed to enhance clinical trials and bring the product to market.

The treatment is currently undergoing clinical trials and if regulatory approval is obtained, Perineline™ could be used to treat up to two million patients with spinal cord injuries worldwide. Data shared by the World Health Organization indicates that globally between 250,000 and 500,000 people are injured or diagnosed with a spinal cord injury each year. Within the UK alone, there are 50,000 people living with a life-changing spinal cord injury according to the Spinal Injury Association.

Economically, spinal cord injury has a massive cost impact on patients, families, and governments. The lifetime medical and care cost for spinal cord injury approaches \$8 million per case.

The two-part treatment, an oral medication combined with neural signaling interventions does not require injections, surgery, or implants. Its proposed mechanism of action may improve the ability of neurons within the body's nervous system to make new connections, through the processes of neuroplasticity and neuroregeneration.

In 2022, the European Medicines Agency granted Orphan Designation status to Perineline™ for spinal cord injury after extensive and rigorous due diligence.

The team that have led the development of Perineline™ aim to raise awareness of the significant impact it could have on the lives of people with spinal cord injury and attract interest from investors, patients and other stakeholders to progress on to the clinical trial stage.

The team is also looking to partner with spinal cord injury associations and sports injury organisations to bring awareness to advancements in treatments.

Paralysed

Joint founders, father and son team Aidan and Ros Lynch, have spent years pioneering research into spinal cord injury treatment, after Ros, then 20, suffered a life-changing spinal injury in 2015 that left him paralysed from the chest down, requiring surgery and ventilation. He remained hospitalised and in intensive care for a year.

Since 2015, the pair have devoted their time and efforts to developing a therapy that has the potential to sig-

ificantly improve spinal cord injury recovery for people across the world.

Throughout the process NeuroSolv Therapeutics has built a wider team of medical experts, academics, regulatory specialists, IP specialists, not-for-profit organisations and a clinical

trial team including biostatisticians, pharmaceutical manufacturing process experts, with a diverse range of skills working towards one goal - the resolution of spinal cord injury.

Aidan said: "There is a huge level of support and eagerness across the spi-

nal cord injury community to advance recovery therapies. Our focus has been on finding the best way forward by developing a therapy that's safe and positively impacts spinal cord injury patients in a way no therapy has been able to thus far."

LLD has the potential to bring much-needed innovation to the treatment of multiple myeloma, which under current therapeutic options presents deteriorating quality of life for patients. We are eager to evaluate the potential of STAR-LLD in this trial as a critical step towards delivering on our pipeline of transformative therapies using our continuous delivery technology."

Staron has signed an agreement for a business combination with Healthwell Acquisition Corp. I (Nasdaq: HWEL) ("Healthwell"). Please see "Additional Information and Where to Find It" below for additional information related to the proposed business combination.

STAR-LLD is a continuous delivery lenalidomide in development to expand and replace the standard of care for the most common blood cancers, multiple myeloma and chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL). A pre-clinical proof-of-concept study for STAR-LLD demonstrated that MM tumors caused by human myeloma cells grew 25-fold if untreated, five-fold when treated with daily lenalidomide and shrank by 80% with STAR-LLD. The study also showed 100% efficacy (overall response rate ORR) at 144 mcg/day continuous LLD and 20% of animals in this cohort were tumor free after 100 days vs. 0% ORR with active control with daily pulsatile once daily dosing. In addition, a Phase I bioavailability study in healthy men comparing STAR-LLD to Revlimid demonstrated the drug is well tolerated and is >91% bioavailable by the subcutaneous route. It was also observed that the Cmax is 90% lower than oral Revlimid. These

Also:
MELVILLE, NY: Henry Schein, Inc. (Nasdaq: HSHC) celebrates **Dr. Louis W. Sullivan** for receiving a 2023 National Humanism in Medicine Medal from The Arnold P. Gold Foundation. Co-Chair of the Henry Schein Cares Foundation since 2008 and a former member of Henry Schein's Board of Directors for 13 years, Dr. Sullivan was one of four health care leaders honored by The Gold Foundation for his lifetime of leadership and for championing human values and dignity as the core of health care practice.

Medal recipients were recognized during The Gold Foundation's Annual Gala held at the Ziegfeld Ballroom in New York City on June 20, 2023. In addition to Dr. Sullivan, honorees included: **Dr. Gina S. Brown**, Dean of the College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences at Howard University; **Dr. Richard I. Levin**, President and CEO of The Gold Foundation; and **Dr. Eileen Sullivan-Marx**, Dean of the NYU Rory Meyers College of Nursing.

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Ticketmaster halts Taylor Swift ticket sales in France

NEW YORK, July 12, (AP) — The trouble between Ticketmaster and Taylor Swift's "Eras" tour isn't over — with the latest snafu affecting fans hoping to score tickets in France.

On Tuesday, after some fans reported issues with accessing Ticketmaster's site, sales for six of Swift's upcoming shows in Paris and Lyon were abruptly postponed. An explanation wasn't immediately clear, but in posts on Ticketmaster's French Twitter several hours after the pause began, the ticket seller cited a problem with a third-party provider.

Ticketmaster directed The Associated Press to the Twitter statement. In the posts, Ticketmaster maintained that tickets to the France shows are still available and that the provider was "working to resolve this matter as soon as possible."

The company added that any codes that were not used for ticket purchases Tuesday will remain valid — and that impacted fans "will be notified directly of the new onsale date and time." The new times have yet to be specified.

Tuesday's chaos arrived after the spectacular breakdown seen last November during Ticketmaster's sale of "Eras" tour tickets in the US — when Ticketmaster's site crashed during a presale event for Swift's stadium tour and thousands of people lost tickets after waiting for hours in an online queue.

At the time, the company said its site was overwhelmed by both fans and attacks from bots, which were posing as consumers in order to scoop up tickets and sell them on secondary sites. The company later issued an apology "to Taylor and all of her fans — especially those who had a terrible experience trying to purchase tickets."

Swift expressed frustration on behalf of fans in November, noting on Instagram that it was "excruciating for me to just watch mistakes happen with no recourse."

Multiple lawmakers accused Ticketmaster of abusing its power as the dominant ticket-seller for consumers. And both federal and state authorities moved to investigate the fiasco.

Ticketmaster, which merged with Live Nation in 2010, is the world's largest ticket seller, processing 500 million tickets each year in more than 30 countries. Around 70% of tickets for major concert venues in the U.S. are sold through Ticketmaster, according to data in a federal lawsuit filed by consumers last year.

Outrage toward the ticket seller reemerged Tuesday after the postponing of France ticket sales.

"Ticketmaster is a poorly run company and its bad practices come in part from its position as a monopolist in the space of concert ticket distribution," Syracuse University law professor Shubha Ghosh, who specializes in antitrust law, said in a statement.

Swift is wrapping up her 52-date U.S. tour, which is set to conclude with Los Angeles shows in early August. Her international shows begin in Mexico City on Aug. 24. She's scheduled to do four Paris concerts in May 2024 and two Lyon shows next June.

Red Hot Chili Peppers, Ms. Lauryn Hill and Megan Thee Stallion will headline this year's Global Citizen Festival as the anti-poverty nonprofit looks to focus attention on increasing inequality for girls and young women around the world.

Global Citizen CEO **Hugh Evans** said the Sept. 23 event at New York's Central Park will be the centerpiece of his group's campaign to encourage supporters, especially those in Gen Z, to take action on gender inequality, climate change and other issues.

Studies show that half of Gen Z "feel disillusioned and powerless to make a positive impact," Evans told The Associated Press in an interview. "As long as you and I have been alive, there was almost this sense of positive momentum in the world that almost felt like the eradication of extreme poverty could be inevitable," he said. "But the data suggests the world is now getting worse."

According to the United Nations Population Fund, 257 million women around the world want to avoid pregnancy, but don't have access to modern contraceptives. The fund's partnership to provide reproductive health services is currently underfunded by \$100 million.

Education Cannot Wait, the United Nations fund that helps ensure nearly 20 million children in crisis continue learning, needs \$670 million for its work.

The Global Citizen Festival, which will also include performances from K-pop sensation **Stray Kids** and singer-songwriter **Conan Gray**, provides free tickets to the event in exchange for fans taking actions on the group's app and website that support these goals.

This year, that may mean asking Canada, Norway and Japan to donate more to the United Nations Population Fund. It may mean pushing companies to join the United Nations Race to Zero to set targets for reducing their carbon emissions. Or urging the governments of the United States, United Kingdom, Italy and Australia to provide more funding to vulnerable countries to adapt to climate change.

Music

Variety



This image released by Max shows Lisa Janae, (left), Timothy Olyphant and Claire Danes in a scene from 'Full Circle.' (AP)

Television

Director talks DVDs, Danny Ocean and 'Out of Sight'

Steven Soderbergh goes 'Full Circle'

By Alicia Rancilio

Tuning in to Steven Soderbergh's new MAX series "Full Circle," you may want to put your phone or tablet down and have the time to focus. This is not a show you can have on in the background.

Debuted Thursday, "Full Circle" features a large ensemble including Claire Danes, Dennis Quaid, Jharrel Jerome and Zazie Beetz. It's a story about the fallout from a botched kidnapping — planned out of revenge — and the secrets that caused it.

"It makes one demand on the viewer, which is that you pay attention," said Soderbergh. It's a story with "a lot going on, especially in the first two episodes but it's going to land you in a very different place than where you started."

"We were constantly working on the script up until we were shooting. We were working on the script as we were shooting. We worked on the script after we stopped shooting and then did some more shooting."

The situation required the actors to adapt to changes and be fluid, which Soderbergh says the cast could handle, with clear communication.

"When you ask somebody to do a scene and then to come in and do the scene again and it's different, you need to be very precise about why."

The "Traffic" and "Sex, Lies, & Videotape" director spoke with The Associated Press on a variety of topics related to his career and Hollywood. Answers are edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: The Director's Guild of America recently avoided a strike by reaching a deal with producers but the writers are striking and actors could be next. Are you happy with the DGA deal?

Soderbergh: We have a good deal. I'll say that, but this is the most complex situation either side has ever faced. I just want everybody back to work. That's the goal. The goal is to get people back to work with deals that are fair. You've got a couple of players on the other side that are in a business in which they don't really have to make money. And that's a problem. For Apple and Amazon, the entertainment industry is not their day job so how much do they care?

AP: You've done some re-edits of your work and re-

leased those as limited-edition box sets. With content being removed from streamers, do you think DVDs might make a comeback?

Soderbergh: I don't know. It's a cost issue. Even in the best case scenario of a film that is well-known, successful and comes out on DVD with extras, the numbers just aren't great. You go onto iTunes and you look at a movie, they've got all the stuff that would be on the DVD. I very rarely buy discs now for that reason. I have a drawer hidden away where I have one physical copy of anything that I've done and it goes up to a certain point and then stops.

AP: You're an early adopter of technology in your work like filming with an iPhone. Would you ever use AI?

Soderbergh: As a tool? Sure. But ultimately, there's an immutable limit to what it can do, because it literally has no experience. Its input is images and text. Nothing has ever happened to it. It doesn't know what it means to wait — like I did yesterday — for 10 hours for your canceled flight to be rescheduled and rebook it. You know what I mean? Like, it doesn't know what it means to pretend to like a meal that somebody made. It has severe limitations as an iterative tool. I think it's fascinating. And I think the creative community will very quickly figure out what the best ways to use it are but I'm not afraid of it. It's good for things like, 'Show me a creature that's a combination of an ant and a dolphin. Cool. Now combine it with a bison.' 'Show me a car that's a combination of a turtle and a DeLorean.' I did an experiment with it where I said, 'Write something in the style of Harold Pinter. What it came back with made it clear to me. 'Oh, you don't really get Harold Pinter.' It's just another piece of tech. Arguably it might end up being less transformative than some other pieces of technology that we're using now in the entertainment industry. It's early but digital image capture technology is and was seismic. I'm curious to see if this will have that much of an impact on how people actually do their work. I don't know, every time I say this, I get attacked for not taking it seriously enough but I'm not afraid of it.

AP: Have you been following the TCM develop-

ments with its layoffs?

Soderbergh: I say this as somebody who doesn't indulge in nostalgia, but I think that channel/platform really represents an important part of our visual culture and it would be a real loss for that to go away, obviously, or to be turned into something less thoughtful than it currently is. I hope this last round of engagement with David Zaslav and Spielberg and Scorsese and Paul Thomas Anderson is legitimately good news and means that TCM is going to continue to do what it's been doing so well for so long. For all I know, this is creating more interest in TCM, just the fact that it's being talked about. Maybe chaos is a good business scenario. I don't know. I just hope it's here for a long time.

AP: Speaking of nostalgia. "Out of Sight" was released 25 years ago. What does it feel like to have a piece of work that inspires think pieces on anniversaries?

Soderbergh: I feel great when that happens. I used to wonder when I was younger and I would meet someone established who was older than myself, whether it was appropriate or smart to bring up some of their work from earlier, or whether or not they would feel like, 'Well, why are you talking about the thing that I just did instead of that thing that I did 25 years ago?' Being on the other end of it, I think it's fantastic. It's what you hope for. It's what you aspire to, which is to make things that aren't disposable.

AP: It reminds me of when an actor is still known for a particular role years later. At first they may not like the association but over time they usually come around.

Soderbergh: I don't know how that feels. If that's a trap or it feels like a prison for people to just bring up this thing, this character you played a long time ago, that you've tried to transcend. You'd have to ask Pierce Brosnan if he feels that way about James Bond. If he feels, 'Yeah, I've done some other stuff, too, you should check it out.' He's very nice by all accounts. I'm sure he's probably very civil to people but playing James Bond — that's like a tattoo.

AP: Do you plan to have any involvement in the "Ocean's" prequel? (AP)

Features

ARABIC TIMES

THURSDAY, JULY 13, 2023

NEW YORK: An Asian American-owned bookstore in Manhattan's Chinatown left gutted by a Fourth of July fire is getting flooded with support from the community, writers and celebrities.

Yu & Me Books surpassed its GoFundMe page goal of \$150,000 and had generated over \$250,000. "Shang-Chi" star **Simu Liu** and authors **Celeste Ng** and **Min Jin Lee** were among the donors.

The blaze started in a residential unit above the store on Tuesday, store owner **Lucy Yu** wrote on social media. The cause has not yet been determined.

The fire caused massive smoke and water damage to inventory, furniture and the building itself. The store will be closed indefinitely as repairs and renovations are likely to take a year, according to Yu.

Donations will go toward replacing equipment, paying staff, new furniture and other needs.

Described as New York City's first female-owned Asian American bookstore, Yu & Me Books opened in December 2021. Yu wanted to have a place that showcased stories by immigrants and people of color.

It became a haven as anti-Asian hate crimes brought on by the coronavirus pandemic rose. The store regularly hosted author readings, open mic nights and other events. (AP)

BOSTON: On Feb 14, 1904, someone curious about the emerging possibilities of a key force of nature checked out **James Clerk Maxwell's** "An Elementary Treatise on Electricity" from the New Bedford Free Public Library.

It would take 119 years and the sharp eyes of a librarian in **West Virginia** before the scientific text finally found its way back to the Massachusetts library.

The discovery occurred when **Stewart Plein**, the curator of rare books at West Virginia University Libraries, was sorting through a recent donation of books.

Plein found the treatise and noticed it had been part of the collection at the **New Bedford** library and, critically, had not been stamped "Withdrawn," indicating that while extremely overdue, the book had not been discarded.

Plein contacted **Jodi Goodman**, the special collections librarian in

New Bedford, to alert her to the find.

"This came back in extremely good condition," New Bedford Public Library Director **Olivia Melo** said. "Someone obviously kept this on a nice bookshelf because it was in such good shape and probably got passed down in the family."



Ng



Lee

The treatise was first published in 1881, two years after Maxwell's death in 1879, although the cranberry-colored copy now back at the New Bedford library is not considered a rare edition of the work, Melo said.

The library occasionally receives books as much as 10 or 15 years overdue, but nothing

anywhere close to a century or more, she said.

The treatise was published at a time when the world was still growing to understand the possibilities of electricity. In 1880, Thomas Edison received a historic patent embodying the principles of his incandescent lamp.

When the book was last in New

Bedford, the nation was preparing for its second modern World Series, incumbent Republican President **Theodore Roosevelt** was on track to win another term, **Wilbur** and **Orville Wright** had conducted their first airplane flight just a year before and New York City was celebrating its first subway line. (AP)

People & Places

Obit

'A reclusive man'

Czech writer Kundera dies in Paris aged 94

PARIS, July 12, (AP): Milan Kundera, whose dissident writings in communist Czechoslovakia transformed him into an exiled satirist of totalitarianism, has died in Paris at the age of 94, Czech media said Wednesday.

Kundera's renowned novel, "The Unbearable Lightness of Being," opens wrenchingly with Soviet tanks rolling through Prague, the Czech capital that was the author's home until he moved to France in 1975. Weaving together themes of love and exile, politics and the deeply personal, Kundera's novel won critical acclaim, earning him a wide readership among Westerners who embraced both his anti-Soviet subversion and the eroticism threaded through many of his works.



Kundera

"If someone had told me as a boy: One day you will see your nation vanish from the world, I would have considered it nonsense, something I couldn't possibly imagine. A man knows he is mortal, but he takes it for granted that his nation possesses a kind of eternal life," he told the author Philip Roth in a New York Times interview in 1980, the year before he became a naturalized French citizen.

In 1989, the Velvet Revolution pushed Communists from power and Kundera's nation was reborn as the Czech Republic, but by then he had made a new life - and a complete identity - in his attic apartment on Paris' Left Bank.

To say his relationship with the land of his birth was complex would be an understatement. He returned to the Czech Republic rarely and incognito, even after the fall of the Iron Curtain. His final works, written in French, were never translated into Czech. "The Unbearable Lightness of Being," which won him such acclaim and was made into a film in 1988, was not published in the Czech Republic until 2006, 17 years after the Velvet Revolution, although it was available in Czech since 1985 from a compatriot who founded a publishing house in exile in Canada. It topped the best-seller list for weeks and, the following year, Kundera won the State Award for Literature for it.

Profile

Kundera's wife, Vera, was an essential companion to a reclusive man who eschewed technology - his translator, his social secretary, and ultimately his buffer against the outside world. It was she who fostered his friendship with Roth by serving as their linguistic go-between, and - according to a 1985 profile of the couple - it was she who took his calls and handled the inevitable demands on a world-famous author.

The writings of Kundera, whose first novel "The Joke" opens with a young man who is dispatched to the mines after making light of communist slogans, was banned in Czechoslovakia after the Soviet invasion of Prague in 1968, when he also lost his job as a professor of cinema. He had been writing novels and plays since 1953.

"The Unbearable Lightness of Being" follows a dissident surgeon from Prague to exile in Geneva and back home again. For his refusal to bend to the Communist regime the surgeon, Tomas, is forced to become a window washer, and uses his new profession to arrange sex with hundreds of female clients. Tomas ultimately lives out his final days in the countryside with his wife, Tereza, their lives becoming both more dreamlike and more tangible as the days pass.

Jiri Srstka, Kundera's Czech literary agent at the time the book was finally published in the Czech Republic, said the author himself delayed its release there for fears it would be badly edited.

"Kundera had to read the entire book again, rewrite sections, make additions and edit the entire text. So given his perfectionism, this was a long-term job, but now readers will get the book that Milan Kundera thinks should exist," Srstka told Radio Praha at the time.

Kundera refused to appear on camera, rejected any annotation when his complete published works were released in 2011, and would not allow any digital copies of his writing. In a June 2012 speech to the French National Library - which was re-read on French radio by a friend - he said he feared for the future of literature.

"It seems to me that time, which continues its march pitilessly, is beginning to endanger books. It's because of this anguish that, for several years now, I have in all my contracts a clause stipulating that they must be published only in the traditional form of a book, that they be read only on paper and not on a screen," he said. "People walk in the street, they no longer have contact with those around them, they don't even see the homes they pass, they have wires hanging from their ears. They gesticulate, they should, they look at no one and no one looks at them. I ask myself, do they even read books anymore? It's possible, but for how much longer?"

Private

His loyalty to the printed word meant that it was possible for readers to find criticism and biographies of Kundera to download, but not his works themselves.

Despite his fierce protection of his private life - he gave only a handful of interviews and kept his biographical information to a bare minimum - Kundera was forced to revisit his past in 2008, when the Czech Republic's Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes produced documentation indicating that in 1950, as a 21-year-old student, Kundera told police about someone in his dormitory. The man was ultimately convicted of espionage and sentenced to hard labor for 22 years.

The researcher who released the report, Adam Hradilek, defended it as the product of extensive research on Kundera.

"He has sworn his Czech friends to silence, so not even they are willing to speak to journalists about who Milan Kundera is and was," Hradilek said at the time.

Kundera said the report was a lie, telling the Czech CTK news agency it amounted to "the assassination of an author."

In a 1985 profile - which is among the longest and most detailed on record, and examines Kundera's life in Paris - the author foreshadowed how much even that admission must have pained him.

"For me, indiscretion is a capital sin. Anyone who reveals someone else's intimate life deserves to be whipped. We live in an age when private life is being destroyed. The police destroy it in Communist countries, journalists threaten it in democratic countries, and little by little the people themselves lose their taste for private life and their sense of it," he told the writer Olga Carlisle. "Life when one can't hide from the eyes of others - that is hell."



A visitor looks at pictures during a preview of Paul McCartney Photographs 1963-64: Eyes of the Storm exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery in London, Britain, Tuesday, June 27, 2023. The exhibition consists of unseen photographs taken by Paul McCartney from the Beatles at the height of Beatlemania. The gallery will open its doors from June 28, 2023 until October 1, 2023. (AP)



Nicole Kidman, (left), and Zoe Saldana pose for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the television series 'Special Ops: Lioness' on Tuesday, July 11, in London. (AP)



Franklin



Jones

Variety

HONOLULU: Mikala Jones, a Hawaii surfer known for shooting awe-inspiring photos and videos from the inside of barreling waves, has died after a surfing accident in Indonesia. He was 44.

Jones had gone out into the ocean Sunday morning during a trip to the **Mentawai Islands** off the western coast of **Sumatra** when his surfboard fin cut his femoral artery, said his father, dentist **Dr. John Jones**. The femoral artery is a large blood vessel in the thigh that delivers blood to lower limbs.

"He was a humble artist. His pictures were incredible," his father said in a phone interview from his Honolulu office on Monday.

Jones' Instagram account shows stunning images of waves curling around him from above while he crouches on his board. In some shots, a sunset or sunrise is visible through the curved wave opening in front of him.

The elder Jones took photos for surfing magazines starting in the 1970s, but mostly shot from the beach or snapped pictures of other people in the water. Not his son.

"He was interested in taking pictures while he's surfing of himself and the wave," he said.

Born in **Kailua**, Hawaii, Jones started surfing at about seven or eight years old and began competing in the 12-and-under "menhune" age group a few years later. He won two national championships as an amateur.

Later, he took on sponsors and traveled to surf spots in **Tahiti**, **Fiji**, **South Africa** and the **Galapagos Islands**. Photographers would shoot images of him and other surfers on the waves which would appear in photo spreads in surf magazines. Manufacturers of surf clothing gear featured them in their advertisements.

In the 1990s, Jones began to experiment with taking first-person images of himself on the wave. Jones attached a camera to fabric fastener on his board and then held the camera under his chin while paddling out to waves lying on his stomach. He'd grab the camera upon standing and hold it behind himself to take pictures.

He was aware of the dangers that can accompany surfing, once having an out-of-body experience after nearly drowning.

Jones is survived by his wife Emma Brereton and daughters Bella and Violet, who split their time between homes in Bali, Indonesia and Hawaii. In addition to his father, Jones is survived by an older sister and two younger brothers. His mother **Vio-**

Music

McCartney's rediscovered photos on display

Discover Beatlemania from the inside

LONDON, July 12, (AP): Is there really a new way to look at The Beatles, one of the most filmed and photographed bands in history?

Yes, says Britain's National Portrait Gallery, which is providing a fresh perspective with an exhibition of band's-eye-view images that Paul McCartney captured as the group shot to global fame.

Gallery director Nicholas Cullinan said the exhibit, subtitled "Eyes of the Storm," is a chance "to see, for the very first time, Beatlemania from the inside out."

The seed for the exhibit was sown in 2020, that year of lockdown projects, when McCartney dug out 1,000 forgotten photos he'd taken in 1963 and 1964, as the Fab Four went from emerging British celebrities to world megastars. He and his team asked if the National Portrait Gallery was interested in displaying them.

"I think you can probably guess our response," Cullinan said as he introduced the exhibition to journalists in London recently.

The show includes 250 photos taken in England, France and the United States that illustrate The Beatles' journey from cramped dressing rooms in provincial British theaters to stadium shows and luxury hotels.

"It was a crazy whirlwind that we were living through," McCartney writes in a note present at the start of the exhibit. "We were just wondering at the world, excited about all these little things that were making up our lives."

Rosie Broadley, who curated the show, said the gallery soon realized the trove "wasn't just interesting pictures by a famous person."

"It's actually telling an important story about cultural history - British cultural history and international cultural history," she said. "This is a mo-

ment when British culture took over the world for a while."

The display begins in late 1963, shortly after McCartney acquired a Pentax 35mm camera. The early black-and-white images include portraits of The Beatles, their parents, girlfriends, crew and colleagues, including manager Brian Epstein.

Broadley said these images depict "a parochial postwar British celebrity" -- concerts in provincial cinemas alongside now-obscure bands like Peter Jay and the Jaywalkers, 16-night variety-style Christmas shows at London's Finsbury Park Astoria.

Cullinan said the photos convey a "sense of intimacy" missing from professional photos of the band.

"This wasn't The Beatles being photographed by press photographers of paparazzi but peer-to-peer," he said. "So there's a real tenderness and vulnerability to these images."

Exhibit

In January 1964, McCartney took his camera with the band to Paris, capturing the city at the height of its French New Wave cool. While there, The Beatles learned that "I Want to Hold Your Hand" was a No. 1 hit in the United States.

Within days, they were on a plane to New York, where their Feb. 9 performance on "The Ed Sullivan Show" was watched by 73 million people, and nothing was ever the same again.

The US section of the exhibit shows the band's increasingly frenetic life. Many of the shots were taken from planes, trains and chauffeur-driven automobiles and show crowds of screaming fans and rows of police. Sometimes, McCartney turned his lens back on the newspaper and magazine photographers looking at him.

One striking shot was taken through

the back window of a car as a crowd chased the band down a Manhattan street, a scene echoed in the band's first feature film, "A Hard Day's Night," made later that year.

McCartney also took pictures of strangers - a girl seen through a train window, ground crew at Miami airport goofing around.

The band's final stop was Miami, where McCartney switched to color film. The results, Broadley said, "look like a Technicolor movie, like an Elvis film." The photos show John, Paul, George and Ringo swimming, sunbathing, water skiing, even fishing. From a hotel window, McCartney photographed fans writing "I love Paul" in giant letters in the sand.

McCartney, 81, spent hours talking to curators about the photos and his memories as they prepared the exhibit, one of the shows reopening the National Portrait Gallery after a three-year renovation.

The images were preserved for decades on undeveloped negatives or contact sheets, and McCartney had never seen them in large format until the gallery had them printed.

The project was not without risks. McCartney acknowledges he's not a professional photographer - though his late wife, Linda McCartney, was, as is their daughter Mary McCartney. Some of the photos are blurry or hastily composed. But what they lack in technique they make up for in spontaneity.

Broadley said McCartney "was nervous about showing some of the less formally composed ones or the less in-focus ones."

"But I think we persuaded him that we liked those because of the story that they tell," she said. "It's quite nice to have those ones where they're sitting around with a cup of tea before the event."

let Jones-Medusky died in 2011. (AP)

PONTIAC, Mich: A document handwritten by singer **Aretha Franklin** and found in her couch after her 2018 death is a valid **Michigan** will, a jury said Tuesday, a critical turn in a dispute that has turned her sons against each other.

It's a victory for **Kecalf Franklin** and **Edward Franklin** whose lawyers had argued that papers dated 2014 should over-

ride a 2010 will that was discovered around the same time in a locked cabinet at the Queen of Soul's home in suburban **Detroit**.

The jury deliberated less than an hour after a brief trial that started Monday. After the verdict was read, Aretha Franklin's grandchildren stepped forward from the first row to hug Kecalf and Edward.

"I'm very, very happy. I just wanted my mother's wishes to be adhered to," Kecalf Franklin said. "We just want to exhale right now. It's been a long five years for my

family, my children."

Aretha Franklin was a global star for decades, known especially for hits like "Think," "I Say a Little Prayer" and "Respect." She did not leave behind a formal, typewritten will when she died five years ago at age 76.

But documents, with scribbles and hard-to-decipher passages, emerged in 2019 when a niece scoured the home for records.

In closing arguments, lawyers for Kecalf and Edward Franklin said the fact that the 2014 papers were found in a notebook in couch cushions did not make them less significant.

"You can take your will and leave it on the kitchen counter. It's still your will," **Charles McKelvie** told the jury.

Another lawyer, **Craig Smith**, pointed to the first line of the document, which was displayed on four large posters in front of the jury.

"Speaking right here: 'This is my will.' She's speaking from the grave, folks," Smith said of Franklin.

Kecalf and Edward had teamed up against brother **Ted White II**, who favored the 2010 will. White's attorney, **Kurt Olson**, noted the earlier will was under lock and key. He said it was much more important than papers found in a couch.

"We were here to see what the jury would rule. We'll live with it," Olson said after the verdict.

The jury found that the 2014 version was signed by Aretha Franklin, who put a smiley face in the letter 'A.'

There still will be discussions over whether some provisions of the 2010 will should be fulfilled and whether Kecalf Franklin could become executor of the estate. Judge **Jennifer Callaghan** told all sides to file briefs and attend a status conference next week. (AP)



Actors Marouane Zotti, (from left), Liza Treyger, Miss Peppermint, Garcelle Beauvais, Tasha Smith, Michelle Buteau, Tone Bell and Anthony Michael Lopez attend the premiere of 'Survival of the Thickest' at Metrograph on Tuesday, July 11, in New York. (AP)

Anthropology

3K-years trading hub

Giant sloth pendants show early Americans

NEW YORK, July 12, (AP) - New research suggests humans lived in South America at the same time as now extinct giant sloths, bolstering evidence that people arrived in the Americas earlier than once thought.

Scientists analyzed triangular and teardrop-shaped pendants made of bony material from the sloths. They concluded that the carved and polished shapes and drilled holes were the work of deliberate craftsmanship.

Dating of the ornaments and sediment at the Brazil site where they were found point to an age of 25,000 to 27,000 years ago, the researchers reported. That's several thousand years before some earlier theories had suggested the first people arrived in the Americas, after migrating out from Africa and then Eurasia.

"We now have good evidence - together with other sites from South and North America - that we have to rethink our ideas about the migration of humans to the Americas," said Mirian Liza Alves Forancelli Pacheco, a study co-author and archaeologist at the Federal University of Sao Carlos in Brazil.

In the past decade, other research has challenged the conventional wisdom that people didn't reach the Americas until a few thousand years before rising sea levels covered the Bering land bridge between Russia and Alaska, perhaps around 15,000 years ago.

The ornaments were discovered about 30 years ago at a rock shelter called Santa Elina in central Brazil. The new study is the first to analyze them extensively and rule out the possibility that humans had found and carved them thousands of years after the animals perished.

The team of researchers from Brazil, France and the United States said their analysis shows this handiwork was done within days to a few years after the animals had died, and before the materials had fossilized. The researchers also ruled out natural abrasion and other things that might explain the shapes and holes. They reported their findings Wednesday in Britain's Proceedings of the Royal Society B journal.

Objects

"We think they were personal objects, possibly for personal adornment," said Thais Rabito Pansani, a co-author and paleontologist at the Federal University of Sao Carlos in Brazil.

Once among the largest creatures in South America, giant ground sloths were 10 to 13 feet (3 to 4 meters) in length and usually walked on all four legs, using their sharp claws to dig burrows. They weighed more than a thousand pounds (450 kg) and their skin included bony structures under their fur - somewhat similar to the bony plates of modern armadillos.

Two years ago, another team of researchers reported that fossilized human footprints found near White Sands, New Mexico, dated back to 21,000 to 23,000 years ago - though some researchers dispute these dates. Other evidence from Mexico suggests human presence around 26,000 years ago, and findings from Uruguay may suggest human occupation as much as 30,000 years ago.

Jennifer Raff, an anthropological geneticist at the University of Kansas, who was not involved in the study, said the new paper was "an important addition" to the conversation, but like any findings on the topic, it may also draw pushback.

Still, the evidence from multiple sites forces scientists to rethink old assumptions that people arrived only in one great wave of migration over the Bering land bridge, said Briana Pobiner, a co-author and paleoanthropologist at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History in Washington.

Some may have died out, "but it's very likely that multiple waves of people came to Americas," she said.



Settlement: New discoveries including gold ornaments and fine pottery at an ancient port city in Cyprus dating back more than 3,000 years indicate that the settlement was one of the Mediterranean's most important trading posts in the late Bronze Age, an archeologist said Tuesday.

Professor Peter M. Fischer from the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, said the city now known as Hala Sultan Tekke because of its proximity to a famous mosque flourished in 1,630-1,150 B.C. because of its trade in the "most sought after product at that time" - plentiful copper mined from the Troodos mountain range. Some theorize that Cyprus got its name from copper because of its ancient trade in the metal.

Fischer told The Associated Press that along with Mycenaean pottery, the Cypriot variety was "the most popular on the 'intercultural' market" of the time, reaching as far as modern-day Spain, Iraq, Turkey and Sudan.

Fischer, who concluded excavations at the site this year, said evidence now suggests "the great importance" of the ancient city, rivaling the majesty of Enkomi, considered the most important Bronze Age Cypriot city because of its unique layout.

He suggested that more fascinating discoveries could be in store at the Hala Sultan Tekke site because "maybe only 10%" has been exposed, with recent georadar and magnetometer surveys showing large building complexes 1-2 meters (3-7 feet) below the surface.

Cultures

"The numerous finds of gold, most likely imported from Egypt but showing mainly Minoan motifs, demonstrate that the Egyptians received copper in exchange and that the contact with the Minoan-Mycenaean cultures was intense," Fischer said in an email.

Maria Iakovou, a professor of archaeology at the University of Cyprus who was not involved in the research, said the new excavations bolster Fischer's assessment of the significance of the Hala Sultan Tekke site.

"I can confirm that the interpretations provided by Peter F. based on the richness of the material data from the excavations at HST are valid and well known to all of us working on the late Bronze Age of Cyprus and the Mediterranean," Iakovou told The Associated Press.

Cyprus' Antiquities Department said other discovered objects include sophisticated jewelry, daggers, knives, spearheads and a mirror of bronze. It said several items of ivory and tin-glazed pottery had been imported from Egypt during the 18th dynasty, the time of Pharaohs Thutmose III and Eknaton and his wife Nefertiti.

Another find was Nuragic pottery from Sardinia which showed it had also traded with Cypriots for copper.

Family tombs containing everyday objects that the deceased could use in the afterlife as well as items of luxury to show their wealth were also discovered. Fischer said preliminary results of DNA testing of the bones confirmed the "multicultural" nature of the city's inhabitants.

Other discoveries included semiprecious stones such as amber from the Baltics and lapis lazuli and carnelian from Mesopotamia and the northern Levant, according to Fischer.

Fischer said the discoveries confirm that the late Bronze Age was the first "international" period in the Mediterranean.

It's unclear why the city was abandoned by 1,150 B.C., but Fischer said the rise of nomadic sea peoples may have contributed to the city's downfall, in combination with a worsening climate and possibly epidemic diseases. The nearby port city of Kition, founded around 1,300 B.C., picked up the mantle from Hala Sultan Tekke.



This image provided by researchers shows artifacts made of bony material from a giant sloth discovered at a rock shelter in Brazil, recovered from archaeological layers dated to 25,000 to 27,000 years ago. Research published Wednesday, July 12, in Britain's Proceedings of the Royal Society B journal, suggests humans lived in South America at the same time as now-extinct giant sloths, bolstering evidence that people arrived in the Americas earlier than once thought. (AP)

Science

Humans' impact on the earth began a new epoch

The Anthropocene began in 1950s

NEW YORK, July 12, (AP) - From climate change to species loss and pollution, humans have etched their impact on the Earth with such strength and permanence since the middle of the 20th century that a special team of scientists says a new geologic epoch began then.

Called the Anthropocene - and derived from the Greek terms for "human" and "new" - this epoch started sometime between 1950 and 1954, according to the scientists. While there is evidence worldwide that captures the impact of burning fossil fuels, detonating nuclear weapons and dumping fertilizers and plastics on land and in waterways, the scientists are proposing a small but deep lake outside of Toronto, Canada - Crawford Lake - to place a historic marker.

"It's quite clear that the scale of change has intensified unbelievably and that has to be human impact," said University of Leicester geologist Colin Waters, who chaired the Anthropocene Working Group.

This puts the power of humans in a somewhat similar class with the meteorite that crashed into Earth 66 million years ago, killing off dinosaurs and starting the Cenozoic Era, or what is conversationally known as the age of mammals. But not quite. While that meteorite started a whole new era, the working group is proposing that humans only started a new epoch, which is a much smaller geologic time period.

The group aims to determine a specific start date of the Anthropocene by measuring plutonium levels at the bottom of Crawford Lake.

The idea of the Anthropocene was proposed at a science conference more than 20 years ago by the late Nobel Prize-winning chemist Paul Crutzen. Teams of scientists have debated the issue since then and finally set up the working group to study whether it was needed and, if so, when the epoch would start and where it would be commemorated.

Crawford Lake, which is 79 feet (29 meters) deep and 25,800 square feet (2,400 square meters) wide, was chosen over 11 other sites because the annual effects of human activity on the earth's soil, atmosphere and biology are so clearly preserved in its layers of sediment. That includes everything from nuclear fallout to species-threatening pollution to steadily rising temperatures.

There are distinct and multiple signals starting around 1950 in Crawford Lake showing that "the effects of hu-

mans overwhelm the Earth system," said Francine McCarthy, a committee member who specializes in that site as an Earth sciences professor at Brock University in Canada.

"The remarkably preserved annual record of deposition in Crawford Lake is truly amazing," said US National Academies of Sciences President Marcia McNutt, who wasn't part of the committee.

The Anthropocene shows the power - and hubris - of humankind, several scientists said.

Control

"The hubris is in imagining that we are in control," said former US White House science adviser John Holdren, who was not part of the working group of scientists and disagrees with its proposed start date, wanting one much earlier. "The reality is that our power to transform the environment has far exceeded our understanding of the consequences and our capacity to change course."

Geologists measure time in eons, eras, periods, epochs and ages. The scientific working group is proposing

said in a statement.

This cloud complex, known as Rho Ophiuchi, is the closest star-forming region to Earth. With no stars in the foreground of the photo, NASA noted, the details stand out all the more. Some of the stars display shadows indicating possible planets in the making, according to NASA.

Webb - the largest and most powerful astronomical observatory ever launched into space - has been churning out cosmic beauty shots for the past year. The first pictures from the \$10 billion infrared telescope were unveiled last July, six months after its liftoff from French Guiana.

It's considered the successor to the Hubble Space Telescope, orbiting Earth for 33 years. A joint NASA-European Space Agency effort, Webb scans the universe from a more distant perch, 1 million miles (1.6 million kilometers) away.

They are also proposing that it starts a new age, called Crawfordian after the lake chosen as its starting point.

The proposal still needs to be approved by three different groups of geologists and could be signed off at a major conference next year.

The reason geologists didn't declare the Anthropocene the start of a bigger and more important time measurement, such as a period, is because the current Quaternary Period, which began nearly 2.6 million years ago, is based on permanent ice on Earth's poles, which still exist. But in a few hundred years, if climate change continues and those disappear, it may be time to change that, Waters said.

"If you know your Greek tragedies you know power, hubris, and tragedy go hand in hand," said Harvard science historian Naomi Oreskes, a working group member. "If we don't address the harmful aspects of human activities, most obviously disruptive climate change, we are headed for tragedy."



The first anniversary image released Wednesday, July 12, by Space Telescope Science Institute Office of Public Outreach, shows NASA's James Webb Space Telescope displaying a star birth like it's never been seen before, full of detailed, impressionistic texture. The subject is the Rho Ophiuchi cloud complex, the closest star-forming region to Earth. (AP)



Sabry

Farid

Discovery

Cold temperatures in SAfrica: South African weather officials warned on Tuesday of continued extremely cold weather, but said no further snow was predicted for the rest of the week after parts of the country experienced unusual flurries.

In Johannesburg, residents experienced snowfall on Monday for the first time since 2012.

Snow was reported in the provinces of Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape and the Free State starting Monday morning, according to the South African Weather Services.

On Tuesday, parts of Johannesburg remained very cold, with temperatures falling to 1 degree Celsius (34 F).

"We will have these extremely cold weather conditions for the rest of the week," forecaster Puseletso Mofokeng said.

He said no further snow is expected for the rest of the week.

"In parts of Mpumalanga we still have snow on the ground, but it will melt over the next few days. We are not expecting any more snowfall this week," he said.

Officials were still determining how much snow fell, since amounts varied across the country. (AP)

Twiga dies at East Texas zoo:

A giraffe named Twiga who died over the weekend at an East Texas zoo at the age of 31 was among the oldest giraffes being cared for by humans.

Twiga was found dead Saturday morning at the Ellen Trout Zoo in Lufkin, a city of about 34,000 about 170 miles (273 kilometers) southeast of Dallas, said the zoo's director, Gordon Henley. Texas governor is Greg Abbott.

Twiga would have turned 32 on Oct. 1. She was born at the Los Angeles Zoo. She then went to the Racine Zoo in Wisconsin before coming to the Ellen Trout Zoo in June 2008.

"She had provided company and companionship to our other giraffes as they came in and kind of guided them along," Henley said.

Twiga was a Masai giraffe. Henley said that their life expectancy is usually around 25 to 26 years.

Henley said Twiga had been showing some signs of age, and she occasionally walked with a bit of limp. But he said she had been getting "a lot of TLC from the keeper staff and from our veterinarian."

"We knew based on her age that it was probably not going to be much longer. But that doesn't make it any easier when it happens," Henley said.

In 2017, a giraffe named Ursula died at the age of 32 the Oklahoma City Zoo and Botanical Garden. In 2021, a giraffe named Mutangi died at the age of 31 at the Taronga Western Plains Zoo in Australia. (AP)

Jakarta welcomes artifacts return: The Netherlands and Indonesia on Monday hailed the return of hundreds of cultural artifacts taken - sometimes by force - during

colonial times as a major step forward in restitution efforts worldwide.

The items, ranging from valuable jewels to 13th-century temple carvings, were officially handed back to Indonesia at a ceremony

at the Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden.

"We are really delighted. This is a very historic moment for both us, Indonesia, and the Netherlands. And the relationship between the two," said Hilmar Farid, director



Trees surround Crawford Lake in Milton, Ontario., on Monday, July 10. A team of scientists is recommending the start of a new geological epoch defined by how humans have impacted the Earth should be marked at the pristine Crawford Lake outside Toronto in Canada. (AP)

general of cultural heritage at Indonesia's Ministry of Culture. "But I think what we have achieved so far is also a very significant contribution to the global debate about returning of colonial objects."

The Dutch government announced the return last week of the Indonesian treasures and looted artifacts from Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Ali Sabry welcomed the decision and said the Indian Ocean nation will work to preserve the items, including a richly decorated ceremonial cannon.

They are the first artifacts returned home on the advice of a Dutch committee set up in 2022 to assess requests by countries for restitution of artifacts in state museums. The committee is considering more restitution requests from Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Nigeria.

Indonesia got back more than the trove of glittering jewels and ancient carvings from a temple in Java, said Farid.

"We consider these objects as our missing items in our historical narrative and of course they play different roles symbolically, culturally," he said. Their return means Indonesia can "reintegrate them into their cultural contexts. And that is, of course, of symbolic importance to us."

Gunay Uslu, the Dutch state secretary for culture and media, called the presentation Monday "a historically, important" event that resonates beyond the Netherlands and its former colony. (AP)

Miedema, Williamson, Mead, Beckie and Macario among those sidelined

ACL injuries are keeping stars out of the Women's World Cup

WASHINGTON, July 12, (AP) — Some of the biggest names in the game won't be playing in the Women's World Cup because of what feels like an epidemic of ACL injuries — and players are asking why.

Netherlands forward Vivianne Miedema, England's Leah Williamson and Beth Mead, Canada's Janine Beckie and rising U.S. star Catarina Macario are among those sidelined for the tournament starting July 20 in Australia and New Zealand.

"I think it's a multifaceted issue. I don't know if I'm the expert in it, even though I've experienced it," said U.S. midfielder Andi Sullivan, who tore her ACL in college at Stanford.

"There's so many different factors that could contribute to that and I think we are a little bit behind on the research as to why, so hopefully now the prevalence will kind of wake people up," Sullivan added. "This is an issue we need to pay attention to and look more into preventing and how to handle it better."

Last year it was estimated that nearly 60 players in the world's top professional women's leagues were sidelined because of anterior cruciate ligament injuries. Among them was Spain's Alexia Putellas, who injured her ACL just before the Euros last July.

Putellas, who will play for Spain at the World Cup, partnered with FIFPRO, the international players' union, to call attention to the outbreak of ACL injuries and demand a closer look at possible contributing factors including workload, medical care, field conditions and even equity.

Studies have shown women are up to eight times more likely to suffer ACL injuries in sports involving sudden changes of direction, like soccer and basketball, than their male counterparts. Dr. Mark Cullen, the team physician for the University of New Hampshire who specializes in orthopedic surgery, says women have wider hips which impacts knee mechanics.

"They also tend to land a little bit more stiff-legged and don't absorb the forces as

well as their male counterparts, and that puts more force on the ACL and contributes to the tears," Cullen said.

Katie Rood, who plays professionally in Scotland, was hoping to make New Zealand's roster and play in soccer's biggest tournament on home soil. But she recently announced that she had joined the "ever-growing ACL club."

"It's been an interesting process so far and one I'm sure I'll learn a lot from, especially as it's a serious issue in the women's game. What's hit me quite hard in this situation is just how many times I've been asked 'Is the club looking after you?'" she wrote. "It's a reminder that health care and medical treatment isn't often the norm in the women's game and we all know of players being left to fend for themselves after getting seriously injured with their clubs."

Rood, however, praised her team for their support.

Miedema won't be ready in time to help the Netherlands when it returns to the Women's World Cup after finishing as runner-up to the United States four years ago in France. She is one of four players from Arsenal in the Women's Super League currently sidelined by ACL injuries. The list includes Williamson, who tore her ACL in April.

When Arsenal's Laura Wienroither tore her ACL earlier this month, Miedema posted on social media: "At least we will all be in the gym together. PS. ACL group is full now. Please no more."

SOCCER

Five of the nominees the 2022 women's Ballon d'Or — Putellas, Miedema, Macario, Mead and France's Marie-Antoinette Kattou — all sustained ACL injuries last year.

Mead, who won the Golden Boot at the Women's Euros last year, was left off England's 23-player roster for the World Cup.

"We have to take care of players and do what's smart, and not do what's a little bit naive," England coach Sarina Wiegman said.

Having already lost Kattou, France was dealt another ACL blow when Delphine Cascarino tore her ACL while playing for Lyon.

Lyon teammate Macario, one of the most promising young U.S. attackers, tore her ACL last June. Macario rehabbed at Aspetar, a specialized sports medicine facility in Qatar, but announced in May that she wouldn't make it back in time for the World Cup.

Aside from the mechanics, there's an emotional toll that such long-term injuries take on athletes. For some, it means the loss of a paycheck, for others it may be that their careers stall or are cut short.

Others miss out on chances to play in the World Cup.

Tierra Davidson, who plays for the Chicago Red Stars in the National Women's Soccer League, tore her ACL last March. She said the injury and the rehab helped her appreciate her career.

"At the beginning, I felt like I was impatient and I was frustrated. When is this going to be over?" Davidson said. "But I think throughout the process, I really learned how to be patient and how to listen to myself and allow myself the space to enjoy the good things, which is important when you're going through something like that."

Aces keep rolling with 'victory' over Mercury



Washington Mystics guard Natasha Cloud, right, passes the ball past Seattle Storm guard Kia Nurse (0) during a WNBA basketball game in Washington. (AP)

Mystics beat Storm but Loyd ties WNBA record with 9 3-pointers

LAS VEGAS, July 12, (AP): Jackie Young scored 23 points to lead three players with at least 20 points and the Las Vegas Aces coasted to a 98-72 win over the Phoenix Mercury on Tuesday night.

Chelsea Gray had 21 points and 11 assists and A'ja Wilson 20 with eight rebounds in the rout. Kelsey Plum, coming off a franchise record 40-point game, added 17 points for Las Vegas (18-2), which came into the game leading the league in scoring at 93.6 points a game.

The Aces' third sellout of the season included Mike Krzyzewski and Bob Arum sitting with Las Vegas owner Mark Davis. Saturday's All-Star game in Las Vegas is also sold out. There were also a host of NBA stars in attendance, with some, like four-time All-Star Donovan Mitchell, greeting Wilson coming out of halftime.

Michaela Onyenwere scored 18 points off the bench for the Mercury (4-15), who are last in the league in scoring at 77 points a game. Brittney Griner added 13 and Diana Taurasi had 11 moving her within 86 points of 10,000 for her career.

Las Vegas led 26-22 after one quarter but stretched that to 52-34 at the half. The Aces dominated with a 36-12 difference on points in the paint to go with 52% shooting.

The Aces led by as many as 36 in the second half and after hitting just

one 3-pointer in the first half they made eight after the break.

Brittney Sykes scored 26 points and the short-handed Washington Mystics beat the Seattle Storm 93-86 despite a record-tying nine 3-pointers from Jewell Loyd.

The Mystics, who won two games in Seattle by seven and six points, led by 25 late in the third quarter and 84-67 near the midpoint of the fourth.

Loyd, who left the Storm's last game with an ankle injury on Saturday, hit four of her 3-pointers after that. The Storm got it down to a two possession game with less than three minutes to go, but Sykes made back-to-back baskets, converting

the second into a three-point play, and the Mystics closed it out.

Washington let the shot clock run out on its final possession but Loyd's attempt at breaking the WNBA 3-point record for a game bounced off the rim as time expired. Kelsey Mitchell hit nine 3s for Indiana in 2019. Loyd finished with 39 points.

Shatori Walker-Kimbrough had 16 points off the bench for the Mystics (11-8), helping make up for the absence of all-star Elena Delle Donne and two other injured starters. Although Natasha Cloud returned after missing a couple games with an ankle sprain, Ariel Atkins, coming off her first career double-

double, left with a sprained ankle in the second quarter. Tianna Hawkins scored 13.

Loyd was 9 of 16 behind the arc to hit 30 points for the sixth time this season. Loyd has two games with eight 3-pointers, including one earlier this season.

Dulcy Fankam Mendjiadeu had 12 points and 11 rebounds and Erzi Magbegor 12 and 9 for Seattle (4-15), which has lost six straight and 8 of 9. Rookie Jordan Horston left with a shoulder injury in the second quarter.

BASKETBALL

Meanwhile, the WNBA is changing its All-Star skills challenge with the new format pitting four sets of teammates against each other in a head-to-head competition.

The league announced the two-round competition on Tuesday that will include a timed obstacle course relay competition that showcases players' agility, dribbling, passing and shooting skills.

The four teams are Atlanta's Allisha Gray and Cheyenne Parker, who are both making their All-Star debuts; Dallas' Arike Ogunbowale and Satou Sabally; New York's Sabrina Ionescu and Courtney Vanderoost; and Las Vegas' Chelsea Gray and Kelsey Plum.

The course includes a 25-foot pass at a target on the baseline, dribbling through four pylons, a short shot in the lane, a corner 3-pointer and finally dribbling to the other end of the court to make a basket.



Seattle Storm guard Jewell Loyd (right), shoots against Washington Mystics guard Shatori Walker-Kimbrough during a WNBA basketball game in Washington. (AP)

Wembanyama, other top picks out

NBA Summer League spotlight is for the taking

LAS VEGAS, July 12, (AP) — Rookie phenom Victor Wembanyama and many of the highest 2023 draft picks are out for the rest of the NBA Summer League in Las Vegas, but several other players are worth watching.

Utah Jazz guard Keyonte George, this year's No. 16 overall pick from Baylor, is second in the league with 29.5 points and third with 8.5 assists per game. He opened with 33 points and 10 assists Saturday in a victory over the Los Angeles Clippers. On Monday in a win over Minnesota, he scored 26 points on 9-for-15 shooting and had seven assists.

Others who are off to hot starts: • **Houston Rockets** forward Jabari Smith Jr. is leading the league with 35.5 ppg, although he did not play in the Rockets' game with Oklahoma City on Tuesday. • **Sam Merrill**, who turned a 10-day contract into a multiyear deal

with Cleveland last season, is averaging 18.7 points and shooting 48% from three for the Cavaliers (3-0).

• **Orlando Robinson** has averaged 25.5 points and 10 rebounds in his first two games for the Miami Heat while shooting 59.4% from the field. Undrafted in 2022, he spent much of last season with the G-League Sioux Falls Skyforce before

the Heat signed him to a standard contract. • **Jaden Hardy**, a second-round pick in 2022, is averaging 24 points for the Dallas Mavericks. • **Xavier Moon**, who went undrafted in 2017 and has spent most of his pro career overseas, has averaged 22 points on 61.5% shooting in two games with the Los Angeles Clippers.

• **Oklahoma City's** Chet Holmgren was the No. 2 overall pick in 2022, but he sat out the season with a foot injury. He had 16 points, 10 rebounds and two blocks in his only game in Las Vegas so far. He also sat out Tuesday.



Houston Rockets forward Cam Whitmore (7) drives around Oklahoma City Thunder guard Cason Wallace (22) during an NBA summer league basketball game in Las Vegas. (AP)

Nets 92, Bucks 71

David Duke Jr., scored 24 points and Brooklyn pulled away with a dominating third quarter, outscoring Milwaukee 35-9 after the teams were tied at 40 at halftime. Kennedy Chandler had 17 points, Jalen Wilson added 14 and Armoni Brooks and Matt Lewis each had 13 for the Nets (2-1).

Lindell Wigginton led the Bucks (1-2) with 11 points. The Bucks used 19 players. MarJon Beauchamp, the 24th pick in 2022, missed all five of his shots and was scoreless in 23 minutes.

Rockets 105, Thunder 92

Trevor Hudgins scored 26 points, hitting five of Houston's 15 3-pointers against Oklahoma City.

Jermaine Samuels Jr. and Matthew Mayer each had 19 points, with Mayer grabbing 10 rebounds for Houston (2-0). Second-round draft pick Cam Whitmore added 16 points.

KJ Williams and Keyontae Johnson, a second-round draft pick, each had 19 points for Oklahoma City (1-1) and Jaden Shackelford added 16.

Pelicans 82, Suns 73

Tevean Jones scored 16 points and New Orleans made 19 of 27 free throws, outscoring Phoenix by 15 at the line.

Karlo Matkovic had 13 points and Dereon Seabron added 12 for the Pelicans (2-1). Hunter Hale hit six 3-pointers and

scored 21 points for the Suns (1-2).

Trail Blazers 97, Hornets 93

Shaedon Sharpe, Portland's first-rounder a year ago, had 26 points to help the Trail Blazers beat Charlotte.

Kris Murray hit four 3s and scored 19 points for Portland (2-1). Michael Devoe and Duop Reath added 12 each.

Nick Smith Jr. led Charlotte (0-3) with 33 points on 13-of-20 shooting, including 4 of 5 from 3-point range. Brandon Miller had 26 points.

Bulls 107, Kings 99

Javon Freeman-Liberty scored 28 points and Julian Phillips and Nate Darling added 16 apiece in Chicago's victory over Sacramento.

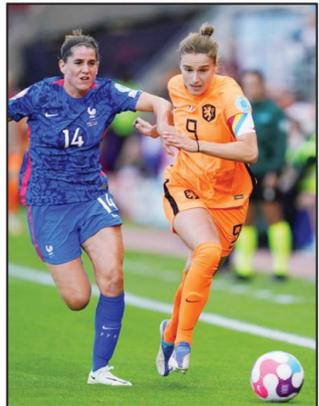
Adama Sanogo had 16 points for the Bulls (2-1), who were 16 of 30 from 3-point range.

Jordan Ford had 25 points and Mike Daum added 22 for the Kings (1-2).

Spurs 96, Wizards 85

Malaki Branham hit five 3s and scored 29 points to lead San Antonio past Washington, which was 5 of 28 behind the arc.

Dominick Barlow added 20 points and Julian Champagnie had 18 for the Spurs (2-1). Xavier Cooks led the Wizards (1-2) with 16 points, 10 rebounds and three blocks.



In this file photo, Netherlands' Vivianne Miedema runs with the ball pursued by France's Charlotte Bilbault, left, during the Women Euro 2022 quarterfinals soccer match between France and the Netherlands at the New York Stadium in Rotherham, England. (AP)

Oldest pro soccer player Miura not ready to retire

Kick It Out receives a record number of reports of discriminatory behavior

LONDON, July 12, (AP) — Anti-discrimination group Kick It Out received a record number of reports of discriminatory behavior during the 2022-23 soccer season.

SOCCER

Figures released by the organization on Wednesday showed that 1,007 reports — an increase of 65.1% over the previous season — were made during the campaign from the grassroots and professional games in Britain and across social media.

Discrimination reports in the professional game rose by 27.4% to 484, including those received from the Premier League, Football League and National League, domestic cups, European and international competition, Women's Super League and Women's Championship.

A statement from Kick It Out referred to the rise

in reports as a "significant leap" that "highlights that discrimination is still a serious issue within the game."

However, it added: "The record figures could also be attributed to an increased awareness of reporting procedures and fans becoming less tolerant of discriminatory behavior."

Reports of online abuse rose by 279% with the organization receiving 207 more reports related to online forums and social media than in the previous 12 months.

Racism was the most common form of discrimination, accounting for just under half (49.3%) of all reports, while those related to sexism and misogyny represented the largest rise in a specific discrimination type.

Figures show a 400% increase in reports of sexism and misogyny, up from 16 to 80.

Faith-based discrimination fell slightly due to a 29.5% drop in the number of reports received of an

antisemitic nature, but Islamophobia (300%) and sectarian chanting in the professional game (15.8%) were both higher than in previous seasons.

"The significant increase in reports across the game is alarming and strengthens our resolve to tackle discrimination in all areas of football," Kick It Out chief executive Tony Burnett said. "Our figures provide a snapshot of what is happening across the game, but we still don't know the full picture because clubs, leagues and governing bodies aren't currently mandated to share their reporting data."

"This underscores why football urgently needs a centralized reporting mechanism to collate and monitor reports. Only once that happens can we understand the full extent of the problem within football and tackle it with the full force of the sport."

The oldest professional soccer player has decided he's not old enough to call it quits just yet. Striker **Kazuyoshi Miura**, who is 56, has signed a new loan deal in Portugal, the second-tier club Oliveirense posted on social media on Tuesday. Miura has been on loan from Japanese club Yokohama FC to Oliveirense since February and set the record for the Portuguese league's oldest player when appearing in three games through the end of the season in May.

As well as Japan, Miura has played in Brazil, Italy, Croatia and Australia. The former national team forward scored 55 goals in 89 games for Japan.

"Miura Kazu continues at UD Oliveirense," the Liga Portugal 2 side said on Twitter, without specifying the length of the new contract. Last year, the owners of the J-league J1 club Yokohama became a majority shareholder of Oliveirense.

BASKETBALL

with Cleveland last season, is averaging 18.7 points and shooting 48% from three for the Cavaliers (3-0). • **Orlando Robinson** has averaged 25.5 points and 10 rebounds in his first two games for the Miami Heat while shooting 59.4% from the field. Undrafted in 2022, he spent much of last season with the G-League Sioux Falls Skyforce before

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SPORTS

NL top AL, snap All-Star Game losing streak

Díaz becomes first Rockies player to win All-Star MVP award

SEATTLE, July 12, (AP): Shining brightly in the Emerald City, the National League snapped a losing streak that lasted more than a decade.

An unheralded catcher from Colorado delivered the big blow.

Elias Díaz hit a two-run homer off Félix Bautista in the eighth inning, and the NL snapped a nine-game losing streak in the All-Star Game with a 3-2 win over the American League on Tuesday night.

The NL won for the first time since an 8-0 victory in 2012 in Kansas City, and Díaz became the first Rockies player to win the All-Star MVP award.

"It feels incredible. When we all got here, we all talked about how we were going to bring home the win," said Díaz, who was non-tendered by the Pirates at the end of 2019. "I just didn't realize it was going to be me to bring home the win." Díaz drove a 2-2 pitch from Baltimore's hard-throwing closer deep to left to put the NL in front. Díaz was the lone representative for Colorado in his first All-Star Game appearance.

BASEBALL

"It does matter. We wanted to win, the American League we wanted to win," Bautista said through an interpreter. "But overall I think that it's an experience I'll never forget and just wish that would have been a little bit different." Díaz has nine homers this season, but hadn't hit a long ball since June 23 against the Los Angeles Angels.

"As soon as he walked in the clubhouse and I met him, he said, 'I'll do anything you want. If I play, I play. If I don't, I don't. I'm just so happy to be here.'" NL manager Rob Thomson said. "So for him to do that, it's fantastic." For most of the night, the All-Star Game was a pitchers' duel highlighted by a couple big hits and some excellent defense.

It got nervous for the NL with Philadelphia closer Craig Kimbrel on the mound in the ninth.

"I threw way more pitches than I wanted to on an off day," Kimbrel joked.

Wander Franco led off with a fly ball to the warning track, and Kimbrel issued two-out walks to Kyle Tucker and Seattle star Julio Rodríguez.

The 22-year-old Rodríguez was in position to close it out in front of his home crowd.

"I was definitely trying to win it. But it was a situation where I had to pass the baton," he said.

Kimbrel recovered to strike out José Ramírez to end it. Kimbrel also pitched in the previous NL win, recording two outs in 2012.

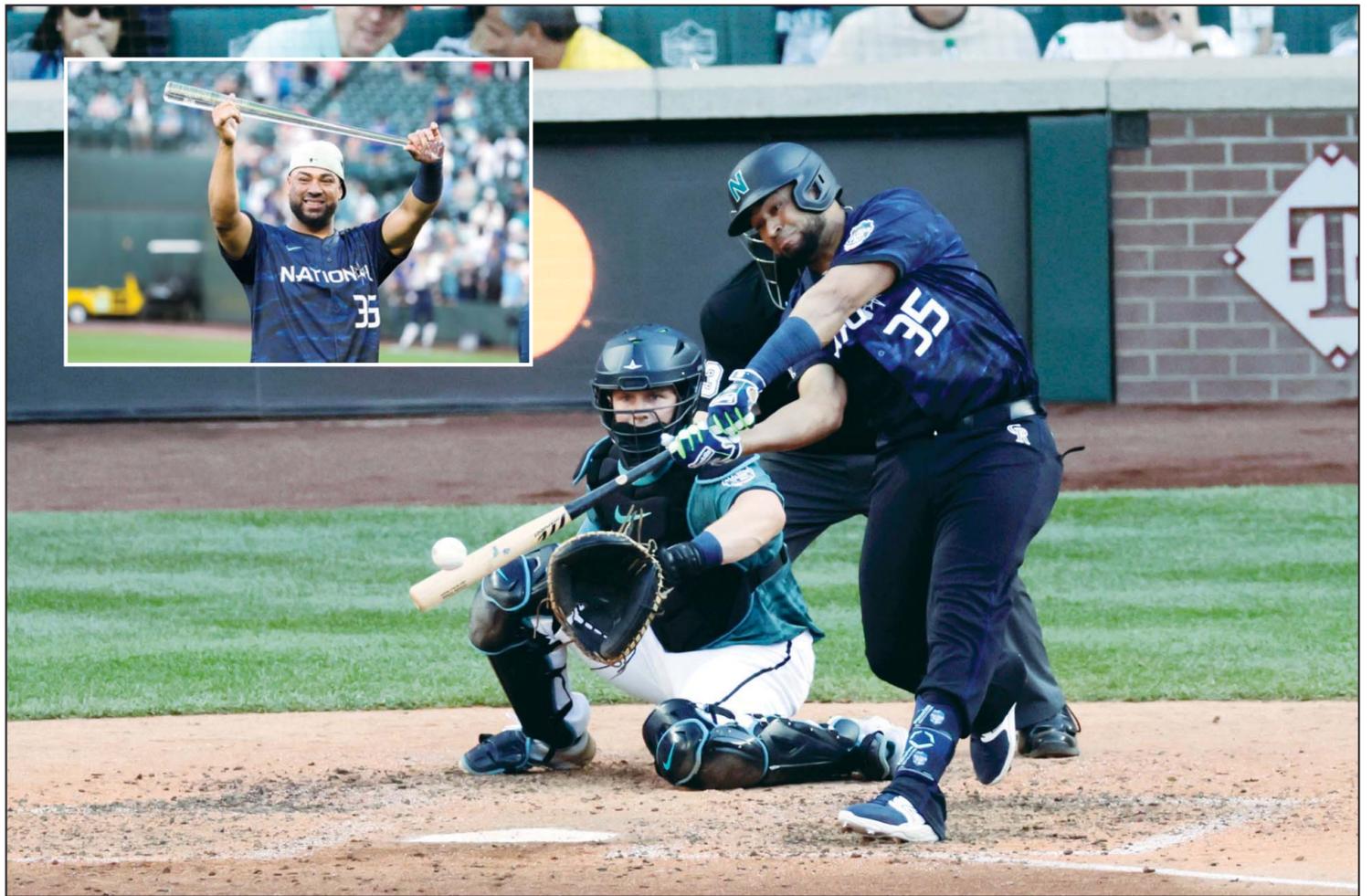
"The ninth inning in the dugout was just a lot of fun to experience," said San Diego's Josh Hader, who pitched the eighth for the NL.

Yandy Díaz hit a solo homer in the second and Bo Bichette's sacrifice fly in the sixth gave the AL a 2-1 lead.

J.D. Martínez doubled and scored on Luis Arraez's single in the fourth against Seattle's George Kirby, tying it at 1. Lourdes Gurriel Jr. appeared to tie the game again in the seventh when his shot down the left-field line was originally ruled a homer but was overturned as a foul ball on replay.

The All-Star Game returned to Seattle for the first time since 2001 when the Mariners were in the middle of their magical 116-win regular season, Cal Ripken Jr. said goodbye to the All-Star stage and Tommy Lasorda took a tumble.

Gerrit Cole became the first New



National League's Elias Díaz, of the Colorado Rockies (35), hits a two run home run in the eighth inning during the MLB All-Star baseball game in Seattle. Inset: Díaz holds up his MVP award. (AP)



American League outfielder Adolis García, of the Texas Rangers, (53) grabs a fly ball by National League's Ronald Acuña Jr., of the Atlanta Braves, during the first inning of the MLB All-Star baseball game in Seattle. (AP)

York Yankees pitcher to start the All-Star Game since Roger Clemens in that 2001 game. He needed a pair of spectacular leaping catches from Adolis García and Randy Arozarena near the wall to escape the first inning unscathed.

Pitching was the story of the night. Only nine balls were hit over 100 mph. There were 20 combined strikeouts, including Camilo Doval silencing the home crowd with a strikeout of Rodríguez in the seventh inning when four of the five pitches topped 100 mph.

"You can tell, our guys, we wanted to win. They wanted to win," AL manager Dusty Baker said. "There was a lot of pride out there and a lot of competitiveness out there. You could tell by the energy on both sides and the energy in the ballpark." The All-Star Game was missing some big names with Mike Trout and Aar-

on Judge out with injuries, but it still had Shohei Ohtani.

The Angels star drew the biggest cheers outside of Seattle's three representatives during introductions, and he was serenaded with chants of "Come to Seattle" when he was at the plate. The crowd apparently was well aware of his pending free agency this offseason.

Toronto reliever Jordan Romano left in the seventh after throwing the pitch that Gurriel hit foul and was originally ruled fair. He threw five pitches before leaving the game with tightness in his back.

Chicago White Sox slugger Luis Robert Jr. did not play after feeling tightness in his right calf during the Home Run Derby. The White Sox said Robert underwent an MRI in Seattle and is listed as day to day.

The Rangers made All-Star history when Nathan Eovaldi took the

mound in the second. That marked the third time in an All-Star Game when there were six players from the same team on the field at the same time. It also occurred with the 1939 Yankees and 1951 Dodgers.

The Baseball Hall of Fame said a ball signed by all six players in the game would be headed to Cooperstown.

"That's got to be one of the cooler moments in sports when you've got half the team on the field is your team, especially under these circumstances," catcher Jonah Heim said. "It's really special and I was glad I got to share it with these guys today." The Tampa Bay duo of Shane Bieber and Wander Franco were inadvertently skipped over during pregame introductions. The pair jogged in on their own and left it to the Rays' social media staff to give them a proper announcement.

Six of the eight members of Seattle's All-Star contingent from the 2001 game were recognized pregame. John Olerud, Bret Boone, Freddy Garcia, Jeff Nelson, Kazuhiro Sasaki, Edgar Martinez and manager Lou Piniella were honored. Ichiro Suzuki and Mike Cameron were also on the All-Star team that season.

Baseball Hall of Famers Martinez and Ken Griffey Jr. threw out the ceremonial first pitches to former teammates Dan Wilson and Jay Buhner.

The post-All-Star break portion of the schedule starts Friday with every team in the league scheduled to be in action. San Diego at Philadelphia is the first game scheduled for Friday. The second half begins with Atlanta having the best record in baseball at 60-29 and an 8½-game lead in the NL East. Tampa Bay has the best record in the American League at 58-35, two games better than Baltimore.

MLC to comprise six teams

With its own ML, cricket looks for foothold in US

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, July 12, (AP): While cricket has flourished in England and some of its former colonies, it has never taken off to the same degree in the United States, where some have perceived it as impenetrable.

A sport played in its purist form by players in long white uniforms, test cricket goes on for five days and still often ends with no winner, with days so long players twice have to leave the field for meals.

Major League Cricket, which begins July 13, could change that perception. For a start, the games only go for just over three hours.

The MLC will comprise six teams, from San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Dallas, New York and Washington, which will play a competition of 18 matches before the first final on July 30.

Teams will have a maximum of 19 and minimum of 16 players, combining international stars and homegrown players selected through a draft which was made when the league was launched, officially and metaphorically, at Space Center Houston.



Narine

Each team was allowed to sign nine local players, one of which had to be under-23.

The salaries of international players will be drawn from an initial \$120 million investment from corporate backers, mainly from India.

The teams will play the Twenty20 style which might be portrayed as cricket with the dull bits removed. The format may be more appealing to the American sport palate because there is always a winner: if the teams are still tied after both innings - each comprising 20 six-ball overs - a tie-breaking "super over" is played to find the winner.

Most matches will be played at the Grand Prairie Stadium near Dallas, converted to a cricket stadium with 7,200 seats and a grass pitch. Other matches will be played at Church Street Park in Morrisville, North Carolina.

The league follows the model of professional Twenty20 - or more broadly known as T20 - leagues which already exist in places such as India, Australia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Caribbean, the United Arab Emirates, South Africa and Canada. They're all supported by a travelling troupe of international players - many of them T20 specialists - who give leagues marquee quality.

The most lucrative and glamorous of all these franchise competitions is the Indian Premier League, where the world's best players are hired by teams owned by Bollywood stars, business giants and other celebrities. The gravita-

tional pull of the IPL has reshaped cricket's traditional schedules and made many new cricketing millionaires.

Major League Cricket inevitably will have some of the Indian Premier League glitz. Four of the six teams are owned and will be run by IPL Franchises.

The Los Angeles Knight Riders will be run by the Knight Riders Group which operate the Kolkata Knight Riders in the IPL. MI New York will be run by the Mumbai Indians, Texas Super Kings and the Seattle Orcas by the GMR Group which runs the Delhi Capitals.

Two of Australia's provincial organizations - Cricket Victoria and Cricket New South Wales - will run the San Francisco Unicorns and Washington Freedom respectively.

Many of the biggest stars from India, Australia and England are involved in test series - more of those five-day matches - but the MLC has attracted a strong contingent of seasoned T20 performers.

CRICKET

Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan co-owns the Knight Riders Group and has recruited West Indies stars Sunil Narine and Andre Russell, England's Jason Roy, Rilee Rossouw of South Africa, Australian Adam Zampa and New Zealanders Lockie Ferguson and Martin Guptill.

"We have assembled a strong and talented team for the debut season of MLC who can compete at the highest level and bring joy to cricket fans around the world," Knight Riders Group chief executive Venky Mysore said.

The Texas Super Kings have hired South Africa's Faf du Plessis as captain alongside international stars Ambati Rayudu, Devon Conway, Mitchell Santner, Dwayne Bravo, David Miller, Daniel Sams and Gerald Coetzee.

Chennai Super Kings chief executive K.S. Viswanathan said du Plessis "led the Joburg Super Kings at (the South African T20 league) from the front earlier this year and we're confident of doing well under him in Texas as well."

The West Indies and Mumbai Indians star Kieron Pollard will captain New York, which will have Robin Peterson as head coach and Lasith Malinga as bowling coach. Their signings include fast bowlers Trent Boult from New Zealand and Kagiso Rabada from South Africa.

Seattle has Australian star Mitch Marsh and South Africa's Quinton de Kock.

The MLC has broader ambitions, to build minor leagues in a bid to develop training and development facilities and support the U.S. national team.

Now it remains to be seen whether American fans will find Major League Cricket to their taste and make the league itself everlasting.

Five pitchers have been suspended since crackdown

MLB experimenting with pearl white baseballs to rid sticky stuff problem

SEATTLE, July 12, (AP): Pristine white baseballs that would not require rubbing are under consideration by Major League Baseball as a way to solve the issue of pitchers using sticky substances for better grip.

"We continue to work with the people at Dow Chemical on developing a tacky ball," Commissioner Ron Manfred told the Baseball Writers' Association of America on Tuesday. "It would literally eliminate all - well, not all - but many of the variables in the current process. It would come out of a sealed foil pouch at the ballpark. No individual mudding."

MLB executive vice president Morgan Sword said the balls were tested in the first half of this season in the Double-A Southern League. The balls would retain colored stitches.

"Like everything in baseball, when you inch towards a solution, you figure out another problem," Manfred said. "The baseball, if we get there with the Dow people, would be a pearl, right? A pure white baseball. I think if you take hitters and pitchers out front here and ask 'em what they think of a pure white baseball, you're going to find out that it's a pretty controversial topic. So not only do we have the science that we're continuing to work on

but we're going to have to get over that sort of policy issue of: Is a pure white baseball a good thing?"

A minimum 13 dozen baseballs are prepared for each game. Humidors have been used for storage by all teams since 2022.

BASEBALL

"The only issue guys are having now is that whatever park you go to, every stadium is different," Minnesota All-Star pitcher Sonny Gray said. "The elements are different everywhere. Like when you're pitching in Minnesota when it's 30 degrees outside for the first month of the season, the balls are going to be hard, cold and dry, rather than when you're pitching in Cincinnati in the middle of the summer it's sticky and humid."

Tampa Bay pitcher Shane Bieber prefers a pre-tacked ball, such as Nippon Professional Baseball uses.

"We've seen that it's had success in Japan with consistent balls," he said. "Once we agree upon it as players and whatnot, I'm excited to see what happens."

Five pitchers have been suspended for 10 games each since MLB began its crackdown on banned grip substances in June 2021 by instituting

regular inspections by umpires.

Seattle's Hector Santiago and Arizona's Caleb Smith served suspensions in 2021 and three were disciplined this season: the Mets' Max Scherzer,

the Yankees' Domingo Germán on May 17 and the Mets' Drew Smith on June 14.

"The suspensions that we have had would fall into the category of

clear-to-egregious violations," Manfred said. "I understand that feeling someone's hand is inherently subjective. I think this is an area where umpires, again, with a difficult topic, have shown great judgment and discretion. I think gray areas, players have definitely been given the benefit of the doubt."

Baseballs currently are rubbed with mud to make them less slick.



Cleveland Guardians starting pitcher Shane Bieber rubs up a new ball while Atlanta Braves' Ozzie Albies runs the bases on a home run during the fifth inning of a baseball game in Cleveland. (AP)



Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates winning a point against Russia's Andrey Rublev in a men's singles match on day nine of the Wimbledon tennis championships in London. (AP)

Sports

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Jabeur ends Rybakina Wimbledon reign

Djokovic ties Federer with 46 Slam semifinals

WIMBLEDON, England, July 12, (AP): Aryna Sabalenka reached the semifinals at Wimbledon for the second straight time, with a one-year break in between because she was banned from the tournament in 2022.

Sabalenka, a Belarusian who is seeded second at the All England Club, had to sit out last year's competition along with other players from her country and from Russia because of the war in Ukraine. She advanced Wednesday by beating Madison Keys 6-2, 6-4 on No. 1 Court.

"It really feels amazing to be back in the semifinals. I can't wait to play in my second semifinal at Wimbledon," said Sabalenka, who lost to runner-up Karolina Pliskova in 2021. "Hopefully I can do better than I did last time."

Another player who was banned last year, Daniil Medvedev, reached the semifinals in the men's tournament. The second-seeded Russian beat American player Chris Eubanks 6-4, 1-6, 4-6, 7-6 (4) 6-1 on the same court.

Sabalenka's victory improved her record to 17-1 at major tournaments this year. She won the Australian Open and reached the semifinals at the French Open before her five wins so far on the grass at Wimbledon.

TENNIS

Sabalenka, the only former major champion remaining in the women's tournament, also improved her record to 6-0 in Grand Slam quarterfinal matches, and she did so despite much of the cheering going toward Keys on Wednesday.

"Thank you so much for the atmosphere, even though you supported her more," Sabalenka said on court. "I still enjoyed playing in front of you guys."

Sabalenka will next face Ons Jabeur, a sixth-seeded Tunisian who beat defending champion Elena Rybakina 6-7 (5), 6-4, 6-1 on Centre Court in a rematch of last year's final.

"I wish we can exchange this match from finals last year," said Jabeur, who lost to Rybakina in three sets in 2022. Jabeur won eight of the last nine games to reach the semifinals at a major tournament for the third time. She is 2-0 in the previous two, also reaching the final at last year's U.S. Open.

"I'm going to keep the spirit on the court and hopefully the crowd will be with me," Jabeur said of the match against Sabalenka.

Jabeur will play Sabalenka in the second match on Centre Court on Thursday for a spot in Saturday's final. Elina Svitolina will face Marketa Vondrousova in the early match.

Medvedev won the U.S. Open in 2021 and will be playing in the semifinals of a Grand Slam tournament for the sixth time - and first time at Wimbledon.

As Novak Djokovic pursues more history-making victories and more milestones, he is well aware that every opponent he faces would love nothing more than to stop him.

"I know they want ... to win. But it ain't happening, still," he told the crowd at Wimbledon on Tuesday after reaching a 46th Grand Slam semifinal to tie Roger Federer's record for men.

Hearing the spectators' loud reaction to that boast, Djokovic laughed and observed about himself: "Very humble."

His 4-6, 6-1, 6-4, 6-3 victory over Andrey Rublev was the 33rd in a row at the All England Club for Djokovic, moving him closer to a fifth consecutive championship and eighth overall there - which would pull him even with Federer on both counts.

"I feel," Rublev said about Djokovic, "like he's playing better and better."

Djokovic, a 36-year-old from Serbia, is also pursuing a 24th career major trophy. He already set the men's mark in that category by collecting No. 23 at the French Open last month, pulling ahead of Rafael Nadal. Federer is next on the list with 20.

The only real blip for Djokovic came when the No. 7-seeded Rublev broke him with a forehand winner to lead 5-4 at the outset, then served out the opening set.

From there, Djokovic saved all seven break points he faced and pulled away, dropping Rublev to 0-8 in Grand Slam quarterfinals.

"Every time when he had a chance, this little chance," Rublev said, "he (made) them. All of them." Well, not quite. Djokovic failed to convert any of his three break points in the opening set. After that? He went 5 for 9.

Next up for Djokovic is a matchup against No. 8 seed Jannik Sinner, who



Tunisia's Ons Jabeur stretches to return to Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina in a women's singles match on day ten of the Wimbledon tennis championships in London. (AP)



Inter Miami team co-owner David Beckham juggles a ball on the sideline during a training session for the MLS soccer team, Wednesday, July 12, 2023, in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. International soccer superstar Lionel Messi is expected to make his debut with the team in a match on July 21, after an introductory event on July 16. (AP)

made it to the semifinals at a major tournament for the first time by beating Roman Safiullin 6-4, 3-6, 6-2, 6-2 earlier Tuesday.

Djokovic has won both previous head-to-head meetings against Sinner, a 21-year-old from Italy. That includes in last year's Wimbledon quarterfinals, when Djokovic dropped the first two sets before coming through in five.

"It's for sure one of the toughest - if not the toughest - challenge," Sinner said about playing Djokovic.

The other two men's quarterfinals are Wednesday: No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz vs. No. 6 Holger Rune, and No. 3 Daniil Medvedev vs. unseeded Chris Eubanks.

On Friday, Sinner will be the latest to attempt to stop Djokovic, who is two wins away from heading to the U.S. Open in August with his sights on the first calendar-year Grand Slam for a man since Rod Laver accomplished the feat in 1969.

"Any tennis player wants to be in a position where everyone wants to win against you on the court. ... Pressure is part of what we do. It's part of our sport. It's never going to go away, regardless of how many Grand Slams you win or how many matches you win or how many years you are playing professionally on the tour," Djokovic said.

"The pressure is paramount every single time I come out on the court, particularly here, the Centre Court of Wimbledon. But at the same time, it awakens the most beautiful emotions in me and it motivates me beyond what I have ever dreamed of, actually, and inspires me to play my best tennis."

Philipsen secures 4th sprint win at Tour de France

MOULINS, France, July 12, (AP): Jasper Philipsen is in a class of his own when it comes to sprinting at the Tour de France. He is so strong that even when the teammate in charge of setting him up is not there, he still wins in the end.

The Belgian sprinter posted his fourth stage win at this year's Tour de France on Wednesday, taking his career tally to six.

"It's been an incredible Tour so far," Philipsen said after outclassing the field. "I can't realize how good it is all going, so I'm super proud and really happy with my shape. And also, to get through the final without problems is also a big challenge, and we managed to do it four times, so I'm super happy."

There were no major changes in the general classification: Jonas Vingegaard kept his 17-second lead over two-time champion Tadej Pogacar. Jai Hindley remained in third place, 2 minutes, 40 seconds off the pace.

Philipsen, who rides for Alpecin-Deceuninck, had been perfectly guided by his leadout man Mathieu van der Poel in his three previous stage wins. Left on his own this time, he perfectly timed his move and once again proved strongest in the frenetic last kilometer of the 180-kilometer (112 miles) Stage 11 from Clermont-Ferrand to Moulins in central France.

Philipsen has lost just one of the five mass sprints that took place at this year's Tour when Mad Pedersen won

CYCLING

Stage 8.

With van der Poel not taking part in Wednesday's sprint, Philipsen navigated his way through traffic at an average speed of 65.6 km/h (40.8 mph) in the last kilometer to join Mark Cavendish as the only active rider with at least four stage wins in a single Tour edition. Cavendish crashed out of the race last week.

"I can also win without (van der Poel), but of course, he makes it more easy," Philipsen said.

After Alexander Kristoff launched the sprint, Dylan Groenewegen countered with Philipsen on his wheel. The Belgian's power was too much to handle for Groenewegen, who had to be content with a runner-up finish. Phil Bauhaus completed the stage podium.

"I had to find my wheel a little bit,

Kuwait secure spot on the podium again

ALGIERS, July 12, (KUNA): Kuwaiti fencers grabbed one more medal, bronze, during competition in the Algeria-hosted Arab Games, bringing the total number of medals to nine: four silver and five bronze medals.

For the third day in a row, the Kuwaiti national team managed to secure a spot on the podiums for the fencing competitions that took place at the Women's Sports Center in Ben Aknoun (Algiers), where the Kuwaiti fencing team won a new bronze medal with the fluorescent weapon.

The Kuwaiti team that won today's medal came in third place in the fencing competition, namely the fluorescent weapon

and it's also finding the space, and it's hectic and dangerous for crashing, but I'm happy I could find a good wheel - Groenewegen - in the end, he opened up early, and I could go over," Philipsen summed up.

Following a day of furious racing in hot weather that took a toll on the peloton, Andrey Amador moved to the front immediately after the start of the stage but quickly noticed there were not a lot of riders interested in jumping into a break.

Amador for a while rode only a few

competition, and they are the champions Ali Al-Nassar, Ali Fadel, Abdulaziz Juma, and Saleh Abdul Karim.

It is noteworthy that the Kuwaiti team managed, since the beginning of the Arab Games, to

ARAB GAMES

snatch four medals in the athletics competition, two silver medals for each of the two champions, Yaqoub Al-Youha and Issa Al-Zankawi, and two bronze medals for the champion runner, Madawi Al-Shammari, and the champion, Abdulrahman Al-Azmi, in the javelin throw competition.

meters ahead of the bunch before Matias Louvel and Daniel Oss joined his effort as they broke away without facing resistance from the peloton.

With only three riders in the lead group, the breakaway was doomed to failure and the sprinters' team did not react, well aware that they would catch the trio further down the road. The main bunch was happy to sit back for a while, riding at an easy pace on long stretches of flat roads bordered by sunflowers and fields.



Belgium's Jasper Philipsen, wearing the best sprinter's green jersey, sprints towards the finish line to claim his fourth stage victory ahead of Netherlands' Dylan Groenewegen, just behind Philipsen (right), and Germany's Phil Bauhaus, on Philipsen's (left), to win the eleventh stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 180 kilometers (112 miles) with start in Clermont-Ferrand and finish in Moulins, France. (AP)

Torres 'links' up again with Unai

BIRMINGHAM, England, July 12, (AP): Spain defender Pau Torres is linking up again with Unai Emery, this time in England with Aston Villa.

Torres, a 26-year-old left-sided center back, played under Emery at Villarreal, the player's hometown club where he has been in the senior team since 2017. Together, they won the Europa League in 2021 and reached the Champions League semifinals a year later.

Torres moves for a reported initial fee of 32.5 million euros (\$36 million) and is joining a team that will be playing in the Europa Conference League in the upcoming season.

The post-Lionel Messi rebuilding continues at Paris Saint-Germain.

The French champions signed highly-rated midfielder Cher Ndour on Wednesday, making the Italian teenager its sixth new player of the offseason.

Following the departure of Messi and Sergio Ramos, coupled with the uncertainties regarding the future of Kylian

SOCCER

Mbappé at the club, PSG has been very active on the transfer market.

Russia midfielder Daler Kuzyaev has signed a two-year deal with French club Le Havre.

The newly-promoted club from the port city in the Normandy region said Kuzyaev, who was out of contract with Zenit St. Petersburg, will join his new teammates in the coming days.

United States forward Christian Pulisic arrived in Italy on Wednesday for a medical test with AC Milan before an expected transfer from Chelsea.

The 24-year-old Pulisic, who has one year left on his contract at Chelsea, is expected to sign a four-year deal with the Rossoneri and become the third American to play for the club after Oguuchi Onyewu and Sergiño Dest.

"I'm very happy to be here. I'm excited. I'm excited to start with this historic club," Pulisic told reporters waiting for him at Milan's Malpensa airport. "It's legendary and I'm really excited to come here and try to win some titles here."