



Maryam Rajavi, President of the National Council of Resistance of Iran leaves after meeting with the Italian parliamentarians who support the opposition to the Iranian regime, in Rome, Wednesday, July 12, 2023. (AP)

European Parliament calls for Palestinian State recognition

Israeli settlements declared illegal

BRUSSELS, July 13, (KUNA): The European Parliament (EP) has called on the European Union and its member states to support in principle a recognition of Palestinian statehood.

The EP meeting in Strasbourg today adopted with 338 votes in favour, 195 against with 102 abstentions a resolution expressing their strong support for a two-state solution on the basis of the 1967 borders with two sovereign, democratic states and with Jerusalem as their shared capital, noted an EP statement.

The resolution also advocates for the full respect of international law while reiterating the EU's commitment to the equal rights of all Israelis and Palestinians.

Stressing that it is unacceptable that no elections have been

held in the Palestinian territories in more than 16 years, EP strongly urges the political leadership of the PA to prepare for the holding of free and fair legislative and presidential ballots as soon as possible.

"Today is an important day. The European Parliament stress the importance of respect for international law in the pursuit of a just and lasting peaceful two-state solution, said rapporteur of the recommendation Evin Incir, an MEP from Sweden after the vote.

"A strong and democratic Palestinian Authority is an essential part of reaching that goal. An end to the occupation and to the expansion of Israeli settlements is equally vital," stressed Incir.

The resolution says that Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories are illegal under international law and demand their immediate end.

Pointing out that these settlements constitute a major obstacle to the viability of the two-state solution, including lasting peace and security, MEPs call for new efforts to end the latest cycle of settlement related violence and say the EU should consider sanction specifically addressing settlement expansion in the West Bank.

They also express concern about EU policy and EU financial assistance in the Palestinian territories being undermined by illegal settlements and demand compensation for the demolition of all EU-funded infrastructure in the area.

The text notes that, in 2022, 101 structures funded by the EU or EU member states valued at 337,019 EURO (USD 374,789) were demolished or seized by Israeli occupation forces.

The resolution reiterates the EU's strong support for the International Criminal Court's (ICC) work and its impartiality and neutrality.

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: Chargés d'Affaires of the Iranian Embassy Ibrahim Norouzi has confirmed the extradition of 11 Iranian prisoners from Kuwait to serve their prison sentence in their home country — near their families, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a statement to the daily, Norouzi disclosed that the extradition process was completed in cooperation with the concerned Kuwaiti authorities. He affirmed the strength of coordination between Kuwait and Tehran on the extradition of prisoners. He said about 100 prisoners have been extradited between the two countries over the past years.

He added this procedure is in line with the judicial cooperation agreement between the two countries and the result of efforts exerted by the joint consular committee. He also pointed out this is a confirmation of the statement of Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian on his commitment to take care of the Iranian community.

CAIRO: Egypt's president and Ethiopia's prime minister have met to discuss bilateral relations, including construction of a giant dam on the Blue Nile, ahead of a summit in Cairo to discuss potential resolutions to the deadly 12-week conflict in Sudan.

Their rare meeting at Cairo's Al-Ittihadiya Palace Wednesday preceded a summit that President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi is hosting on Sudan. Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is set to attend Thursday's high-stakes meeting, along with leaders from South Sudan, Chad, Eritrea, Central African Republic and Libya.

"The two leaders discussed on key bilateral & regional issues of interest to both parties in a spirit of cooperation," said a tweet from the Ethiopian prime minister's account.

The office of Egypt's presidency said that the two leaders spoke about the Renaissance Dam and the crisis in Sudan. No further details about the meeting were made public. (AP)

KUALA LUMPUR: Saudi Arabia inked Wednesday with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) a treaty of amity and cooperation. The signing took place on sidelines of Foreign Minister's Faisal bin Farhan visit to Indonesian capital of Jakarta to participate in 56th ASEAN foreign ministers' meeting.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi welcomed Saudi Arabia to the ASEAN family and underlined the necessity of working together as a positive power to achieve peace stability and prosperity in the Indo-pacific area, reported the state-run news agency.

Minister Marsudi indicated that several countries showed interest in signing the treaty, adding that Serbia's request has recently been approved, while Algeria's request is under review.

ASEAN foreign ministers support cooperation between the general secretariat, the Pacific Islands forum and the Indian Ocean Rim Association, as this furthers efforts bolstering dialogue, cooperation and comprehensiveness. (KUNA)

MANAMA: Bahraini Minister of Education Mohammad bin Mubarak Juma praised on Thursday the efforts exerted by the Gulf Arab States Educational Research Center (GASERC) for developing Gulf educational policies.

The minister added that GASERC plays a great role in considering the educational reality of the Gulf States and providing proper opportunities for exchanging expertise in this regard.

During his meeting with GASERC's visiting Director Mohammad Al-Shareka, the Bahraini minister welcomed the member states' representatives participating in the center's board meeting held in Bahrain on Wednesday.

On his part, Al-Shareka expressed his gratitude to Bahraini Ministry of Education for its continued support and contribution to the center in executing its research programs and activities.

Al-Shareka also praised the meeting which paved the way for closer cooperation between Bahraini Ministry of Education and the center. (KUNA)

BRUSSELS: The European Union deplored the veto by Russia yesterday on the UN Security Council Resolution 2672 (2023) to extend for additional six months the authorization of cross-border delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in northwest Syria.

"The non-renewal of UNSCR 2672 as a result of the Russian veto will further exacerbate the already dire humanitarian situation in northwest Syria and will gravely disrupt the delivery of life-saving humanitarian supplies to millions in need," said EU High Representative Josep Borrell and EU Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenarcic in a joint statement on Wednesday.

The EU "is deeply concerned about the impact of this decision and the further politicisation of humanitarian assistance to people in desperate need," said the statement and called on the UNSC to undertake every effort to find a solution that will enable cross-border assistance to continue. (KUNA)

HARARE, Zimbabwe: Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi was welcomed in Zimbabwe on Thursday by people singing songs criticizing the West as he arrived on what's expected to be the last stop of his three-nation Africa trip.

Raisi was greeted at Harare's international airport by Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa, who thanked the Iranian leader for showing "solidarity."

Both countries are under U.S. sanctions and Raisi's trip to Africa, which has already included stops in Kenya and Uganda, highlights Iran's efforts to build new partnerships in a bid to soften the impact of those heavy economic punishments.

Iran and Zimbabwe already have a joint permanent commission on political and trade relations. They also share historical ties and Mnangagwa thanked Raisi for Iran's help in a liberation war in the 1970s that eventually led to the southern African nation breaking free of white minority rule. (AP)



Arabian Oryx run during a dusty hot day at a conservation area in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, last week. (AP)

Sweden High Court rejects extradition to Turkey

Erdogan says NATO ratification for Sweden likely in October

Blast harms 3 Hezb militants

Accounts, personal data, finances at risk

Kaspersky reports Threads scams

BEIRUT, July 13, (AP): An explosion near Lebanon's border with Israel slightly wounded at least three members of the militant Hezbollah group, a Lebanese security official said, raising tensions in the area.

The three Hezbollah members were taken to a hospital near the scene of the explosion in the village of Bustan in the southern Lebanese province of Tyre, the official said on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

The Israeli army said in a statement that several suspects approached a security fence and attempted to sabotage it, drawing efforts by soldiers to force them to retreat. It posted surveillance footage showing four people in civilian clothing approaching the border fence, and running away after an explosion. The identity of the suspects is unknown, it said.

The Israeli army later told The Associated Press that soldiers had used a stun grenade. The incident took place hours before Hezbollah Secretary-General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah gave a speech to commemorate the start of a monthlong war between Israel and the militant group in 2006 that ended with a draw.

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said the army had used "nonlethal means" to deter people he called activists. "Anyone who tries us will get an answer," Gallant said. "We have a lot to do, and we will know how to do what is needed at the right time."

U.N. peacekeeping forces along the southern Lebanese border, known as UNIFIL, said they were investigating the situation. "In the meantime, the situation is extremely severe," UNIFIL said. "We urge everyone to cease any action that may lead to escalation of any kind."

LONDON, July 13: Just one week after its launch on July 5, Threads, the new microblogging app from Meta, has already amassed an impressive 100 million sign-ups. However, as is often the case with popular trends, scammers have wasted no time in capitalizing on its popularity. Kaspersky experts have discovered several deceptive tactics being used by scammers to exploit the app's user base. This involves primarily masquerading as the Threads app to trick users, possibly gaining unauthorized access to their accounts, personal data, and even their finances.

Fraudsters have developed phishing pages that mimic a non-existent web version of Threads. Users are deceived into entering their login credentials, accidentally divulging their private information to scammers. Since Threads is linked to other Meta services, users may also face the risk of losing access to various social media accounts, such as Instagram and Facebook. Not only does this pose priva-

cy concerns like identity theft and doxing but more worryingly it carries financial risks. Personal banking information or even corporate finances, as businesses use these accounts for creating ad campaigns, may end up in the wrong hands.

Another scam also involves fictitious service called Threads Coin, which claims to offer enhanced possibilities by bridging the gap between the physical and digital worlds, specifically within the Metaverse. Users are tempted to purchase this coin using Ethereum. However, the only outcome users would experience is financial loss.

Another scheme presents users with the opportunity to gain new followers on the new social network for free. They can opt for 10,000, 25,000, or 50,000 followers. Once the desired option is selected, the user is prompted to undergo a verification process. This involves selecting one of the available options, which may

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VILNIUS, Lithuania, July 13, (AP): Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said that Sweden's NATO membership bid would not be ratified by Turkey's parliament before October, but that he hopes for a swift ratification once lawmakers return from a break.

Turkey on Monday withdrew its objections to Sweden joining the alliance, a step toward the unity that Western leaders have been eager to demonstrate in the face of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The decision by Erdogan was a significant move toward Sweden's membership and came after days of intensive meetings.

Erdogan's comments Wednesday were his first public confirmation of his decision to refer Sweden's membership to parliament, where his party and its allies command a majority.

He said at a news conference at the NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, that the process would have to wait until after lawmakers return from a summer recess. The new session opens Oct. 1.

"The parliament is not in session for the upcoming two months ... but our target is to finalize this matter as swiftly as possible," he said.

The president's apparent change of heart - after a year of blocking Sweden's bid - came after Sweden pledged deeper cooperation with Turkey on counterterrorism and to support Turkey's ambition to revive its EU membership bid. In addition, the NATO secretary-general said the alliance would establish a special coordinator for counterterrorism.

Highlighted

Erdogan highlighted these commitments, describing a draft roadmap of 17 articles framed by Sweden and presented by Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson to Erdogan when they met Monday.

"A bilateral security mechanism will be established at the ministerial level and we will increase our cooperation and collaboration in our fight against the terrorist organizations," he said, referring to the new Turkey-Sweden deal.

"At the same time, Sweden will actively support the Republic of Turkey in the update of the customs union, visa liberalization and the membership process of Turkey to the European Union."

Erdogan added that Sweden will help lift arms embargoes imposed on Turkey. "After those promises are kept, we will of course continue with (Sweden's NATO) membership process."

Finland has already become the 31st member of the alliance, and Sweden is on deck to become the 32nd. Both Nordic countries were historically nonaligned until the war increased fears of Russian aggression.

Turkey wants "this process to be over as soon as possible," Erdogan said, referring to the ratification process. The deal would first be discussed by the parliament's foreign affairs committee before going to a vote in the main chamber.

Erdogan must also win over the political parties aligned to his Justice and Development Party (AKP) that give him a parliamentary majority following elections in May. These include a small Islamist group, which on Wednesday said it opposed Sweden joining NATO as it "allows attacks on Islamic values" - a reference to the burning of Qurans during protests in Stockholm.

Erdogan also addressed a central point of contention over Sweden's bid - what Ankara perceives as its soft stance on terrorism, particularly Kurdish militants and those it associates with an attempted coup against Erdogan in 2016. Turkey has also complained in the past about what it considers terrorist activity in other European countries.

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Members of Meira Paibis, a powerful vigilante group of Hindu majority Meitei women, block traffic as they check vehicles for the presence of members from the rival Christian tribal Kuki community, in Imphal, capital of the northeastern Indian state of Manipur, Monday, June 19, 2023. Manipur is caught in a deadly conflict between the two ethnic communities that have armed themselves and launched brutal attacks against one another. This is an unseen war, barely visible on the country's countless TV news channels and newspapers, a conflict hidden behind the blanket shutdown of the internet. (AP) - See Page 2



## OPINION OTHER VOICES

Donations reflect ancient Hinduism

# Modi's gift of 10 danas carries deep symbolism

By Jeffery D. Long  
Elizabethtown College

(The Conversation) During his state visit to the United States in late June 2023, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi presented several gifts to U.S. President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden. Among those were the "10 danas," items with symbolic importance in Indian traditions. I study these traditions in my work as a scholar of Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. Each of the danas is believed to have an auspicious meaning.



The 10 danas are (1) til, or sesame seeds; (2) a gold coin; (3) a cow, though Biden received a silver image of a coconut as a substitute; (4) a piece of land, in place of which Biden received a piece of fragrant sandalwood; (5) ghee (clarified butter); (6) cloth - for which Biden received a piece of silk; (7) long-grained rice; (8) a piece of jaggery, a very sweet brown sugar made in India from palm tree sap; (9) a silver coin; and (10) some salt.

What does each substance represent?

Sesame seeds are a symbol of immortality. According to a story in the Puranas, or books of ancient lore about the Hindu deities, during the churning of the ocean, the sweat of Hindu Lord Vishnu dropped to the Earth in the form of sesame seeds. The churning of the ocean was an event, famous in Hindu literature, in which the devas, or deities, and the asuras, or demonic beings, joined forces to acquire a life-giving substance called amrita that had sunk to the ocean floor. This required great

exertion, especially on the part of Lord Vishnu, who transformed himself into a giant tortoise to play his role in the process.

Gold is considered purifying and also is symbolic of wealth and prosperity.

The cow is a symbol of life and of nurturing. The substitution of the silver image of a coconut for an actual cow reflects a common Hindu ritual in which an actual coconut is used in a ceremony to substitute for some other object that is unavailable or that would be impractical to include.

The gift of a piece of land also represents wealth. Traditionally, the gift of an actual piece of land is something one could draw upon in times of financial difficulty. It could be cultivated, rented out, and so on.

Ghee, or clarified butter, is an element in Hindu rituals going back to at least the second millennium B.C. It represents both nourishment and healing.

Cloth represents financial security: one's ability to obtain the necessities of life, such as decent clothing.

Rice, in India, has long been a symbol of fertility. The ability to grow rice has been vital to life in most of India since before recorded history.

The sweetness of the jaggery represents good news. Giving it represents a hope that one will receive good news and hear auspicious things in the years ahead.

Silver is connected with the Moon in Hindu symbolism - as gold is connected with the Sun. The gift of silver is a wish that one will have

good dreams and undisturbed sleep.

Finally, salt is a symbol of Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity. Like salt, she is said to have emerged from the ocean. Salt thus represents lifelong prosperity.

The 10 danas are given to someone who has seen 1,000 full moons, or "sahasra chandra." This is an ancient practice first described in a set of texts called the "Grihya Sutras," which date from roughly 500 B.C. These sutras, or authoritative texts, describe household rituals and regulations. The practices they enjoin are rooted in the culture of the Vedas, the oldest sacred literature of Hinduism.

The full moon is an auspicious symbol in many Indian traditions. The full moon day, or Purnima, of each month is a time when many people engage in religious observances. The full moon day is the culmination of the "bright half," or the shukla paksha, of each month in the Indian lunar calendar. The bright half is the roughly two-week period during which the Moon is waxing, and is seen as a better time to undertake any important activity. Seeing the full moon is an auspicious act, so having seen a thousand full moons is a particularly auspicious and noteworthy event in one's life.

The ceremony is typically performed for someone who is between the ages of 81 and 84, though Modi gave the 10 gifts to Biden on the occasion of his reaching the age of 80. Giving these gifts amounts to congratulating the recipient for having lived a long life - itself a sign of virtue and wisdom - and wishing continued good luck, health and prosperity. (AP)



An Indian army soldier peers through binoculars as he monitors situation in nearby villages in Siden near Churachandpur, in the northeastern Indian state of Manipur, Tuesday, June 20, 2023. Two months since an ethnic conflict began, despite the army's presence, hundreds of roadblocks and sandbag bunkers dot highways across the torn Manipur lands. Most of these imaginary borders are controlled by the warring communities. Those left unattended have been taken over by Indian forces who peep from binoculars into

each side where armed bands in camouflage rev motorcycles. Inset: Kim Neineng, 43, a tribal Kuki, cries as she narrates the killing of her husband, at a relief camp in Churachandpur, in the northeastern Indian state of Manipur, Tuesday, June 20, 2023. Neineng escaped with her four children to a nearby relief camp when a Meitei mob descended on their village. Her husband was killed by the mob - beaten with iron bars, his legs chopped off and then picked and tossed in the raging fire that had already engulfed his home. (AP)

Remote Indian region on the brink of civil war

## Mayhem in Manipur ... does anyone know?

Zuan Vaiphei is armed and prepared to kill. He is also ready to die. Vaiphei spends most of his days behind the sandbag walls of a makeshift bunker, his fingers resting on the trigger of a 12-gauge shotgun. Some 1,000 yards ahead of him, between a field of tall green grass and wildflowers, is the enemy, peering from parapets of similar sandbag fortifications, armed and ready.

"The only thing that crosses our mind is will they approach us; will they come and kill us? So, if they happen to come with weapons, we have to forget everything and protect ourselves," the 32-year-old says, his voice barely audible amid an earsplitting drone of cicadas in Kangvai village that rests along the foothills of India's remote northeastern Manipur state.

Dozens of such fortifications mark one of the many front lines that don't exist on any map and yet dissect Manipur in two ethnic zones - between people from hill tribes and those from the plains below. There, amid endless groves of bamboo and oak, young men walk with rifles slinging from their shoulders.

"Our mothers, our sisters, they fast for us, praying to God," Vaiphei says, standing at the mouth of his bunker where he keeps a copy of the Bible alongside him.

Two months ago, Vaiphei was teaching economics to students when the simmering tensions between the two communities exploded in a bloodletting so horrific that thousands of Indian troops who were sent to quell the unrest remain paralyzed by it.

The two warring factions have formed armed militias, laying bare the ethnonationalist fissures that have long threatened to worsen instability in India's restive northeastern region.

Tucked in the mountains on the border with Myanmar, Manipur was once ruled by a patchwork of kings and tribal confederations. It appears to be a different world from the rest of India, a culture that borrows heavily from East Asia. Manipur is also a state that has never been fully reconciled to central rule and some guerrilla groups still pursue an effort to break away from India.

Ethnic clashes between different groups have occasionally erupted in the past, mostly pitting the minority Christian Kukis against mostly Hindu Meiteis, who form a narrow majority in the state. But no one was prepared for the killings, arson and a rampage of hate that followed in May, after Meiteis had demanded a special status that would allow them to buy land in the hills populated by Kukis and other tribal groups, as well as a share of government jobs.

Police armories were looted. Within days, both sides were armed to unleash havoc.

Witnesses interviewed by The Associated Press described how angry mobs and armed gangs swept into villages and towns, burning down houses, massacring civilians, and driving tens of thousands from their homes. More than 50,000 people have fled to packed relief camps. Those who fought back were killed, sometimes bludgeoned to death or beheaded, and the injured tossed into raging fires, according to witnesses and others with first-hand knowledge of the events.

The deadly clashes, which have left at least 120 dead by the authorities' conservative estimates, persist despite the army's presence. Isolated villages are still raked with gunfire. Wide swathes have turned into ghost towns, scorched by fire so fierce that it left tin roofs melted and twisted. Burnt buildings and churches stare out at the narrow dirt roads. In front-

line neighborhoods, women join night patrols with flaming torches.

Manipur is India's unseen war - barely visible on the country's countless TV news channels and newspapers, a conflict hidden behind the blanket shutdown of the internet that the government said was used to fuel the violence by spreading disinformation and rumors. The internet ban has severed communications in Manipur, locked out reporters and left the state's 3.7 million people scrambling for a sliver of information.

"It is as close to civil war as any state in independent India has ever been," said Sushant Singh, a senior fellow at the Centre for Policy Research in India and an Indian army veteran. He said the armed civilians were not organized as militant or terrorist groups, but "these are local people, people of one ethnicity, fighting against other ethnicity."

The conflict has also divided state forces, with many defecting to their communities along with their arms and in some cases more sophisticated weaponry like snipers, light machine guns and mortars. A number of former army soldiers and policemen have been shot dead by either faction.

The unrest has been met with nearly two months of silence from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose Bharatiya Janata Party rules Manipur. Modi's powerful home minister, Amit Shah, visited the state in May and tried to make peace between the two sides. Since then, state lawmakers - many of whom escaped after their homes were torched by mobs - have huddled in New Delhi to try to find a solution.

The state government, nonetheless, has assured Manipur is returning to normalcy. On June 25, Chief Minister N. Biren Singh said that the government and armed forces had been "able to control the violence to a great extent." However, Singh's visit to a front line coincided with fresh

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editor's choice



## Prayer Timings

Fajr .....	03:24	Asr .....	15:28
Sunrise ..	04:57	Maghrib ..	18:50
Zohr .....	11:54	Isha .....	20:20

# Local

## Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

**By Day:** Very hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind with speeds of 08-38 km/h.  
**By Night:** Hot to rather hot

## Weather

and relatively humid over coastal areas with light variable wind to moderate northwesterly wind with speeds of 08-28 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	46	34
Kuwait Airport	47	35

Abdaly	47	33
Jahra	48	33
Salmiyah	42	34
Ahmadi	45	36
Nuwaisib	48	33
Wafra	47	33

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

## Mayhem in

Continued from Page 2

clashes that left three people dead, officials said. In some ways, the bitter fight between the two factions is driven by deeply rooted problems that have festered for years.

Meiteis have long blamed minority Kukis for the state's rampant drug problems and accused them of harboring migrants from Myanmar. The administration, mostly made up of Meiteis, also appears to be coming down heavily on Kukis after Singh alleged that some of those involved in the latest clashes were "terrorists."

However, India's top military officer, Gen. Anil Chauhan, who visited the state in May, had a different view, saying "this particular situation in Manipur has nothing to do with counter-insurgency and is primarily a clash between two ethnicities."

Some Meiteis fear that the hill tribes are using illegal drugs to finance a war to finish them off. On the other side, Kukis worry for their safety and now seek federal rule over the state and administrative autonomy for the community.

Such concerns gave way to violence on May 3, when clashes first erupted in Manipur's Churachandpur district and soon spread to other parts of the state as frenzied mobs attacked one village after another.

It reached A. Ramesh Singh's home on May 4 in Phayeng, a predominantly Meitei village some 17 kilometers (10 miles) from the state capital Imphal.

The previous day, Singh had kept a vigil outside his village whose residents, more than 200 of them, were expecting mobs of Kukis to descend from an adjacent hill. A former soldier, Singh carried a licensed gun with him, his son, Robert Singh, said.

The night of the raid, Singh fired shots, some in the air and some at the mobs, but was hit in his leg. Wounded and unable to walk, he watched his village being ransacked, before he was abducted with four other people and dragged up the hills, his son said.

The entire village gathered in a nearby open area, praying for the return of their neighbors.

"We didn't know if he was dead, but we prayed. We prayed he would return," Robert, 26, said on a recent afternoon at his house.

Robert joined the search for his father, shouting his name as they hiked up the hill. No one answered.

The next day, Robert was told his father's body was found in a grove. He was shot in the head.

"Please save us. This is our last word to the world," Robert pleaded, folding his hands, his head shaved in a sign of bereavement.

Singh's body was burned according to Hindu rituals and the remains were buried in a grave nearby. On a recent afternoon, his wife, Lilapati Devi, and Robert trudged towards it to pay their respects. As Singh's grave became visible from a distance, Devi began to howl and called her husband's name. "Are you at peace, my love?" she wailed.

The anguish of victims also resonates quietly through hundreds of relief camps where displaced Kukis - who have suffered most deaths and destruction of homes and churches - are taking shelter.

Kim Neineng, 43, and her husband had enjoyed years of peace in Lailampat village. He farmed the fields. She sold the produce in the market. They were welded to each other by love.

On the afternoon of May 5, Neineng went outside her house to check on noise. Out of breath, she rushed inside and told her husband what she had seen: a Meitei mob, many of them armed, had descended on their village, screaming and hurling abuses.

Neineng's husband knew what it meant. He asked her to escape with their four children and not look back, promising he would take care of the cattle and their home. She quickly packed her belongings and ran to a nearby relief camp.

A day later, more of her neighbors reached the shelter and told Neineng what had happened to her husband.

When the mob reached their house, the husband tried to reason with them, but they wouldn't listen. Soon, they started beating him with iron bars. More armed men arrived and chopped off his legs. Then they picked him up and tossed him in the raging fire that had already engulfed his home.

Neighbors found his charred body on the scorched floor.

"They tortured and treated him like an animal, without any humanity. When I think of his last moments, I can't comprehend what he must have felt," Neineng said, barely choking out words.

No one in Neineng's relief camp wants to return home. But she says she would still like to go one last time and visit the place where her husband was killed.

"Maybe I will just go to feel his presence. So that his soul is at peace," she said.

Manipur's war and its ugliness spell horror for the victims and signify something deeper: This remote region is slowly cracking apart.

Two months since the conflict began, hundreds of roadblocks and sandbag bunkers dot highways across the torn Manipur lands. Most of these imaginary borders are controlled by the warring communities. Those left unattended have been taken over by Indian forces who peep from binoculars into each side where armed bands in camouflage rev motorcycle.

Surveillance drones sometimes circle high overhead over the checkpoints. Those who belong to the wrong ethnic group cannot pass through. Convoys with food and other essential supplies are escorted by the army. There is a curfew in place.

Some villagers have set up fortifications made of bamboo around their houses, chiseling its edges in the shape of spears to keep mobs away. Others have painted their ethnicity on doors of their homes in fears that they could be burned due to mistaken identity.

Bursts of gunfire are followed by long lulls in which the armed opponents take smoke breaks and drink beer.

Yet, there are signs it could get worse as each side is vying for control of villages or seizing them back - a guerrilla tactic that sometimes leads to deadly gunfights, use of mortar shells and in one instance a car bombing that left three people critically injured.

Both Kukis and Meiteis are asking questions they thought they would never ask: Should they also pick up arms and fight?

Vaiphei, the economics teacher who has taken up arms, is certain it will be a long-drawn fight. For each one who is killed, another will take his place, he says. (AP)

# Two bills ratified as parties bury hatchet

Ex-speaker Al-Ghanim's proposal turned down

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh  
Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, July 13: The National Assembly has ratified the Housing and Retirees Health Insurance bills in its special session Thursday.**

A total of 17 MPs submitted the bill on establishing shareholding companies that will be tasked to implement housing projects. The Assembly unanimously approved the bill in its first and second readings on Thursday. It can be recalled that the nullified

2022 Assembly approved the bill in its first reading.

The bill, which consists of 40 articles, allows local and international private companies to help in addressing the housing issue through the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) system for a period of 40 years. The investors will provide the infrastructure, benefit from commercial businesses in each housing project and construct the houses for citizens. It gives the citizens the option to construct their own houses. Citizens will also benefit from the housing projects as the shares of the companies will be offered for public subscription.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Al Fahd thanked the Assembly for ratifying the bill, pointing out this is the first fruit of the legislative-executive cooperation.

Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun also expressed his gratitude to the two authorities

for their cooperation in approving the bill in the interest of citizens.

All the MPs agreed on the need for the government to immediately issue the executive regulations for this law.

MP Adel Al-Damkhi hopes the government will not put obstacles in front of the investors in order to attract the best international companies. He called for laying down regulations to stop citizens from selling the shares allocated for them in order to prevent monopoly.

Following are some of the amendments made to the bill during the session:

■ Before the public subscription announcement, the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) must publish a summary of the feasibility study on the shareholding companies including the plans, number of houses and investment projects.

■ The capital of every company will be specified according to the cost and nature of the project assigned to them.

■ The shares will be divided as follows: 25 to 50 percent for public subscription, six to 24 percent for PAHW and other public institutions, and 26 to 49 percent for the companies with the lowest and best offer.

■ The contracts signed by PAHW and the winning companies must stipulate the period for completion of infrastructure and construction works.

■ Houses will be distributed as per PAHW Law number 47/1993.

■ PAHW shall lay down the regulations governing the relationship between the companies and beneficiaries, while a citizen is not allowed to buy more than one house to ensure the law benefits the largest number of citizens. It prohibits beneficiaries from buying houses until they obtain the ownership documents. A beneficiary can terminate the contract with the company and reclaim his money in case of delay in the implementation of the project, violation of the contract and other conditions stipulated in the law.

■ The companies are obliged to carry out regular maintenance works and give 10-year warranty to the beneficiaries.

■ The companies are allowed to benefit from the revenues of commercial businesses in the residential areas for 40 years. This period will be extended by 10 years if the companies provide more services.

■ The concerned public institutions must provide basic services including roads leading to the residential areas and remove all obstacles.

■ The housing projects covered by this law are exempted from the regulations of the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) and advance monitoring of the State Audit Bureau (SAB).

■ The imported construction materials that will be used for the implementation of housing projects are exempted from customs fees.

■ PAHW must regularly submit reports on the performance of the companies to the Council of Ministers and provide the Assembly with copies of these reports.

In addition, the Assembly approved unanimously the bill on amending law number 114/2014 to add more categories to the beneficiaries of the health insurance for retirees in the first and second readings.

The additional categories include married Kuwaiti women who are covered by the social allowance, divorcees and widows. All these women should be above 50 years old.

The Assembly rejected the proposal of Al-Ghanim to add the disabled to the beneficiaries.

It also approved recommendations to study the possibility of the government signing health insurance contracts with companies which meet Islamic Sharia conditions and establishment of a unit to receive the complaints of the beneficiaries of health insurance for retirees (Afia).

Meanwhile, Housing Affairs Committee Chairman MP Hassan Jawhar explained the bill is aimed at forging partnership between the government, private sector investors and citizens that will get a share of the profits of the companies. He affirmed the State will not bear any cost for the implementation of housing projects, which will greatly contribute to national income.

He pointed out that similar laws succeeded in many countries like Saudi Arabia where the housing sector is the third biggest source of national income, after oil and other investments.

He added the law stipulates the provision of infrastructure in three residential cities -- Sabriya, Nawaf Al-Ahmad and South Khairan -- with a total capacity of 100,000 houses.

He said many institutions, parties and individuals contributed to the ratification of the law that started in 2020, continued in 2022 and competed in 2023. He praised the efforts exerted by former Minister of Housing Affairs Ammar Al-Ajmi, PAHW, Kuwait Municipality, Ministry of Finance, Kuwait Credit Bank and Minister of Justice and State Minister of Housing Affairs Faleh Al-Raqaba.

Rapporteur of the committee MP Abdulaziz Al-Saqabi revealed there are 25,000 vacant plots in different residential areas and 15,000 of which are monopolized by 146 individuals. He said the number of housing grant applications is expected to reach 220,000 after 20 years. He then stressed the need to ratify other laws to achieve the sustainable housing goal.



National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun in discussions with an unidentified deputy. Photo by Rizk Taufiq

## Kuwait leadership congratulates Montenegro

KUWAIT CITY, July 13, (KUNA):

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable of congratulations to the President of the Republic of Montenegro Jakov Milatovic, on the occasion of his country's national day.

In his cable, His Highness the Amir wished the president good health, further progress, and prosperity for the people of Montenegro.

### Crown Prince

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Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Dr. Fatima Al-Salem receives Pakistan's Ambassador to the country Malik Muhammad Farooq in her office. KUNA photo

## KUNA chief, Pakistan envoy talk media ties

Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Dr. Fatima Al-Salem received Pakistani Ambassador to Kuwait Malik Muhammad Farouq and discussed developing media cooperation Thursday.

During the meeting, Dr. Al-Salem stressed the need to develop relations between the two sides, especially in media.

She noted that KUNA aims to develop its services and news bulletin and has a plan to expand in the east through activating previously signed agreements and memorandums of understanding with news agencies and media bodies in East, Central and South Asia countries, mainly

the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP), she added.

Moreover, Dr. Fatima Al-Salem underlined the importance of sharing experience through joint training courses, in the light of the recent development in digital media.

On his part, Ambassador Farouq said that media plays a big role in bringing nations and cultures together, while also shaping the countries' foreign policies.

He hailed KUNA's role in supporting Kuwait's foreign policy and diplomatic relations, hoping for further cooperation between the two sides in media, to keep up the strong political ties between Kuwait and Pakistan. (KUNA)

## Get married in winter, part ways in summer

KUWAIT CITY, July 13: Statistics issued by the Central Statistical Administration on marriages and divorces for 2022 show most Kuwaitis marry in winter, and part ways in the summer, reports Al-Rai daily.

And this is exactly what happened especially during August since 644 di-

vorces were recorded and 640 in June. According to details published by the office, 969 marriages between Kuwaitis were recorded in March, 886 in February, 822 in December and 814 in November, while the highest number of divorces (644) were recorded in August. The lowest number of marriages was

recorded between a Kuwaiti couple in April (486 cases), as well as the lowest number of divorces for a Kuwaiti couple (409 cases).

The total number of divorces during 2022 was 8,307 cases, including 6,393 divorce cases for a Kuwaiti husband and 1914 for a non-Kuwaiti husband.

## MoE mulls new mechanism

## Exams to measure student's ability

KUWAIT CITY, July 13: The Ministry of Education (MoE) is working on changing the mechanism for preparing high school exams in accordance with the global trend, as the Minister of Education Dr. Hamad Al-Adwani asked the technical guidance body to coordinate with the educational research and curricula sector to prepare a study in this regard, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to an educational source, the aim of this approach is for the exams to be a tool to measure the student's ability to understand the scientific material, and not to memorize and indoctrinate.

The technical guidance will also propose a change in the testing mechanism, so that there are activities on the basis of which the learner is evaluated throughout the academic year, and that the test is not the only one that affects the total score, with questions prepared in a multiple-choice manner, and other questions related to basic concepts in the curriculum.

The source said, "The study may take months and needs specialists for evaluation, as it is a joint work and not an individual one for one party without the other."

The public education sector will address the curriculum sector in the coming days to coordinate and form a work team. It may include

some specialists from the Kuwait University or the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training."

**Back from Hajj mission:** The Public Relations and Media Department of the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD) said the head of the DGFD Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Mekrad, received members of the DGFD delegation who participated in the Kuwaiti Hajj mission, reports Al-Anba daily.

Lieutenant General Al-Mekrad listened to a detailed explanation from the head of the delegation, Brigadier General Abdulaziz Nasser, on how the delegation works and the method of inspection of the Kuwaiti Hajj campaign headquarters in Makkah Al-Mukarramah, and to ensure that they meet the requirements of safety and fire prevention, in order to preserve the safety of the pilgrims of the Holy House of God.

Al-Mekrad thanked the members of the delegation, and praised their efforts that contributed to the success of the Hajj season.

Meanwhile, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) has announced the nomination of 3,631 citizens to work in various government agencies, reports Al-Anba daily.



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# Abdali Port Customs struggling after expiry of service contract

Nazaha refers top ex-PAI official to Prosecution

**KUWAIT CITY, July 13:** Amidst extremely difficult circumstances, the General Administration of Customs is exerting every effort to protect the country from the entry of all kinds of prohibited items. However, these efforts may not be sufficient with the expiry and non-renewal of the contract of the investing company to provide services at the Abdali Customs Port, reports *Al-Rai* daily.

Since the month of May, the company has withdrawn inspection devices for luggage, vehicles, and trucks. It also withdrew handling workers, which has burdened the port inspectors who have come to rely on their intelligence and experience in inspecting luggage and private vehicles.

As for the trucks, it has been agreed with the Ministry of Interior to send them in shifts to Suleibiya customs to perform inspection services.

According to customs sources, the Abdali port is Kuwait's gateway to Europe, from which trucks and vehicles enter and exit throughout the day. Therefore, the presence of modern inspection devices, such as the truck inspection device, is necessary due to its importance and support for the inspectors, especially since they deal with professional smugglers in smuggling routes.

## Council for Family Affairs acts to keep in check domestic violence

**KUWAIT CITY, July 13:** Acting Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs Dr. Maryam Al-Azmi stressed on the need to develop a plan to spread awareness about domestic violence and the protection of women's and children's rights, reports *Al-Rai* daily.



Dr Al-Azmi

The absence of these devices disrupts the customs system, and leaves a security vacuum that may be exploited by smugglers.

The sources indicated that no new tender has been floated so far despite the request sent by the General Administration of Customs several times to the responsible authorities to expedite the provision of inspection equipment and handling workers.

They revealed that the number of inspectors per shift at the port is 40, and they work for 48 consecutive hours in a bad work environment as a result of the lack of adequate housing and in a hot and open atmosphere.

The sources said, after the company withdrew handling workers, the role of the customs inspector also includes unloading luggage, manu-

ally searching personal vehicles and trucks, and using sniffer dogs, which distracts the inspectors' efforts between transporting the luggage and inspecting it carefully to prevent the entry of prohibited items.

They stated that the number of private vehicles coming to Kuwait two months ago amounted to 10,944, and those exiting was 11,658, (more than 22,000 cars), in addition to the thousands of trucks that are inspected before being sent to the Sulaibiya port, which reflects the volume of work and the great responsibility that rests on the shoulders of customs officers.

The sources affirmed that the burden is heavy on the customs inspectors, with the absence of supportive inspection devices, especially in light of the need for constant vigilance and caution, and

the provision of all means to protect the country from the entry of smugglers and contraband.

**Ex-top official referred to PP:** The Public Authority for Anti-Corruption (Nazaha) announced a former senior official of the Public Authority for Industry has been referred to the Public Prosecution, on suspicion of forging official documents, reports *Al-Qabas* daily.

Nazaha affirmed its intention to continue efforts and procedures regarding examining and collecting inferences and investigations in all serious information that fulfills the conditions it receives, and always appreciates the role of whistleblowers in exercising their role in helping to access the necessary information and data on corruption cases.

She made the statement after a meeting of the council's Family Awareness and Counseling Team, which she chairs, with members from the concerned authorities.

Al-Azmi expressed the team's aspiration to discuss ways of cooperation with civil society institutions to achieve the principle of community partnership for the benefit of all segments of society.

She added one of the team's most important functions is to prepare awareness programs regarding protection from domestic violence and highlighting it on social and digital media.

The team also prepares training programs that focus on the importance of family cohesion and its role in preserving society.

Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila, a member of the teaching staff at the Kuwait University and a member of the awareness and counseling team, confirmed that the university is fully prepared to start awareness programs and introduce the law regarding the protection from domestic violence for university students.

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## diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

### 'Early deviation seen in ... parliamentary work'

"AFTER the results of the National Assembly elections were declared on June 7, 2023, we indicated the need for the majority, and even the presidency and office of the parliament, to govern the course of the members of the National Assembly, so that it is characterized by deliberation, wisdom, and the pursuit of priorities that do not arouse the discontent among Kuwaitis or the majority of them, and are not impulsive with practices that confuse the state and its course," columnist Dr. **Mohammad Al-Maqatei** wrote for *Al-Jarida* daily.

"It is illogical and prudent to point arrows of accountability or early political excitement towards the government before the lapse of a reasonable period of time, and before the completion of files, pending popular issues, or suspended public services, because this is a gradual process that achieves popular rallying, national credibility, and building bridges of remarkable cooperation with the government.

"Although the National Assembly is barely three weeks old since its inauguration, we already see the hectic activity since MPs have already raised multiple issues without priority and without coordination or in a balanced manner, and even pushing to use political tools of accountability in a hasty manner and appear to be in a frantic race in an illogical or unreasonable manner.

"Here we find that parliamentary queries have been lined up which we feel are unacceptable and illogical, and does not reflect sophistication and political acumen in the use of these tools, which will lead corner the government and which will bring about a state of realistic obstruction unable to answer parliamentary queries, which means stopping the development wheel abruptly.

"On another track, we find that the wheel of legislation in which the National Assembly began its course also does not bode well for the predominance of wisdom, discernment, and good management among the members. Here, the numbers of law that have been proposed are increasing abnormally, and they lack focus, harmony and rationalization of priorities.

"It is called the populist proposals that tickle the electorate's enthusiasm and their impulse to achieve electoral gains away from the public interest and nation-building, which makes parliamentary action lose its link and its rational path, and indicates an early deviation, and an imminent return to square one in the scope of tensions, conflicts, and a frantic race among members, and they know with certainty that nothing will be accomplished if they continue to tickle the emotions of the masses which will neither benefit the state of the citizens.

The reports of the parliamentary committees entered show each of them have something to brag about compared to other committees and talk about their superiority over their competitors, which is stress, miscarriage and deviation of parliamentary work.

"Among the most dangerous slip-ups for the National Assembly, or some of its members, is submitting proposals that are not related to citizens and their rights, nor to the state, its path and its problems, but rather proposals that have nothing to do with the constitution, but rather transgress its provisions and violate its texts far from defending the rights and freedoms of the people, for which they have sworn on oath, and the clearest picture of this deviation can be seen when some members proposed granting non-citizens (bedoun) rights established by law, contrary to Article 91 of the Constitution."

"This path indicates an early deviation in the parliamentary work, and it deviates from the rational path. It also mixes the papers with negligence or indifference, which will increase and multiply the country's woes."

#### Also:

"It is no secret to anyone the pleasure of working within the walls of higher education institutions among scholars, in addition to life among huge libraries that contain rare 'papers' of references, for those who thirst for knowledge, but like any job there is the other side that is steeped in bureaucracy shackled on administrative disputes," columnist Dr. **Nada Suleiman Al Mutawei** wrote for *Al-*

*Jarida* daily.

The following are excerpts from the experiences of university professors, which were published in several books and memoirs, including the obstacles that higher education institutions in our Arab world in general have faced and are still facing.

"One, insisting on assigning faculty members many administrative tasks that the administrative specialist can perform instead of the academician whose preoccupation with administrative burdens delays his research productivity.

"Two, personal disputes overshadow relationships and become a disabling feature of the mechanism of building professional relationships, and thus are negatively affected by the job environment.

"Three, complex procedures in administrative work still make the researchers lose the ability to be productive in research and the ability to innovate and develop.

"Four, the absence of methods for detecting scientific plagiarism, as universities continue to ignore scientific plagiarism is a reason for students' persistence in seeking help from others to write research and insisting on writing without mentioning the scientific source.

"Today, with the spread of scientific plagiarism detection programs in all languages, its approval has become an obligatory necessity for the student before submitting his research.

"The phenomenon of 'flattening' or simplification, as the late Dr. Abd al-Malik al-Tamimi called it, is due to the large number of positions or their succession for faculty members, which causes simplification of intellectual content in scientific research and the educational process.

"Add to this the lack of renewal and reform in the stages that precede higher education; reforming education in the secondary and intermediate stages are an essential step in reforming education in higher education institutions and absence of correct guidance for students with regard to choosing majors.

"The opinions are still divided between the need of the labor market and the student's desire to develop his knowledge. The mechanism for developing talent is still absent from our educational institutions, which is the missing link in front of the university graduates' desire. The other is creative design, which puts us in front of the need to strengthen the strategy of talent development and professionalization from the early educational stages."

"Since we are not in a country that relies on the party system to choose the government, we suffer from many issues, and perhaps, the most prominent of which is the preparation and qualification of professionals for political work over the years," columnist **Asrar Jawhar Hayat** wrote for *Al-Qabas* daily.

"I do not call for favoring parties, but based on my observation of meetings and events in the government including its ministers and officials, I discovered that the government lacks manpower with the mastery of the simplest etiquette rules. This is evident in the 'styles' and outfits of some ministers.

"It is clear that the government needs a consultant in the art of diplomatic etiquette, to play his role in qualifying and training ministers and officials on the foundations and rules of this art.

"The ministers and officials are considered the face of Kuwait. As representatives of the country, they attend many events, yet some of them lack the simplest etiquette in terms of dressing, dealing with others and conversing. Some may consider this a simple issue, but it affects Kuwait's international reputation, and it could affect diplomatic relations, especially in dealing with others.

"Since we are lagging behind others in the development field and our projects are suspended, we do not feel the difference between an outgoing and incoming government. We have not had any significant achievement from the majority of ministers, except changing press statements so that they all begin with the phrase 'based on the directives of His Excellency the Minister'."

"Our ministers should at least learn the rules in the art of dealing with others and fashion. They should know how to manage diplomatic dialogues, how to negotiate and how to follow the art of etiquette, in order to get a more beautiful facade for Kuwait, until our aspirations for the country's financial and economic development are realized."

— Compiled by **Mai Elsoukary**



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4th meeting of the (GlobE Network) in Vienna.

### Entities joining membership increase

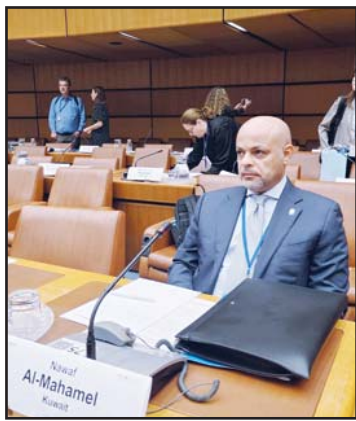
## Kuwait joins GlobE Network meet to combat corruption

VIENNA, July 13, (KUNA): Kuwait's Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) participated in the fourth meeting of the Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (GlobE Network), which was held at the United Nations Headquarters in Vienna from 10 to 13 July.

In a statement, the Nazaha stated that the network is a platform for exchanging information among government authorities concerned with combating corruption and provides the necessary knowledge, resources and tools to enhance international cooperation in investigations of cross-border corruption crimes.

The network is witnessing a continuous increase in the number of entities joining its membership from all over the world, as the number has reached 161 entities concerned with enforcing anti-corruption laws from 91 countries that are party to the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

The statement also said that the Nazaha delegation participated in many discussions and technical sessions aimed at enhancing methods and techniques for exchanging

KUNA photos  
Head of Kuwait delegation to (GlobE Network) meeting.

information and how to use technology and innovation in preventing and combating corruption.

Nazaha affirmed its constant endeavor to deepen cooperation with countries and international organizations in order to eradicate the scourge of corruption and strengthen measures aimed at combating it through exchanging information on corruption crimes and sharing lessons learned and best practices in this field.

# API and GCC General Secretariat ink MoU to enhance cooperation

Kuwait-based planning body praised

By Khaled Al-Shammari

RIYADH, July 13, (KUNA): Arab Planning Institution (API) Director General Dr. Bader Malallah, affirmed on Wednesday that modeling is an important tool to develop the GCC economy.

Malallah stated to KUNA after signing a MoU with the General Secretariat of the GCC to enhance cooperation in various fields, including economic preparation models, impact measurement models, and foreign trade and investment models.

Dr Malallah expressed his aspiration to start developing models for the GCC in the macroeconomic and trade and investment sectors to advance technical assessment that contributes to their development.

He added that it was agreed with the General Secretariat to hold a technical meeting to set an agenda for cooperation, including training their staff.

Meanwhile, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) signed a memorandum of understanding with the Kuwait-based Arab Planning Institute over skills development and training, the six-nation bloc said in a statement.

### Framework

The deal aims to set up a "framework" for cooperation on matters of mutual concern, according to the bloc's chief Dr. Jassem Al-Bedaiwi, praising the Kuwait-based planning body for its contributions towards regional development projects.

On another front, the General Secretariat of the GCC discussed with the Arab Institute for Planning efforts exerted regarding empowering women in the Arabian Gulf.

API Advisor Ambassador Amal Al-Hamad made the remarks in a state-



KUNA photo

On the sideline of Arab Planning Institution (API) signing ceremony MoU with GCC General Secretariat.

ment to KUNA, after a meeting with the Head of the Human and Environment Affairs Sector in the General Secretariat, Engineer Abdullah Al-Rubie.

She added that the meeting delved into an upcoming meeting on empowering women, scheduled to take place next November in the Kingdom of Bahrain, and to increase coordination between the institute and the general secretariat in order to remove all the obstacles facing women in the region.

She indicated that the interest in empowering women comes from the highest levels in the GCC, stressing that the Gulf's women Empowerment Forum was an initiative from API, which was praised by all the countries of the Cooperation Council and held its first meeting in Muscat.

## EU-GCC ministerial meet enhances joint interest and goals: GCC chief

RIYADH, July 13, (KUNA): Secretary General of the GCC Jassim Al-Bedaiwi affirmed on Wednesday that the EU-GCC Ministerial meeting next October aims to achieve joint interests and goals.

This came during Al-Bedaiwi's meeting with EU's Special Representative for the Gulf region Luigi Di Maio in Riyadh, where he also congratulated him on his new post wishing him further success, General Sec-

retariat said in a statement.

Al-Bedaiwi added that Maio denounced the Quran burning in Sweden, adding that the EU strongly condemns this violent act, which does not reflect on their beliefs and opinions.

He also added that the meeting discussed the agenda of the upcoming EU-GCC ministerial meeting, held next October, noting that the GCC and EU aims to boost cooperation.

### Embassy grants multi-entry, long-term visas

## German envoy to Kuwait pleased over high turnout for tourist visa

KUWAIT CITY, July 12: German Ambassador to Kuwait Hans-Christian Freiherr von Reibnitz has expressed his happiness over the high demand for tourist visa among citizens and expatriates who want to visit his country this year, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Reibnitz made the statement when he attended the celebration of Argentina's Independence Day recently; during which he affirmed that the tourism and travel season this year is characterized by ease, compared to previous years. He asserted many Kuwaiti tourists made a wise decision to apply for a

visa in advance. He advised those planning to travel to any of the European countries to apply for a visa six months before the travel date. He added that applying for visa early is a wise move; especially since the embassy grants multi-entry and long-term visas.

He also revealed that the Consular Section at the Embassy of Germany issues approximately 1,600 visas per week; stressing this number is a great achievement compared to previous years. He said around 29,000 visas were issued in 2022 and this number is expected to increase this year.



Hawalli Governor and Acting Asimah Governor Ali Al-Asfar poses with health officials.

KUNA photo

### Acting Asimah Governor announces Qurtuba joining health cities

Hawalli Governor and Acting Asimah Governor Ali Al-Asfar declared Wednesday Qurtuba's joining the regional network of the integrated health cities affiliated to the World Health Organization (WHO) initiative.

This came in a speech Al-Asfar delivered during a ceremony held on this occasion in the presence of head of health cities office Dr. Amal Al-Yahya and the coordinative committee's members of Qurtuba in Hawalli's H.Q.

Al-Asfar lauded the joining of the city, which is the tenth in Asimah, and the 16th across Kuwait, hoping that it would meet international standards of the health cities to be approved as a health city.

He affirmed full back to and interest in the ingrated health cities' project

and removing all obstacles.

Al-Asfar commended the key role of the health centers in offering distinguished services to alleviate burdens on hospitals.

Meanwhile, Al-Yahya stressed keenness on expanding the project across the country, noting that this expansion shows the desire of areas to implement the WHO standards in this field.

For her part, Dr. Nawal Al-Hamad, general coordinator of the committee, said this initiative aimed at boosting and developing society health through effective participation of residents.

She added that proposals had been discussed, referring to communication with the concerned bodies in the area in this matter. (KUNA)

## Pak Donors Kuwait hosts dinner in honor of Pakistani artists

Report by M. Irfan Shafiq

In commemorating the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Kuwait and Pakistan, Pak Donors Kuwait organized a prestigious dinner to honor artists from Pakistan. The event, held in Kuwait, was attended by renowned personalities including Ali Abbas, Ali Sher, Manahl Abrar, Kashif Hosni, and comedian Yasir Abbas Malangi.

Representatives from the Embassy of Pakistan, Community Welfare Attaché Farrukh Amir Sial, Chairman of Kuwait Pakistan Etihad Society Sultan Al Kandri, Syed Muhammad Ali, Naeem Jan, Irfan Riaz Noon, Chaudhry Mudassar Gujjar, Hakeem Tariq Mehmood Siddiqui, Aftab Gondal, Usman Mangat, Malik Khurram Awan, and members of Team Pak Donors EC were also present to grace the occasion.

Nouman Aslam Ghuman, In-charge Coordinator, Pak Donors Kuwait Chapter, introduced each participant individually to the distinguished guests and provided insights into the organization's mission of Pak Donors and the importance of blood donation.

During the event, Farrukh Amir Sial, the Community



Photo from the event.

Welfare Attaché of the Embassy of Pakistan, expressed his admiration for the spirit and dedication exhibited by the Pak Donors team. Chairman of Kuwait Pakistan Etihad Society Sultan Al-Kandri and Naeem Jan expressed heartfelt gratitude to Team Pak Donors for their exceptional efforts in serving the guests.

The esteemed guests from Pakistan, represented by the renowned host Jahanzeb Zebi, conveyed their profound appreciation for the invaluable services rendered by Team Pak Donors to the Pakistani community in Kuwait, as well as to other communities.

Many expressed their commitment to actively support and participate in the orga-

nization's humanitarian endeavors.

The dinner served as a memorable occasion to celebrate the longstanding friendship and diplomatic ties between Kuwait and Pakistan while recognizing the immense contributions of Pakistani artists and the philanthropic efforts of Team Pak Donors Kuwait.



Residential blocks for Kuwait students in the Hostel in Islamabad.

KUNA photo

## Kuwait Hostel Islamabad... a sign of brotherly relationship

ISLAMABAD, July 13, (KUNA): Kuwait Hostel Islamabad stands tall in the heart of the federal capital as a sign of brotherly relationship between Pakistan and the State of Kuwait.

The scenic hostel building, neighboring the famous Shah Faisal Mosque, accommodates the male stu-

dents of one of the top universities of Islamabad.

The infrastructure of the hostel in the base of Margalla hills Islamabad, which was completed through Kuwait donations, is the calm and green location that provides a peaceful environment for the university students to cope with educational stress.

### Erdogan says

Continued from Page 1

Erdogan welcomed the creation of a "special coordinator" for counter-terrorism within NATO. "Fighting against terrorist organizations is our red line, so from now on we expect all our allies to show a principled stance in their fight against terrorist organizations," he said.

Turkey's agreement on Sweden has also been linked to Ankara's efforts to acquire new F-16 fighter planes and upgrade kits for its existing fighter fleet from the U.S.

In other news, Sweden's highest court rejected extradition requests Thursday for two men wanted by Turkey, saying the Scandinavian country does not criminalize the act they are accused of committing.

The men, who are refugees in Sweden but otherwise were not identified, cannot be sent to Turkey because "the requirement of dual criminality is not met," the Swedish Supreme Court said in a statement.

Turkey wants the men because it says they have joined the movement of United States-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen "by downloading and using a mobile application, which is used by the movement's members."

### Kaspersky reports

Continued from Page 1

include sending a text message and potentially winning a special prize. However, to claim the prize, the user may be required to make a payment. Unfortunately, the user ends up losing money and never receives the promised prize. Furthermore, the scheme encourages users to share the scheme via text messages, unknowingly becoming unwitting tools for spreading the scam.

"Scammers have mastered the art of capitalizing on trendy topics, emphasizing the importance of maintaining constant alertness. The prevalence of scams surrounding the popular Threads app serves as a stark reminder of the risks we face in the digital realm. From deceptive schemes to data collection tactics, these fraudsters spare no effort in compromising your personal and financial security. To safeguard ourselves, we must adopt a skeptical mindset, scrutinize suspicious activities, and prioritize cybersecurity measures. By staying cautious amidst the allure of trendy topics, we can fortify our defenses and navigate the digital landscape with confidence," comments Olga Svistunova, security expert at Kaspersky.

## WORK

## Business Plus



Quitting often considered shameful

## Job leaving agents help people escape



Lawyer Akiko Ozawa, whose law firm advises job-leavers although usually it represents companies, speaks during an interview with The Associated Press on June 22, 2023, in Tokyo. In Japan, a nation reputed for loyalty to companies and lifetime employment, people who job-hop are often viewed as quitters. Ozawa has written a book on job-leaving services to help various people, mostly in their 20s and 30s, escape less painfully from jobs they want to quit. Inset: Yoshihito Hasegawa, who heads Tokyo-based TRK that runs a job-quitting service called Guardian, works at his office in Tokyo on June 21, 2023. (AP)

Conformist “workaholic” pressures in Japanese culture are painfully heavy. Workers don’t want to be seen as troublemakers, are reluctant to question authority and may be afraid to speak up.

In Japan, a nation reputed for loyalty to companies and lifetime employment, people who job-hop are often viewed as quitters. And that’s considered shameful.

Enter “taishoku daiko,” or “job-leaving agents.” Dozens of such services have sprung up in the last several years to help people who simply want out.

“Imagine a messy divorce,” says Yoshihito Hasegawa, who heads Tokyo-based TRK, whose Guardian service last year advised 13,000 people on how to resign from their jobs with minimal hassles.

People often stick with jobs even when they’re unhappy, feeling as if they are “kamikaze” sacrificing their lives for the greater good, he said, comparing his clients to pilots sent on suicide missions in the closing days of World War II.

“It’s the way things are done, the same way younger people are taught to honor older people,” he said. “Quitting would be a betrayal.”

Founded in 2020, Guardian, a taishoku daiko service, has helped various people, mostly in their 20s and 30s, escape less painfully from jobs they want to quit. That includes people who worked in a Shinto shrine, a dentist’s office and law firm to convenience store and restaurant staff.

Nearly half of Guardian’s clients are women. Some work for a day or two and then discover promises of pay or work hours were false.

Guardian charges 29,800 yen (\$208) for its service, which includes a three-month membership in a union that will represent an employee in what can quickly turn into a delicate and awkward negotiation process in Japan.

Generally, Guardian’s clients have worked for the small and medium-sized businesses that employ most Japanese. Sometimes people working for major companies seek help. In many cases, bosses have a huge say over how things are run

and sometimes simply refuse to let a worker leave, especially since many places are shorthanded to begin with, given the Japan’s chronic labor shortage.

Japanese law basically guarantees people the right to quit, but some employers used to an old-style hierarchy just can’t accept that someone they have trained would want to walk away. Those tackling the quitting battle who were interviewed for this story used terms like “fanatics,” “bullies” and “mini-Hitlers” to describe such bosses.

Conformist “workaholic” pressures in Japanese culture are painfully heavy. Workers don’t want to be seen as troublemakers, are reluctant to question authority and may be afraid to speak up. They may fear harassment after they quit. Some worry about the opinions of their families or friends.

Although most of Guardian’s clients prefer to be anonymous, a young man who goes by the online

name of Twichan sought help after he was criticized for his sales performance and became so depressed he thought about killing himself. With Guardian’s help he was able to quit in 45 minutes.

Taku Yamazaki, who went to a different taishoku daiko, said his former employer was a subsidiary of a major IT vendor and he knew his departure would be complicated and time-consuming because he was doing well there.

“I felt a certain amount of gratitude toward the place I was leaving, but I wanted to switch gears mentally and move forward as soon as possible,” he said.

When people fill out taishoku daiko online forms, an automated reply comes within minutes, with a more personal reply promised within one working day.

Lawyer Akiko Ozawa, whose law firm advises job-leavers although usually it represents companies, acknowledged it may be hard to

believe people can’t just pick up and leave.

“But switching jobs is a major challenge in Japan that requires tremendous courage,” said Ozawa, who has written a book on taishoku daiko. Given the shortage of workers in Japan, finding and training replacements is tough and bosses sometimes erupt in outrage when someone resigns.

“As long as this Japanese mindset exists, the need for my job isn’t going away,” said Ozawa, who charges 65,000 yen (\$450) for her service. “If you are so unhappy that you’re starting to feel ill, then you should make that choice to take control over your own life.”

Another quitting service, Albatross, offers a “MoMuri,” or “can’t stand it anymore” service, charges a 22,000 yen (\$150) fee for full-time workers, and a bargain 12,000 yen (\$80) fee for part-time workers.

Workplace problems have existed all along, but people now realize they can get help online, said its founder, Shinji Tanimoto.

“They tell us they couldn’t sleep at all before, but they can finally sleep all they want,” he said of MoMuri’s customers. “Users thank us all the time. Some cry tears of joy.”

One person wanted to quit working at a pet salon where workers were secretly kicking the animals. Another wanted to quit job in a dental office where the staff weren’t using new gloves for each patient.

Many are women working as nurses or caretakers who are asked to stay until a replacement is found, but end up still working in the jobs a year later, he said.

Toshiyuki Niino founded Exit Inc., a frontrunner in the taishoku daiko sector, in 2018, after encountering a boss who constantly yelled at him. Another threatened to kill him.

He quit both jobs, and saw an opportunity.

“I am proud I started this genre of work,” he said.

Exit charges 20,000 yen (\$140). Now that employers understand what taishoku daiko is, it can be over in 15 minutes, once resignation papers are on their way.

Niino, who says he never once expressed an opinion in school, blames the Japanese educational system for turning out obedient workers who are unable to assert themselves.

He’s thinking about branching out to include mental health counseling, job referrals and perhaps an overseas expansion.

Niino laughs, recounting how one of his own employees used a rival agency to resign and then went on to set up his own taishoku daiko company.

“It’s best if you yourself can say you want to quit,” he said. (AP)

Still hiring

## Big Tech layoffs give other sectors an opening

The competition for tech talent remains tight, and many companies, including tech companies, are still hiring - just more slowly. The unemployment rate for tech workers is just 2%. But some who lost their jobs in Big Tech swiftly landed jobs at non-tech firms.

For the thousands of workers who’d never experienced upheaval in the tech sector, the recent mass layoffs at companies like Google, Microsoft, Amazon and Meta came as a shock.

Now they are being courted by long-established employers whose names aren’t typically synonymous with tech work, including hotel chains, retailers, investment firms, railroad companies and even the Internal Revenue Service.

All of those sectors have signaled on recruiting platforms that they are still hiring software engineers, data scientists and cybersecurity specialists despite the layoffs in Big Tech. It’s a chance for them to level the playing field against tech giants that have long had their pick of the top talent with lucrative compensation, alluring perks and sheer name recognition.

No employer is making a more aggressive push than the country’s largest: the federal government,



Mahtad Parsamehr, of Atlanta, checks her phone while handing out resumes during the Startup Student Connection job fair, Wednesday, March 29, 2023, in Atlanta. (AP)

which is aiming to hire 22,000 tech workers in fiscal year 2023. Federal agencies have participated in a series of “Tech to Gov” job forums targeted in part at laid off workers,

hoping to ease their own chronic labor shortages that have hindered efforts to strengthen cybersecurity defenses and modernize the way they deliver benefits and collect

taxes.

“It’s a real opportunity for the federal government,” said Rob Shriver deputy director of the U.S. office of Personnel Management. “We have just about any tech job that anybody could possibly be interested in the federal government.”

Federal, state and local government tech job postings soared 48% in the first three months of 2023 compared to the same period last year, according to an analysis by tech trade group CompTIA of data from Lightcast, a labor analytics firm. It was a sharp contrast to the 33% decrease in tech job openings during that period in the tech industry, and a 31.5% slowdown in such postings across the economy, according to CompTIA’s figures.

Tech hiring reached a historic high of more than 4 million in 2022, although hiring began to fall off in the second half of the year, according to CompTIA. This year, there have been about 1.26 million tech

postings between January and May, a level more on par with the pre-pandemic years, said Tim Herbert, chief research officer at CompTIA.

To be sure, the competition for tech talent remains tight, and many companies, including tech companies, are still hiring - just more slowly. The unemployment rate for tech workers is just 2%. But some who lost their jobs in Big Tech swiftly landed jobs at non-tech firms.

After Hector Garcia, 53, was laid off by Meta’s Facebook in November, it didn’t take long for him to be snapped up by Abbott, the Chicago-based global health company, which expects to hire hundreds of software engineers, data architects and cybersecurity analysts over the next years.

“I decided to go for something that I hadn’t done before,” said Garcia, a data architect who said he got offers from tech firms but was

Continued on Page 7

editor’s choice



## China exports slumped 12.4% in June

China's exports tumbled 12.4% in June from a year earlier as demand weakened after central banks raised interest rates to curb inflation even as Chinese leaders struggled to keep a post-COVID recovery from faltering.

Customs data released Thursday showed imports slid 6.8% to \$214.7 billion. Exports edged up slightly from the month before, totaling \$285.3 billion. The trade surplus was \$70.6 billion, rising

from \$65.8 billion in May. Trade weakness adds to downward pressure on the world's second-largest economy. Global consumer demand has weakened after the Federal Reserve and central banks in Europe and Asia raised interest rates to bring inflation down from near multi-decade highs by reining in business and consumer activity.

In January-June, China's total trade including imports and ex-

ports fell nearly 5% from a year earlier. Exports slipped 3.2% and imports declined 6.7% as prices of commodities like oil fell and demand inside China also faltered.

Exports to the United States tumbled 23.7% from a year earlier to \$42.7 billion, a six-month low, while imports of American goods sank 4.1% to \$14 billion. China's politically volatile trade surplus with the United States narrowed by 30.6% to \$28.7 billion. (AP)

## 3 tax prep firms shared 'extraordinarily sensitive' data

Three large tax preparation firms sent "extraordinarily sensitive" information on tens of millions of taxpayers to Facebook parent company Meta over the course of at least two years, a group of congressional Democrats reported on Wednesday.

They say some of that data was then used by Meta to create targeted advertising to its own users, other companies, and to train Meta's algorithms.

The Democrats' report urges federal agencies to investigate and potentially go to court over the wealth of information that H&R Block, TaxAct and TaxSlayer shared with the social media giant. In a letter to the heads of the IRS, the Department of Justice, the Federal Trade Commission and the IRS watchdog, seven lawmakers say their findings "reveal a shocking breach of taxpayer privacy by tax prep companies and

by Big Tech firms." Their report said highly personal and financial information about sources of taxpayers' income, tax deductions and exemptions was made accessible to Meta as taxpayers used the tax software to prepare their taxes. That data came to Meta through its Pixel code, which the tax firms installed on their websites to gather information on how to improve their own marketing campaigns. (AP)

## Market Movements

13-07-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts		
UAE	- DFM	+0.44	4,004.69	PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	-0.62	45,296.52
JAPAN	- Nikkei	+1.49	32,419.33	SAUDI	- Tadawul	-0.16	11,707.87
PHILIPPINES	- PSEI	+1.73	6,578.49				
EGYPT	- EGX 30	+1.16	17,342.29				

# Business

## Politics of inflation takes a sharp turn

# Inflation drops to 3 pct and Biden hopes to turn a weakness with voters into a strength

WASHINGTON, July 13, (AP) — The politics of inflation took a sharp turn Wednesday with a report showing consumer prices rose at the slowest pace since the early months of Joe Biden's presidency.

Republicans have hammered Biden over the cost of groceries, gasoline, utilities and more, saying his \$1.9 trillion pandemic relief package and push for electric vehicles were responsible for pushing inflation to a four-decade high. The GOP argument has resonated with voters, but the report on consumer prices for June suggests that inflation has eased dramatically without any of the job losses that some economists and Republican leaders said would occur.

Prices have risen just 3% from a year ago, compared with 9.1% in June 2022, and it's the lowest reading since March 2021.

Unlike a year ago, inflation is mainly coming from a government measure of shelter based on what it would cost to rent a home. This makes the inflation argument somewhat nuanced as data from AP VoteCast, a sweeping survey of the national electorate, shows that the majority of voters last year — 83% of Republicans and 73% of Democrats — own their homes and are largely insulated from higher rental prices.

Biden's team was quick to seize on the inflation report as proof that its policies are delivering results. Defying expectations that Federal Reserve efforts to combat inflation would cause layoffs, the unemployment rate is healthy at 3.6%.

"Inflation is down by two-thirds over the past year," said Jared Bernstein, chair of the White House Council of Economic Advisers. "It is particularly notable and highly consistent with Bidenomics to see this steep decline in the rate of inflation while employment remains so uniquely strong."

The president was quick to take credit, with the White House issuing a statement from him: "Good jobs and lower costs: That's Bidenomics in action."

Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla., said Biden was "delusional" for saying his policies are helping U.S. families.

"We've got to get this skyrocketing inflation and reckless spending under control and stop expecting our kids and grandkids to pay the bill," Scott said. "That's

how we protect the American dream."

The office of House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., issued a statement saying that "Bidenomics continues to cost all Americans" because of higher prices since he took office. It called on the president to "join House Republican efforts to increase American energy production to drive down costs for hardworking families across the country."

Republicans are tweaking the data they use on inflation, putting a greater emphasis on total price increases over the entire Biden presidency instead of the annual and monthly figures that economists commonly use. The office of Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., issued a breakdown of price increases over the entirety of Biden's tenure to say that inflation is still a problem, citing a 39% increase in airfare, 18.8% increase in furniture prices and 52% increase in gas.

The administration wants voters to focus on the downward trend. One key statistic being measured by the White House is how many gallons of gas can be purchased on average for an hour of work. Republican lawmakers and candidates blasted Biden for record prices at the pump last year, a message that helped the GOP secure a House majority in 2022. But by an internal White House analysis, this argument looks outdated: A single hour of work 12 months ago could only pay for 5.5 gallons of gas, a figure that has since risen to a bit more than 8 gallons. The increase appears to reflect a 27% drop in prices at the pump compared with a year ago, and also average wage gains of about 5%.

Biden has long denied that his \$1.9 trillion in COVID-19 relief money helped to spark inflation. Broken supply chains and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, he said, were the main culprits. This argument had limited appeal in last year's elections. AP VoteCast found that 54% of voters blamed Biden's politics for the higher inflation, while 46% said higher prices were due to factors outside his control.

Biden's aides largely attribute the decline in inflation to giving the Fed the independence to raise interest rates as needed and the unsnarling of supply chains and other efforts, such as last year's Inflation Reduction Act, that signaled the government would find ways to lower prices for prescription drugs and promote

investments in clean energy and manufacturing.

The White House also feels reasonably positive about the path of inflation because housing is behind much of the current increase in prices. The government's measure of shelter inflation depends on rents, and a forecast by White House economists suggests home rental prices will ease in the months to come.

As the 2024 presidential election approaches, Biden has gone on the offensive about the economy, giving speeches that try to draw a link between his actions and new construction projects and investments by companies. The economy has been a vulnerability for Biden, with just 34% approving of his leadership on the issue in a June AP-NORC poll.

Still, the change in the composition of what is driving inflation could be critical for how voters think about prices and politics.

In 2022, VoteCast found that nearly all voters said inflation was at least a minor factor in their votes. That included 47% who said groceries and food costs were the most important element for them; the majority of these voters backed Republicans.

An additional 16% said gas squeezed them the most, and about two-thirds of this group voted for the GOP. But of the voters who identified housing as their top inflationary burden, two-thirds supported Democrats.

Lael Brainard, director of the White House National Economic Council, told reporters last month that "there's every reason to think" inflation will be close to the Fed's 2% target by the November 2024 election.

Still, the progress does not mean inflation rates are automatically going downward and that the economy is guaranteed to escape a recession. White House officials acknowledged on Wednesday that the effort to bring down inflation is incomplete. The Fed is poised to raise rates and keep them high until inflation appears to be headed to the central bank's target.

Michael Strain, director of economic studies at the center-right American Enterprise Institute, said he is skeptical that demand in the economy "can weaken to the point that the Fed can credibly claim to have met its inflation target without the economy entering a mild recession and the unemployment rate increasing."

## Big Tech

Continued from Page 6

intrigued by the idea of working for a manufacturer that produces something tangible in medical devices.

Jonathan Johnson, CEO of online retailer Overstock, said that he has seen a 20% increase in applications for tech job openings in first quarter compared to a year ago. He also noted that it's taking a shorter time to fill a spot compared to a year ago and that the quality of applicants has improved.

"There's less demand and more supply," Johnson said.

The layoffs have been especially shocking for the newest generation of workers who are too young to remember the burst of the dot-com bubble in 2000 and "grew up consuming the apps and services of the big tech brands," said Christine Cruzvergara, chief education strategy officer for Handshake, a leading career site for college students and graduates.

"The volatility and layoffs of the past year rocked that image of stability and growth," Cruzvergara said.

During the September 2022-2023 school year, the share of applications by tech majors to tech companies fell by 4.4 percentage points on Handshake, compared to last year. In contrast, the share of applications by tech majors to government jobs on the platform grew by 2.5 percentage points.

Tech firms still saw a 46% increase applications from tech majors, as Handshake received more applications overall from that group. But the application to government jobs rose much faster, tripling from last year. Hospitality and health care jobs also saw an increase in applications from tech majors — 18% and 82%, respectively — and their share of applicants from that pool remained steady.

Kevin Monahan, director of Carnegie Mellon University's Career and Professional Development Center, said he first saw a shift last fall before some of the biggest layoffs. More students returned from internships saying that tech companies weren't extending job offers or return internships at that time.

"Indirectly, students were able to see the writing on the wall," Monahan said.

Ly Na Nguyen, a computer science major at Columbia University, said she went off LinkedIn for a couple of weeks at the height of the layoffs because it was so disheartening to read posts from people shocked over their dismissals. Nguyen is happy to be returning to Amazon this summer for another internship, which she said has added prestige to her resume. But overtures from outside Big Tech has grabbed her attention.

"Right now, I'm super flexible," Nguyen said. "I'd definitely look at a government job."

In March, young tech workers from several federal agencies spoke at an online forum on Handshake about the government's urgent need to recruit new talent. Less than 7% of the federal workforce is under 30.

"No one is necessarily going to strike it rich working in the government," said Chris Kuang, co-founder of the U.S. Digital Corp, a federal fellowship program for early career technologists, answering a question about pay. But he encouraged students to consider benefits such as pension plans, job stability and the possibility of working on "any issue under the sun."

"In this economy, a federal job will be one of the most secure types out there," Kuang said.

The government faces plenty of competition from private sector companies making similar overtures.

Hotels and restaurants also posted slightly more tech jobs in the first quarter of 2023 compared to last year, according to CompTIA figures, as the sector emerges from the economic turmoil of the pandemic.

Hilton saw a 152% increase in applications to internships and full-time jobs from tech majors on Handshake this school year, compared to the year prior.

"We do want to demystify the siloed thinking of 'Hey, if I want to work in tech, I have to go work at a tech firm,'" Hilton Chief Human Resources Officer Laura Fuentes said during a recent forum on Handshake. (AP)

# Wall Street 'on the rise' again as inflation slows

Asian shares jump on WS's return to its highest level in over a yr

NEW YORK, July 13, (AP) — Wall Street is adding to its winning week Thursday following the latest signal that inflation is continuing to ease its chokehold on the economy.

The S&P 500 was 0.7% higher in afternoon trading and on pace for its seventh winning week in the last nine. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 77 points, or 0.2%, at 34,425, as of 12:32 p.m. Eastern time, and the Nasdaq composite was 1.2% higher as Big Tech stocks led the way.

Stocks are building on gains after more data raised hopes that inflation is cooling enough to convince the Federal Reserve to end its blistering run of hikes to interest rates very soon. Inflation at the wholesale level slowed more than expected in June, and prices paid by producers were just 0.1% higher during the month than a year earlier. That's down from 11.2% inflation last summer.

High inflation has been the main reason investors have been fearing a possible recession, because of how high the Federal Reserve has cranked interest rates to get prices under control. High rates undercut inflation by bluntly slowing the entire economy and raise the risk of a recession while hurting prices for investments. They also can cause unanticipated parts of the economy to break.

Traders remain nearly convinced the Fed will raise the federal funds rate at its next meeting in two weeks to its highest level since 2001. But this week's inflation data has also pushed traders to build bets for that to be the final rate increase of this cycle.

A report on Wednesday showed that prices consumers paid in June were 3% higher than a year earlier, down from inflation of more than 9% last summer. It's been a "cool summer breeze," as Deutsche Bank economists describe it.

Treasury yields fell further in the bond market as trades pared bets for Fed rate hikes later this year.

The 10-year Treasury yield fell to 3.77% from 3.86% late Wednesday and from 3.98% late Tuesday. It helps set rates for mortgages and other important loans. The two-year Treasury yield fell to 4.63% from 4.75% late Wednesday and from 4.89% late Tuesday. It moves more on expectations for action by the Fed.

Easier interest rates help all kinds of investments. But many investors see big technology and other high-growth stocks among the biggest beneficiaries.

That had Amazon, Alphabet and Nvidia among the strongest forces pushing up the S&P 500. Amazon gained 2.2% after it said the first day of its annual Prime Day event on Tuesday was the biggest sales day in its history.

Alphabet rose 4.7% after Google said it's rolling out Bard, its chatbot powered by artificial intelligence, to more countries around the world and launching new features for it. Nvidia, which has been at the center of Wall Street's frenzy around AI, rose 2%.

PepsiCo added 1.6% after it beat analysts' profit expectations for the spring. It saw lower demand for drinks and snacks, but higher prices helped its earnings. It also raised its forecasts for results for the full year.

The earnings reporting season is just getting underway, and JPMorgan Chase will lead a barrage of banks on Friday that will tell investors how much they made during the spring. Expectations overall are dim, and analysts are forecasting the sharpest drop in earnings for S&P 500 companies since the pandemic was walloping the global economy in the spring of 2020.

## Europe

France's CAC 40 added 0.2% in morning trading to 7,350.45. Germany's DAX edged up 0.2% to 16,048.19. Britain's FTSE 100 gained 0.1% to 7,425.73. se was \$70.6 billion, rising from \$65.8 billion in May.

## Asia

Asian shares rose Thursday, boosted by Wall Street's return to its highest level in more than a year after a report showed U.S.



Specialist James Denaro, (right), works at his post on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, Thursday, July 13, 2023. Wall Street is adding to its winning week Thursday following the latest signal that inflation is continuing to ease its chokehold on the economy. (AP)

## 3.3 bln people live in countries that spend more on debt interest than education: UN

UNITED NATIONS, July 13, (AP) — Some 3.3 billion people — almost half of humanity — now live in countries that spend more money paying interest on their debts than on education or health, according to a new U.N. report released Wednesday.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told a press conference launching the report that because this "crushing debt crisis" is concentrated mostly in poor developing countries, it is "not judged to pose a systemic risk to the global financial system."

"This is a mirage," the U.N. chief warned. "3.3 billion people is more than a systemic risk, it is a systemic failure."

Guterres said financial markets may seem not to be suffering yet — but billions of people are and the levels of public debt "are staggering and surging."

"In 2022, global public debt reached a record \$92 trillion

and developing countries shoulder a disproportionate amount," he said.

According to the report, the number of countries facing high debt levels has increased sharply from 22 nations in 2011 to 59 in 2022.

The secretary-general said a growing share of debt is held by private creditors who charge sky-high interest rates to developing countries. As an example, he cited African countries that on average pay four times more for borrowing than the United States and eight times more than the wealthiest European countries.

The debt crisis is leaving governments with no money to invest in lagging U.N. development goals for 2030 that include ending extreme poverty; ensuring that every child has a good-quality primary and secondary school education, and to invest in transitioning to renewable energy, he said.

consumer inflation cooled a bit more than expected last month. Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 jumped 1.5% in afternoon trading to 32,425.69.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng surged 2.6% to 19,357.96, while the Shanghai Composite gained 1.3% to 3,236.86, even as China reported a slump in trade in June. Chinese exports tumbled 12.4% in June from a year earlier as demand weakened after central banks raised interest rates to curb inflation even as Chinese leaders struggled to keep a post-COVID recovery from faltering. The customs data released Thursday showed imports slid 6.8%, while the trade surplus rose was \$70.6 billion, rising from \$65.8 billion

in May.

## Oil

In energy trading, benchmark U.S. crude rose 19 cents to \$75.94 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, gained 25 cents to \$80.36 a barrel.

## Currencies

In currency trading, the U.S. dollar edged up to 138.71 Japanese yen from 138.41 yen. The euro cost \$1.1138, up from \$1.1128.

Employees work on the construction line for overhead bins at the Boeing Interiors Responsibility Center in North Charleston, S.C., on May 31, 2023. On Thursday, the Labor Department released the producer price index for June. (AP)



**US wholesale prices for June point to further easing of inflation pressures**

Wholesale prices in the United States decelerated again last month, the latest sign that inflationary pressures are easing in the face of the Federal Reserve's streak of interest rate hikes. The government's producer price index - which measures inflation before it reaches consumers - rose just 0.1% last month from June 2022, the smallest such increase since August 2020. And from May to June, prices rose an identical 0.1% after having fallen 0.4% from April to May. The index that the Labor Department is-

sued Thursday reflects prices charged by manufacturers, farmers and wholesalers. It can provide an early sign of how fast consumer inflation will rise. On Wednesday, the government reported that consumer prices in June rose just 3% over the previous 12 months - the mildest such pace since early 2021. The slowdown was driven by easing prices for gasoline, airline fares, used cars and groceries. Year-over-year consumer price inflation has steadily dropped since peaking at a four-decade high of 9.1% in June 2022.

Excluding the volatile categories of food and energy, so-called core wholesale inflation rose 0.1% from May to June and 2.4% from 12 months earlier. The year-over-year gain in core wholesale prices was the smallest since January 2021. Gasoline prices rose 3.4% from May to June, offsetting a drop in the prices of other goods, including iron and steel scrap. In their drive to tame inflation, the Fed's policymakers have raised their benchmark interest rate 10 times since March 2022. (AP)

**COP28 president-designate advances innovative climate finance, leveraging public, business and philanthropic capital during meetings with UK Govt and King Charles**

WINDSOR, England, July 13, (PR Newswire): Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, COP28 President-Designate has participated in high-level discussions on climate finance with US President Joe Biden and H.M King Charles III, alongside leading investors and philanthropists, in a visit to the UK to advance innovative climate finance to deliver climate action and a just energy transition.

During his visit, Dr. Al Jaber attended a forum on Climate Finance Mobilization convened by the UK Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, the Rt Hon. Grant Shapps MP and the U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, John Kerry.

The forum was attended by UN Special Envoy for Climate Action and Finance, Mark Carney, as well as private sector and philanthropic leaders from finance, sustainability, and climate action. Dr. Al Jaber encouraged all parties to set their ambitions high ahead of COP28 and continue to galvanize UK and US-based businesses and philanthropists to do the same.

Dr. Al Jaber said, "The leadership of the US and UK is crucial to both fulfil climate finance pledges and mobilize further capital. We must deliver on the \$100bn of annual climate finance promised in 2009, and I have been encouraged by recent assurances that this pledge will be fulfilled. However, we need to mobilize trillions, not billions, of dollars if we are to reach our climate, biodiversity and SDG targets. To achieve this we need to mobilize capital at all levels, public, business and philanthropic. Capital and finance are critical enablers of climate action. But to unleash its power, it must be available, accessible and affordable throughout the world."

Dr. Al Jaber added, "Climate change is a global problem that requires a global

solution. All financial actors must work within a new framework of solidarity to enable climate finance at the scale, scope and speed that the world needs. As an outcome of today's meetings, I am pleased to announce that COP28 will host a High-Level Business & Philanthropy Delivery Forum, during the World Climate Action Summit. The forum will focus on removing barriers to progress, showcasing what is working, and identifying opportunities for co-creation, collaboration, and acceleration."

**Restated**

Dr. Al Jaber restated his call for major reform of international financial institutions and multilateral development banks, and added, "To invest the amounts required, we must build the right risk mitigation instruments that incentivize private sector action at scale. This is not a time for incremental reform. We need a holistic approach underpinned by collaborative frameworks."

Discussing the announcements made by organizations in attendance, Dr. Al Jaber continued, "Initiatives like the Climate Finance Mobilisation Forum provide a key avenue for progress. The funding announced today by some of the world's leading private sector actors and philanthropists is exactly what we need to see ahead of COP28."

During his visit, Dr. Al Jaber also welcomed progress on the World Bank's Private Sector Investment Lab which will be charged with developing solutions to address barriers to private sector climate finance. Dr. Al Jaber said, "Capital is a key enabler of climate action, and catalyzing private investments is a key priority for the COP28 Presidency. I look forward to actionable recommendations com-

ing out of the Private Sector Investment Lab that can be integrated into COP28's climate finance agenda."

He concluded that, "The UK and US are home to two of the largest financial markets in the world. Their action and the funding announced today is vital to keep 1.5C within reach and must be replicated on a global scale."

Meanwhile, Dr. Sultan Al Jaber has called on governments, industry, and all stakeholders to "disrupt business as usual" and take decisive action to tackle the climate crisis.

Speaking at the Ministerial on Climate Action in Brussels, which brings together the environment ministers of the European Union, Canada, and China, Dr. Al Jaber said it was time to challenge old models built for the last century and break down silos in industries and governments that slow down progress to a low carbon economy.

In his speech, Dr. Al Jaber outlined a wide-ranging plan for COP28 that focuses on four pillars: fast-tracking the energy transition, fixing climate finance, focusing on adaptation to protect lives and livelihoods, and underpinning everything with full inclusivity.

Dr. Al Jaber made critical calls to action and highlighted key efforts already underway:

Pointing to the expected findings of the Global Stocktake on climate change, which will be published later this year, he said the world had to "unite, act and deliver" to solve the climate crisis. He called on all stakeholders to "partner around this shared opportunity." Dr. Al Jaber said: "Let's mobilize to deliver supercharged solutions and ambitious outcomes. And let's restore hope through unity and collective action."

**UK govt offers mlns of public sector employees pay hikes to end strikes**

Today's offer is final: Sunak

LONDON, July 13, (AP): The British government offered millions of public sector workers pay raises Thursday in a bid to end an array of strikes that have crippled trains, health care and other services for more than a year amid the biggest cost-of-living crisis in generations.

On the day that tens of thousands of doctors in Britain's state-funded health service launched a five-day walkout, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak accepted pay recommendations from independent review bodies. But he insisted that there would be no more discussions with unions.

Like other nations in Europe, Britain has faced disruptive strikes as workers, from teachers to train drivers and nurses, have pressed for their pay to keep pace with a sharp increase in consumer prices. A major train strike across Italy stranded tourists and commuters Thursday.

"Today's offer is final," Sunak said. "There will be no more talks on pay. We will not negotiate again on this year's settlements and no amount of strikes will change our decision."

**Recommendations**

He said the accepted recommendations are a "fair deal for the British taxpayer" and offered assurances that they wouldn't stoke further inflation.

Police will see a 7% pay raise, while teachers will get 6.5% and the striking doctors, who are at the early stages of their careers in the publicly funded health care provider, will receive 6%.

Hospital consultants, set to strike in England next week, also will receive a 6% rise. Some of the professions, including the junior doctors, will be getting additional payments.

Already, Sunak said leaders of the teaching unions announced that they're suspending all planned strikes immediately and that they will recommend members to back the pay offer.

"I want to address those yet to do so," the prime minister said. "Now that we've honored the independent pay recommendations, I implore you: Do the right thing, and know when to say yes." Early signs appear to be positive for the government, with the FDA union, which represents civil servants, saying the offer appears to be "both fair and reasonable."

The pay offers shine a particular spotlight on the junior doctors on the first day of what is being described as the longest-ever strike in the National Health Service. They are asking for a 35% pay bump.

The British Medical Association,

**Al-Bakhait: Warba announces the names of the winners of the weekly 'Al Sunbula' draw**

KUWAIT CITY, July 13: Warba Bank - the best bank in corporate banking services and investment banking services in Kuwait - announced the names of the winners of the Al Sunbula weekly draws. Warba Bank will continue to hold weekly draws for ten winners for Al Sunbula account, in the presence of a representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Warba Bank employees.

As for the lucky clients of the Al Sunbula weekly draw, the 10 winners, each of whom got KD 1,000 are as following: Mr. Sultan Salem Bnayan Al-Dosari, Mr. Talal Kanaan Mohammad Al-Otaibi, Ms. Dina Mohammad Abdul Latif Al-Mutawa, Ms. Ghanima Mohammad Ibrahim Al-Tamimi, Mr. Abdullah Mohammad Fereej Al-Mutairi, Ms. Manayer Ayesh Nazzal Al-Anzi, and Mr. Shaheen Ghazi Faisal Al-Rubaijan, Mr. Fahad Salem Eid Al-Azmi, Sarah Mshari Mohammad Al-Bader, and Majid Mohammad Hussein Al-Mutairi.

Regarding the Al Sunbula account, it is the ideal choice for all those wishing to save money and achieve appropriate financial returns on their balances at the same time, in addition to the chances to win cash prizes throughout the year.

Regarding the conditions, Mr. Abdulaziz Saud Al-Bakhait - Area Manager of the Retail Banking Group said: "KD 100 is now required to enter the weekly Al Sunbula draws and major draws, noting that the customer still gets one chance for every KD 10 in the account, and the chances are counted "According to the lowest balance in the account during the month. Therefore, the amount must have passed a full month in the account to qualify for the weekly draw, and two full months to qualify for the major draws. There are no restrictions or limits for with-

drawals and deposits. The higher the deposited amount, the greater the client's chances of winning. Warba Bank launched its latest banking solutions, Customer Onboarding, in accordance with the terms of its ambitious five-year strategy, which enables non-Warba Bank customers to apply for opening an Al Sunbula

account in an easy electronic way via the Bank's website without the need to visit any of the Bank's branches, and within only five minutes - through the new automated system that it uses to apply this service and which is unique in the Kuwaiti banking sector - new clients will be able to complete the re-

shareholders, and these are among the most important elements that make the bank close to all members of society, in addition, Warba Bank is among the 50 largest banks in the Middle East in terms of market value for the year 2023 - Forbes Middle East classification.

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Abdulaziz Al-Bakhait, Area Manager of Retail Banking

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shareholders, and these are among the most important elements that make the bank close to all members of society, in addition, Warba Bank is among the 50 largest banks in the Middle East in terms of market value for the year 2023 - Forbes Middle East classification.

Though inflation has come down slightly from its double-digit peak - to 8.7% - it is far above the Bank of England 2% target.

Sunak said there will be no new borrowing to fund the pay deals and that departments will have to "reprioritize" spending, raising fears of cuts across public services.

He also said the 6.5% pay award for teachers will be "fully funded," with additional money for schools over the coming two years, and that increased charges for visas and NHS contributions for non-U.K. citizens will raise about 1 billion pounds (\$1.3 billion).

**Founder of failed crypto lending platform arrested on fraud charges**

NEW YORK, July 13, (AP): The founder and former CEO of the failed cryptocurrency lending platform Celsius Network was arrested Thursday on federal fraud charges alleging that he schemed to defraud customers by misleading them about key aspects of the business.

Alexander Mashinsky is charged with securities, commodities and wire fraud in an indictment unsealed in Manhattan federal court. He is also charged with illegally manipulating the price of Celsius's proprietary crypto token while secretly selling his own tokens at inflated prices.

Mashinsky's attorney did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment.

According to the indictment, Mashinsky from 2018 to 2022 pitched Celsius to customers as a

modern-day bank where they could safely deposit crypto assets and earn interest. But it says Mashinsky operated Celsius like a risky investment fund, taking in customer money under false and misleading pretenses and exposing customers to a high-risk business.

The indictment alleges that Mashinsky promoted Celsius through media interviews, his Twitter account and Celsius's website, along with a weekly "Ask Mashinsky Anything" session broadcast posted to Celsius's website and YouTube channel.

Celsius employees from multiple departments who noticed false and misleading statements in the sessions warned Mashinsky, but they were ignored, the indictment states.

Mashinsky's false portrayal of Celsius as a safe

and secure institution caused its customer base to grow exponentially through a large number of retail investors, the indictment says.

By the fall of 2021, Celsius had become one of the largest crypto platforms in the world, purportedly holding approximately \$25 billion in assets, it says.

The Securities and Exchange Commission on Thursday also sued Mashinsky and Celsius, saying they misled investors through unregistered and often fraudulent offers and sales of crypto asset securities.

In January, New York Attorney General Letitia James sued Mashinsky in state court in Manhattan, saying he misled hundreds of thousands of investors. Celsius filed for bankruptcy last year.

KFH AlRabeh Campaign visual

**20 customers win KD1,500 each**

**Winners of Al-Rabeh draw announced**

KUWAIT CITY, July 13: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the winners of the AlRabeh draw with 20 customers winning cash prizes worth KD1,500 each for the 25th and 26th week of 2023, additionally, KFH announced Abdullatif Al-Mutawa as the monthly winner of 1 kilo Gram of KFH Gold for the month of June 2023 and the bank also announced Osama Soltan as the winner of the 2nd quarter draw of a prize worth 25,000 K.D.

The winners of KD 1,500 are: Flaihah Al-Fadhli, Fahad Al-Ajmi, Sarah Al-Shatti, Amin Aboumoslam, Saud Al-Juwair, Mohammad Al-Otaibi, Anwar Al-Dhuwailhi, Essam Ahmed, Wadha Al-Otaibi, Nouriah Al-Yahyouth, Manal Al-Rashed, Mahmoud El-Naggar, Fawzy Zaher, Ali Al-Molhem, Sabah Al-Sabah, Majed Al-Dhaye, Ibrahim Al-Shahawi, Fajer Omar, Mohammad Al-Enezi, Adel Al-Saffar.

The AlRabeh campaign provides prizes and draws that offer customers several chances of winning "weekly, monthly and quarterly". The campaign crowns 536 winners throughout the year.

The draw took place under the supervision of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The campaign is part of KFH's ongoing efforts to offer exceptional products

and services that meet customers' aspirations, enhance the bank's leadership in the local and global markets, as well as reflect its excellence in offering innovative banking solutions as per the highest quality standards.

The Al-Rabeh account is a salary account available to customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Customers can open Al-Rabeh account in any of KFH branches in Kuwait, or through the Bank's online channels. The account can be opened in the Kuwaiti Dinar and is targeted for customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Salary transfer is a prerequisite for customers to enter the draw provided that the transfer of salary to Al-Rabeh account is constant.

Regarding the terms and conditions of the prizes and draws, a customer is able to deposit 3 salaries during the 3 months prior to the draw, and the minimum balance of the account should not be less than KD 50 at the end of each month during the 3 months prior to the draw. Ten draws take place on a weekly basis for amount of K.D 1,500 for 10 winners each, 1 KG of KFH gold will be drawn monthly for one winner and K.D 25,000 for one winner every quarter, reaching a total number of 536 winners during the year.

**Ahli United Bank congratulates the winners of Al-Hassad Weekly Draw**

KUWAIT CITY, July 13: Ahli United Bank (AUB) congratulates the winners of Al-Hassad Weekly Draw of Al-Hassad Islamic account, which was held on 12 July at the bank's head office in the presence of a representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry as well as a representative from Deloitte as the external auditor to oversee the draws as per the instructions of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in this regard.

The bank announced 10 winners of KD 1,000 as follows: Ibrahim Najib Ibrahim El-Haj Najib, Ahmad H S Al-Hamad, Ruqayyah Mahmoud Al-Sayed Al-Refaei, Al-Zain Hamad Abdullateef Al-Asfour, Sulaiman M S Al-Dihani, Dania Fadi Ali Abdulsalam, Hossein Mohammad Karim Dehdarooni, Dawoud Sulaiman Dawoud Al-Duwaisan, Khalil Sulaiman Al-Ali and Nawaf Thaar Eshewi Al-Saeedi.

In its new package, Al-Hassad Islamic Saving Account presents a broader variety of rewards. Customers could now participate in the draw to win a monthly KD 100,000 prize, in addition to 10 weekly prizes of KD 1,000 each. The Grand Quarterly Prize of KD 250,000 in cash for the winner remains

the most important aspiration of customers. It is a real chance for them to realize their life dreams. In addition to this attractive package, there will be the annual expected profits on the basis of a Wakala contract that increases the attractiveness of the Al-Hassad Islamic Saving Account to customers.

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

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

Al-Hassad Draw campaign visual.



The Conversation

Returns cost retailers about US\$816bn in lost sales in 2022

# A closer look inside the black box of Amazon returns

By Simone Peinkofer  
Michigan State University

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

E-commerce may make shopping more convenient, but it has a dark side that most consumers never see.

Say you order an electric toothbrush and two shirts for yourself during a sale on Amazon. You unpack your order and discover that the electric toothbrush won't charge and only one shirt fits you. So, you decide to return the unwanted shirt and the electric toothbrush.

Returns like this might seem simple, and often they're free for the consumer. But managing those returns can get costly for retailers, so much so that many returned items are simply thrown out.

In 2022, returns cost retailers about US\$816 billion in lost sales. That's nearly as much as the US spent on public schools and almost twice the cost of returns in 2020. The return process, with transportation and packaging, also generated about 24 million metric tons of planet-warming carbon dioxide emissions in 2022.

Together, costs and emissions create a sustainability problem for retailers and the planet.

As a supply chain management researcher, I follow developments in retail logistics. Let's take a closer look inside the black box of product returns.

So, you repackaged your unwanted shirt and the electric toothbrush and drove them to UPS, which has an agreement with Amazon for free returns. Now what?

UPS transports those items to the retailer's warehouses dedicated to pro-

cessing returns. This step of the process costs the retailer money - 66% of the cost of a \$50 item by one estimate - and emits carbon dioxide as trucks and planes carry items hundreds of miles. The plastic, paper or cardboard from the return package becomes waste.

Processing a return takes two to three times longer than initially shipping the item - it has to be unpacked, inspected, repacked and rerouted. That adds more to the cost to the company, especially in a tight labor market. Workers have to manually unpack the items, inspect them and, based on the return reason, decide what will happen next.

If a warehouse worker decides the shirt in our example can be resold, the shirt will be repackaged and sent to another warehouse.

Consumer

Once another consumer orders the shirt, it will be ready to be packed and shipped.

In-store returns can significantly cut warehouse and transportation costs, but driving to a brick-and-mortar store might not be convenient for the consumer. Only about a quarter of online purchases are returned in person to the store.

If the item is defective, like the electric toothbrush in our example, the warehouse worker might send it back to the manufacturer for fixing and refurbishing. It would be repackaged and loaded on a truck and possibly a plane to be sent to the manufacturer, leading to more carbon dioxide emissions.

If the electric toothbrush can be repaired, the refurbished product is ready to be sold into the consumer market again - often at a lower price.

Refurbishing returned products helps to achieve a closed-loop supply chain where products are reused rather than disposed of as waste, making the pro-

cess more sustainable than buying a new item.

Sometimes, however, repairs cost more than the product can be resold for. When it is more expensive to restock or refurbish a product, it may be cheaper for the retailer to throw the item away.

If the company can't resell the shirt or refurbish the electric toothbrush economically, the outlook for these items is grim. Some are sold in bulk to discount stores. Often, returned products simply end up in landfills, sometimes overseas.

In 2019, about 5 billion pounds of waste from returns were sent to landfills, according to an estimate by the return technology platform Optoro. By 2022, the estimated waste had nearly doubled to about 9.5 billion pounds.

In the past, customers who wanted to return items by mail were often expected to do so on their own dime. That changed after Amazon began offering free returns and providing easy-to-use drop-off locations at UPS or Kohl's stores. Other retailers followed suit to compete, with many seeing free returns as a way to keep shoppers coming back. But that pendulum may be starting to swing back. The percentage of retailers charging to ship returns increased from 33% to 41% in 2022.

Retailers are trying several other techniques to lower the return rate, waste and losses, which ultimately come back to consumers in the form of higher prices.

Some retailers have shortened the return window, limited frequented returns or stopped offering free returns. Other strategies include virtual dressing rooms and clearer fitting guides, which can help reduce clothing returns, as can high-quality photos and videos that reflect size and color accurately. If consumers use those tools and pay attention to sizing, they can help cut down on retail's growing climate footprint. (AP)



This undated photo provided by Envoy shows Larry Gadea, chief executive officer of the company. Gadea founded the workplace platform a decade ago to solve inefficiencies around front desk management. When the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown offices, the San Francisco-based company had to adapt fast. (AP)

Desking product created

## Hybrid work 'evolving' but it's here to stay: Envoy CEO

NEW YORK, July 13, (AP): Larry Gadea, CEO of the workplace platform Envoy, founded his company a decade ago to solve inefficiencies around front desk management. When the COVID-19 pandemic shut down offices, the San Francisco-based company had to adapt fast.

Envoy launched tools to help clients manage workplace safety, including contact tracing. Now, as more companies bring employees back to the office, Envoy is helping them navigate hybrid work models that have become the norm. A new app allows workers to see who is coming in, book conference rooms, desks and parking spaces. An analytics tool collects data on attendance, helping companies determine how much office space they really need.

Envoy's services are used in 16,000 offices around the world by clients including Slack and Lululemon. The company raised \$111 million in new funding last year that brought its valuation to \$1.4 billion. Gadea recently spoke to The Associated Press about the future of work.

**Question:** At the beginning of the pandemic, what was your company's focus, and how did you pivot?

**Answer:** We created a desking product, which was all about keeping people away from each other ... But as time went on, it was less about companies keeping people away from each other because of the pandemic and sickness. It's now about bringing them together on similar days and having teams organize each other and allowing the flexibility and the hybrid portion of it all ... There's an app where you can see the availability of things, and you don't have to walk around in circles in the office for 20 minutes trying to find a room ... The pandemic was not great for us at first, but we were able to pivot it. There was a lot of drama internally.

**Q:** What was the internal turmoil?

**A:** Internally, people were like, 'Is this still a business?' 'Will this still work?' I had to give the confidence that yes, obviously it will work, look at all these things, but I don't know the future either, nobody does. It's a very tricky thing to balance.

**Q:** There have been more prom-

inent companies getting serious about bringing employees back. How do you see this moment?

**A:** We are one of those companies that have brought people back in, and it's not easy. It's not easy for any company. I have bunch of learnings and I could literally list them, but the main thing is companies need to be clear on who they want to be. None of this 'suggest that you come in, or strongly recommend it.' We did all that stuff. None of it works, and it just causes further frustration for people.

**Q:** What is your policy now on in-person work?

**A:** Our policy is three days a week, and those days are specifically Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. We don't want people randomly picking days because when they randomly pick a day, everybody picks a random day, which means that on average, the office is pretty empty.

**Q:** You have a policy about gifting return to work. How are you implementing it?

**A:** One of the things we've noticed over time is that it really sucks to just give a whole bunch of downsides to not coming into the office, like, 'your performance reviews will be impacted,' 'we're going to be looking at the numbers,' 'we're going to be turning off Zoom.' That kind of stuff is not very great and it's a very negative way of dealing with it. For what it's worth, with all policies, there's always a plus and a minus. But one of the things that we were really pushing ourselves to think about is what positive reinforcement can we do ... So, they have to do at least three days but for the teams that actually do it, they will get a day off the following month.

**Q:** Do you think hybrid work is here to stay?

**A:** Even before the pandemic, there was this concept of 'no meeting Tuesdays,' 'no meeting Wednesdays,' and that kind of thing. Companies were already aggressively trying to do this kind of thing. I think this just makes it easier. One thing that will change, and will be very clear, is the data collection in all of this stuff. Knowing which teams are in which days and planning for that and seeing the trends among all your 100 offices - not just your HQ - is the really big part and the part that is really changing.

Privacy campaigner dismisses latest deal

# EU signs a new privacy pact that allows data to keep flowing to US

LONDON, July 13: (AP) The European Union signed off Monday on a new agreement over the privacy of people's personal information that gets pinged across the Atlantic, aiming to ease European concerns about electronic spying by American intelligence agencies.

The EU-US Data Privacy Framework has an adequate level of protection for personal data, the EU's executive commission said. That means it's comparable to the 27-nation's own stringent data protection standards, so companies can use it to move information from Europe to the United States without adding extra security.

US President Joe Biden signed an executive order in October to implement the deal after reaching a preliminary agreement with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. Washington and Brussels made an effort to resolve their yearslong battle over the safety of EU citizens' data that tech companies store in the US after two earlier data transfer agreements were thrown out.

"Personal data can now flow freely and safely from the European Economic Area to the United States without any further conditions or authorizations," EU Justice Commissioner Didier Reynders said at a press briefing in Brussels.

Washington and Brussels long have clashed over differences between the EU's stringent data privacy rules and the comparatively lax regime in the US, which lacks a federal privacy law. That created uncertainty for tech giants including Google and Facebook parent Meta, raising the prospect that US tech firms might need to keep European data that is used for targeted ads out of the United States.

Challenges

The European privacy campaigner who triggered legal challenges over the practice, however, dismissed the latest deal. Max Schrems said the new agreement failed to resolve core issues and vowed to challenge it to the EU's top court.

Schrems kicked off the legal saga by filing a complaint about the handling of his Facebook data after whistleblower Edward Snowden's revelations a decade ago about how the US government eavesdropped on people's online data and communications.

Calling the new agreement a copy of the previous one, Schrems said his Vienna-based group, NOYB, was readying a legal challenge and expected the case to be back in the European Court of Justice by the end of the year.

"Just announcing that something is 'new,' 'robust' or 'effective' does not cut it before the Court of Justice," Schrems said. "We would need changes in US surveillance law to make this work - and we simply don't have it."

The framework, which takes effect Tuesday, promises strengthened safeguards against data collection abuses and provides multiple avenues for re-

LOS ANGELES, July 13: Elon Musk is finally starting to talk about the artificial intelligence company he founded to compete with ChatGPT-maker OpenAI. The startup, xAI, formally launched on Wednesday and its goal "is to understand the true nature of the universe." It hasn't said much more than that.

Led by Musk, the billionaire CEO of Tesla and SpaceX who also owns Twitter, the new startup centered in the San Francisco Bay Area has hired a group of top AI researchers who formerly worked at OpenAI, Google, Microsoft and Tesla.

It will be independent from Twitter's new parent company, X Corp., but will work closely with that company, as well as Tesla, "to make progress towards our mission," according to a statement.

Musk was a co-founder and early funder of OpenAI who parted ways with the San Francisco-based research lab several years ago. He's grown increasingly critical of OpenAI as it's gained global prominence and commercial success with last year's release of ChatGPT and solidified its financial ties to Microsoft.

The public unveiling of xAI follows comments Musk made about it in April to then-Fox News host Tucker Carlson.

Musk told Carlson that OpenAI's popular chatbot had a liberal bias and that he planned an alternative that would be a "maximum truth-seeking AI that tries to understand the nature of the universe."

The startup reflected Musk's long-voiced concerns about a future in which AI systems could present an existential risk to humanity.

The idea, Musk told Carlson, is that an AI that wants to understand humanity is less likely to destroy it.

Musk was one of the tech leaders who earlier this year called for AI developers to agree to a six-month pause before building systems more powerful than OpenAI's latest model, GPT-4. Around the same time, he had already been working to start his own AI company, according to Nevada business records.

Google said Thursday that it's rolling out its AI-powered chatbot Bard across Europe and in Brazil, expanding its availability to hundreds of millions more users.

Under the deal, US intelligence agencies' access to data is limited to what's "necessary and proportionate"

Google rolls out AI chatbot Bard to Europe, Brazil

## Musk unveils new AI startup with team of top researchers but a vague mission



Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk speaks at the Satellite Conference and Exhibition, March 9, 2020, in Washington. Musk is finally starting to talk about the artificial intelligence company he founded to compete with ChatGPT-maker OpenAI. The startup, xAI, had its formal launch on July 12, and says its goal 'is to understand the true nature of the universe.' (AP)

The company also said it's adding more features to Bard as it scrambles to keep up with rival Microsoft - which uses OpenAI's popular ChatGPT service in its Bing search engine - in the race to capitalize on generative artificial intelligence technology that has captured worldwide attention.

Google launched Bard in February, but its planned rollout last month in the European Union was delayed as regulators checked whether the service complied with the 27-nation bloc's strict privacy rules.

The company said it has "proactively engaged with experts, policymakers and privacy regulators."

The Irish Data Protection Commission, Google's main EU privacy watchdog, said it sent the internet search giant a detailed list of questions seeking more information.

As a result, Google hit pause and "made a number of changes" ahead of Thursday's European launch, "in particular increased transparency and changes to controls for users," the watchdog said.

Google detailed the improvements in a blog post, which said Bard can now be used in more than 40 languages, including Arabic, Chinese, German, Hindi and Spanish.

Users also can tailor the tone and

style of Bard's replies and ask it to read out responses, which Google said is "helpful if you want to hear the correct pronunciation of a word or listen to a poem or script."

English-language users can now start uploading images along with prompts for Bard to analyze for answers, Google said.

A new breed of AI chatbots has wowed users with the ability to respond to questions with text, images or video that mimic human work, underscoring big advances by the technology that companies are rushing to take advantage of.

Billionaire Elon Musk, who has voiced concerns about the existential risk that artificial intelligence could pose to humanity, this week launched his own AI company with the lofty but vague goal of understanding the universe.

New AI systems, though, also have raised concerns about data privacy, copyright infringement and misinformation. Italian regulators forced OpenAI to temporarily suspend ChatGPT over privacy concerns, and the European Union is poised to bring in the world's first comprehensive set of rules for artificial intelligence.

to protect national security.

Europeans who suspect US authorities have accessed their data will be able to complain to a new Data Protection Review Court, made up of judges appointed from outside the US government. The threshold to file a complaint will be "very low" and won't require people to prove their data has been accessed, Reynders said.

Business groups welcomed the decision, which clears a legal path for companies to continue cross-border data flows. "This is a major breakthrough," said Alexandre Roure, public policy director at the Brussels office of the Computer and Communications Industry Association, whose members include Apple, Google and Meta.

"After waiting for years, companies and organizations of all sizes on both sides of the Atlantic finally have the certainty of a durable legal framework that allows for transfers of personal data from the EU to the United States," Roure said.

In an echo of Schrems' original complaint, Meta Platforms was hit in May with a record \$1.3 billion EU privacy fine for relying on legal tools deemed invalid to transfer data across

the Atlantic. Meta had warned in its latest earnings report that without a legal basis for data transfers, it would be forced to stop offering its products and services in Europe, "which would materially and adversely affect our business, financial condition, and results of operations."

Biden welcomed the EU adoption of adequacy decision for the US-EU personal data privacy framework.

"I welcome the European Commission's adequacy decision for the EU-US Data Privacy Framework - which will allow personal data to be transferred from Europe to US companies safely and securely," the US leader said in a statement.

He pointed out that announcement represents the culmination of years of close cooperation between the United States and the European Union, and affirms the strength of transatlantic relationship founded on their shared democratic values and vision for the world.

"The decision reflects our joint commitment to strong data privacy protections and will create greater economic opportunities for our countries and companies on both sides of the Atlantic," he clarified. =



A worker adjusts the US and EU flags prior to the arrival of European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell and United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken during the EU-US Energy Council Ministerial meeting at the European Council building in Brussels, on April 4, 2023. The European Union signed off on July 10, 2023 on a new agreement over the privacy of people's personal information that gets pinged across the Atlantic, aiming to ease European concerns about electronic spying by American intelligence agencies. (AP)

thousands of docs in England start 'longest' strike

Britain's state-funded health care service is facing what is being described as its longest-ever strike as tens of thousands of doctors in England commenced a five-day walkout over pay on Thursday.

So-called junior doctors, those who are at the early stages of their careers in the years after medical school, started their strike at 7 a.m., with many of them making their case for a 35% pay rise in picket lines outside hospitals across England.

The British Medical Association, the doctors' union, has asked for a 35% pay rise to

bring junior doctors' pay back to 2008 levels once inflation is taken into account. Meanwhile, the workload of England's 75,000 or so junior doctors has swelled as patient waiting lists for treatment are at record highs in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

"Today marks the start of the longest single walkout by doctors in the NHS's history, but this is still not a record that needs to go into the history books," said BMA leaders Dr Robert Laurensen and Dr Vivek Trivedi.

They urged the government to drop its "nonsensical precondition" of not talking

whilst strikes are announced.

The government, which is facing an array of strikes by public workers across many sectors, is standing firm to its belief that it won't negotiate while the strikes are taking place.

"This five-day walkout by junior doctors will have an impact on thousands of patients, put patient safety at risk and hamper efforts to cut NHS waiting lists," said Health Secretary Steve Barclay. "A pay demand of 35% or more is unreasonable and risks fuelling inflation, which makes everyone poorer." (AP)



Junior doctor members of the British Medical Association (BMA) stand on the picket line outside Guys and St Thomas' Hospital during a 24-hour strike in their continued dispute over pay, in London, July 13, 2023. (AP)

The Conversation

Disorders like epilepsy affect over 65m

Immune cells in brain may reduce damage during seizures

By Synphane Gibbs-Shelton  
University of Virginia

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

Seizures are like sudden electrical storms in the brain. Seizure disorders like epilepsy affect over 65 million people worldwide and can have profound effects on a person's quality of life, cognitive function and overall well-being. Prolonged seizures called status epilepticus can cause lasting brain damage.

Specialized immune cells in the brain called microglia are activated during seizures to help clean up the damage. Researchers don't fully understand exactly how these cells are involved in seizures. Some studies have found that microglia promote seizures, while other studies show the opposite.

I am a scientist who studies the roles that microglia play in seizures. My colleagues and I at the Eyo Lab at the University of Virginia wanted to investigate the possible protective function microglia serve during seizures and how they affect recovery.

We induced seizures in mice using three different methods - chemical, hyperthermic and electrical - and temporarily removed their microglia. In all three cases, we found that seizures worsened when these cells were absent. Mice without microglia also experienced significant weight loss and decrease in mobility compared with mice with microglia.

Function

Our findings highlight the importance of microglia in safeguarding the brain during seizures and promoting recovery; but they also raise important questions about how these cells provide a protective rather than detrimental effect.

While removing all microglia allowed us to better understand their overall effects on seizures, it meant we were unable to fully assess their contributions in specific brain regions and how they interact with other cells.

This is because removing microglia also affects the function of other brain cells. Future studies that more selectively modify microglia or alter their function in a controlled way could help researchers gain a more nuanced understanding of the role these cells play in seizures.

Researchers also don't fully understand what specific molecules and signals microglia use to protect the brain during seizures. How well our findings apply to seizure disorders like epilepsy is also unclear. These knowledge gaps highlight the complexity of seizure disorders and the need for continued study.

Identifying strategies to harness the beneficial functions of microglia can help researchers develop better treatments that prevent long-term brain damage and enhance the quality of life of people with seizure disorders. (AP)

Study highlights benefits and costs of device

Putting price on exoskeleton assistance puts users in driver's seat of honing tech

By Elliott Rouse  
University of Michigan

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

My colleagues and I have used a tool from economics to measure the costs and benefits of wearing an exoskeleton, and we found that it offers a modest average benefit of US\$3.40 per hour while walking uphill, when considering the combined effects of the assistance and device weight. This modest value is in contrast to the value of the assistance alone, which was much greater, at \$19.80 per hour. These values were derived using our novel approach, which subtracts the values of the costs and benefits.

Exoskeletons are mechanical devices that people can wear to boost their power or efficiency. They can be used to assist in manual labor or to aid in rehabilitation from injuries. Our approach brings the user into the evaluation process, which makes it possible to take into account the many ways people experience exoskeletons.

Perceptions are important. Users must want exoskeletons in their lives if the technology is to meet its potential of assisting mobility, endurance and safety. And that means users must perceive the benefits, and that these benefits must outweigh the costs of wearing the exoskeleton, including any added discomfort, weight or noise.

As a way to measure user perception, we studied the economic value, measured in US dollars, of wearing an exoskeleton. To find these dollar values, we asked people how

much money would be required for them to walk uphill for two minutes on a treadmill. The two-minute bouts were repeated in series for approximately 30 minutes. We also repeated these trials with users wearing the exoskeleton while it was unpowered, as well as not wearing the exoskeleton. By comparing the costs among conditions, our approach provides a foundation for assessing the economic value of the complete exoskeleton, its assistance and the cost of the added weight.

To ensure the participants provide a truthful estimate of their cost to walk for two minutes - and not to maximize their earnings - we used a special type of auction that ensures honest valuations, known as the Vickrey auction. In a seller's Vickrey auction, the winner is the lowest bid but gets paid the second-lowest bid. It is often used to measure the value of abstract concepts, because the Vickrey auction breaks the link between the auction winner and their bid and removes incentives to under- or overbid.

Offset

Today, many ways of evaluating exoskeletons are focused on hard-to-get data, such as number of calories burned and complex motion analysis. More subjective measures, such as user preferences of exoskeleton assistance, are difficult to standardize and are only recently beginning to gain traction.

Our study highlights the sizable potential benefit of exo-

skeleton assistance. This is despite most of the value's being offset by the cost of the extra weight. Through measuring this user experience, researchers and developers can refine exoskeletons for user perceptions. For example, these results highlight the need to develop lighter and more compact exoskeletons.

Our method of finding the economic value is intuitive, as the public is more likely to understand the value of dollars over energy-related biomechanical metrics, such as watts or joules. This approach also does not require expensive specialized equipment, as is required for measuring metabolic rate, or how much energy a person would burn while wearing an exoskeleton.

This technique can be used to measure the value of not only different types of exoskeleton assistance, but also a wide range of technologies, activities and experimental conditions, and represents a useful alternative to the standard approach of assessing metabolic rate.

With this data and approach, we plan to design exoskeletons that reduce the cost of wearing the added weight of the device. We also plan to research better control systems to increase the economic benefits.

In our study, we found that the benefits and costs varied greatly across individuals. Some people reported a negative overall value. We want to study these differences to determine why people have such different perceptions. Doing so can help overcome major hurdles in the adoption of this technology. (AP)

Lack of access to dental care leads to dangerous remedies

CareQuest warns about at-home dental remedies

BOSTON, July 13: As the use of dangerous at-home health remedies continues to gain traction on social media, CareQuest Institute for Oral Health®, a leading national nonprofit focused on creating a more accessible, equitable, and integrated oral health system, is warning people about the dangers of treating oral pain at home. The new report reveals that more than half (53.8%) of adults in the US do not have consistent access to dental care and may resort to self-prescribed home remedies, which are not always safe. In fact, half of the adults who experienced an oral health problem in the last year used a home remedy to try to alleviate the problem.

CareQuest Institute analyzed data from its State of Oral Health Equity in America survey, revealing insights into home remedies used by consumers. The most common unsafe home remedies included:

- tobacco poultice;
- pain medication prescribed for another purpose;
- illegal narcotics;
- a needle to lance a gum abscess;
- aspirin powder applied to the gums; and
- alcohol/spirits.

"We've seen an uptick of potentially dangerous at-home dental care trends across social media, and our data support the fact that many people resort to home remedies, often because they cannot access routine care," said Kelly Schroeder, health scientist and dental hygienist at CareQuest Institute. "Remedies that mask pain are delaying having a larger problem such as an infection being treated properly. It's critical that people seek care and advice from a trusted dental professional for their oral health issues."

The report reveals additional insights, including:

- Those who had not had a dental visit in the last two years were 10% more likely to use dangerous home remedies than those who had a dental visit more recently.

- Those who smoke used one or more dangerous home remedies twice as often as those who do not smoke.

- Individuals who identify as Black (62.4%) and as two or more race/ethnicities (60.0%) reported that they used a home remedy for oral health symptoms more often than individuals identifying as white (49.5%), Hispanic (45.5%), Asian (42.9%), or "other" (47.6%).

When people don't have a dental home where they receive

regular, preventive dental care, both oral health and overall health can easily deteriorate. One important part of the solution is to increase dental insurance coverage through employer-sponsored plans as well as by strengthening and protecting adult dental benefits within Medicaid and Medicare. One recent study showed that Medicaid, even with its limited dental coverage, significantly improved adults' access to and utilization of dental services, compared to those who lack medical coverage. It's important for people to have access to a dental home where safe, effective, and personalized home care guidance is provided to prevent individuals from using unsafe home remedies.

CareQuest Institute for Oral Health® is a national nonprofit championing a more equitable future where every person can reach their full potential through excellent health. We do this through our work in philanthropy, analytics and data insights, health transformation, policy and advocacy, and education as well as our leadership in dental benefits and innovation advancements. We collaborate with thought leaders, health care providers, patients, and local, state, and federal stakeholders, to accelerate oral health care transformation and create a system designed for everyone.

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# No deal on Hollywood actors contract as deadline ends

LOS ANGELES, July 13, (AP): The union representing film and television actors says no deal has been reached with studios and streaming services and its leadership will vote on whether to strike later Thursday. The Screen Actors Guild -American Federation of Television and Radio Artists said early Thursday that its decision on whether to join already striking screenwriters will be considered by leadership at a meeting later Thursday.

If the actors go on strike, it will be the first time since 1960 that actors and writers picket film and television productions.

The actors' guild released a statement early Thursday announcing that its deadline for negotiations to conclude had ended without a contract. The statement came hours after this year's Emmy nominations, recognizing the best work on television, were announced.

"The companies have refused to meaningfully engage on some topics and on others completely stonewalled us. Until they do negotiate in good faith, we cannot begin to reach a deal," said Fran Drescher, the star of "The Nanny" who is now the actors' guild president.

The group representing the studios, the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, said it was disappointed by the failure to reach a deal.

"This is the Union's choice, not ours. In doing so, it has dismissed our offer of historic pay and residual increases, substantially higher caps on pension and health contributions, audition protections, shortened series option periods, a groundbreaking AI proposal that protects actors' digital likenesses, and more," the AMPTP said in a statement. It added that instead of continuing to negotiate, "SAG-AFTRA has

put us on a course that will deepen the financial hardship for thousands who depend on the industry for their livelihoods."

If the actors strike, they will formally join screenwriters on the picket lines outside studios and filming locations in a bid to get better terms from studios and streaming giants like Netflix and Amazon. The actors' guild has previously authorized a strike by a nearly 98% margin.

## Negotiations

Members of the Writers Guild of America have been on strike since early May, slowing the production of film and television series on both coasts and in production centers like Atlanta.

Issues in negotiations include the unregulated use of artificial intelligence and the effects on residual pay brought on by the streaming ecosystem that has emerged in recent years.

Actors have joined writers on picket lines for weeks in solidarity. An actors' strike would prevent performers from working on sets or promoting their projects.

Whether the cast of Christopher Nolan's film "Oppenheimer" attends Thursday's London premiere hangs in the balance of whether the actors strike. Attending a photo event on Wednesday, star Matt Damon said that while everyone was hoping a strike could be averted, many actors need a fair contract to survive.

"We ought to protect the people who are kind of on the margins," Damon told The Associated Press. "And 26,000 bucks a year is what you have to make to get your health insurance. And there are a lot of people whose residual payments are what carry them across that

threshold. And if those residual payments dry up, so does their health care. And that's absolutely unacceptable. We can't have that. So, we got to figure out something that is fair."

The looming strike has cast a shadow over the upcoming 75th Emmys. Nominations were announced Wednesday, and the strike was on the mind of many nominees.

"People are standing up and saying, 'This doesn't really work, and people need to be paid fairly,'" Oscar-winner Jessica Chastain, who was nominated for her first Emmy Award on Wednesday for playing Tammy Wynette in "George & Tammy," told the AP. "It is very clear that there are certain streamers that have really kind of changed the way we work and the way that we have worked, and the contracts really haven't caught up to the innovation that's happened."

Unionized Hollywood actors on the verge of a strike have agreed to allow a last-minute intervention from federal mediators but say they doubt a deal will be reached by a negotiation deadline late Wednesday.

"We are committed to the negotiating process and will explore and exhaust every possible opportunity to make a deal, however we are not confident that the employers have any intention of bargaining toward an agreement," the Screen Actors Guild -American Federation of Radio and Television Artists said in a statement Tuesday night.

The actors could join the already striking Writers Guild of America and grind the already slowed production process to a halt if no agreement is reached with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers. The sides agreed to an extension before the original contract expiration date on June 30, resetting it to Wednesday at 11:59 p.m.

Film

Variety



This image released by Searchlight Pictures shows Molly Gordon, (left), and Ben Platt in a scene from 'Theater Camp.' (AP)

Film

Friendship behind summer's most charming comedy

## 'Theater Camp' wades into mockumentary

NEW YORK, July 13, (AP): Among the low-hanging fruits of satire, sleepaway theater camps would range about as low as social-media influencers and Def Leppard cover bands.

But "Theater Camp," a new comedy by Molly Gordon and Nick Lieberman, energetically wades into the kind of mockumentary territory Christopher Guest would approve of. The spirit of "Best in Show" and "Waiting for Guffman" is often present, for better and worse, in Gordon and Lieberman's film, which first debuted at Sundance earlier this year.

But theirs is a much more earnest, loving lampoon, made by a group of friends with obvious affection for musical theater. Gordon and Lieberman co-wrote the script with Ben Platt and Noah Galvin, expanding their 2020 18-minute short. The result is something too tame for rich parody, but knowing enough to be kind of sweet. "Theater Camp," at least, has the song and dance part down pat.

The upstate New York camp of AdirondACTS has been luckily kept running for years by its founder, Joan (Amy Sedaris). She's intended to be the main character of a documentary on the camp. But in the opening moments of the film, while Joan and manager Rita (Caroline Aaron) are out recruiting campers, she's knocked into a coma by strobe lights in a middle school production of "Bye Bye Birdie."

It's a funny enough gag but a crushing blow to the film. Taking Amy Sedaris off screen in a mockumentary that might have starred her is like killing Fred Astaire off in the first number. You just don't do it. So who are our characters instead? Joan's son, Troy (Jimmy Tatro), comes in to run the camp. He's pretty much their worst nightmare: a social media-promoting finance bro who always avoided his mother's camp because, he says, he was busy doing "dope (expletive)" instead.

When Troy opens a new summer season, plenty of eyerolls follow - especially from Amos (Platt), the head of drama, and his close friend and collaborator Rebecca-Diane (Gordon). They nevertheless forge ahead with the summer's programs, including "The Crucible Jr.," an "immersive" "Cats" and their original piece, "Joan, Still."

Life at the camp gets underway while the threat of fore-

closure lurks and a more well-to-do rival camp looks to take over. The inside jokes fly fast and frequent. There's a group of finger-snapping "Fosse kids," a designated "Meryl Day," bedtime stories where the villain is non-union and exaggerated stakes on stage. "Joan, Still" is said to be such an ambitious work of theater that Amos promises its child cast: "This will break you."

All of this clever but too expected to be especially funny. The movie, the directorial debut for Gordon and Lieberman, loosely bounces between a large cast of characters, who know their parts well - maybe too well. They include the dancing instructor Clive (Nathan Lee Graham), the costume designer Gigi (Owen Thiele) and Galvin's tech director with secret dreams of performing. One notable standout is "The Bear" breakout Ayo Edebiri as a local hire who lied on her resume; her scenes have a lively unpredictability.

## Satire

But if "Theater Camp" struggles to find its footing, "Joan, Still" leads it to a surprisingly terrific finale. By then, Tatro has turned his one-note caricature into an endearing ally. And the kids - all of them legit performers who are mostly relegated to the background for much of the film - take center stage. "Theater Camp" might have worked better with a "Meatballs"-style structure, focusing on a camper and a counselor. But it knows how to put on a show. With songs written by the screenwriters and Mark Sonnenblick, "Theater Camp" in the end hits just the right note between satire and sincere.

There is quite a bit of history between the team behind "Theater Camp," a loving satire of musical theater kids and their teachers that opens in theaters Friday.

Molly Gordon, Ben Platt, Noah Galvin and Nick Lieberman are all, first and foremost, theater kids themselves. They're also longtime friends. Lieberman has been making things with Platt since they were in high school. Galvin and Gordon are best friends and did a play together about a decade ago. And Galvin and Platt are currently engaged.

It's Platt and Gordon's relationship that stretches back the furthest, though. Both children of parents in the entertainment industry, they've been friends since

they were 3 years old.

"I was deeply in love with him," Gordon laughed in an interview with her collaborators during the Sundance Film Festival. "He came out to me and didn't want to be with me, but I still tried for years."

The ins and outs of all of their collaborations, musical workshops, web series, comedy videos and hours improvising would require a flow chart to process fully. But what it boils down to is when the four found each other, they didn't want to let go.

About five years ago, they found themselves with a moment between projects and decided that they would finally do something together. So they "stole" some kids from Galvin's old performing arts high school in Manhattan and put together a short film about a musical theater camp.

"It seemed like the most natural world for us to jump off the ledge into together as this comedy collective for the first time," Platt said. "We all felt like it really suited us tonally and emotionally. It was exactly the kind of thing we wanted to make. (The short) was a quite a janky, very fast, very, very, very cheap, quick little moment. But it definitely set off an alarm in all of us."

A few years would go by before they got the greenlight for the feature, helped by Picturestart and Topic Studios, as well as Jessica Elbaum, of Will Ferrell's Gloria Sanchez Productions, who'd gotten to know Gordon and Galvin during "Booksmart."

"I'm such a nerd, so I knew who Jessica was," Gordon said. "We got lunch one day and she said 'I feel like you want more than this. I feel like you want to write things.' She's done that to Noah too. She's really good at spotting people who want more."

"Theater Camp" is the feature debut for Gordon and Lieberman. They all wrote the screenplay, and everyone but Lieberman acts in the film. The premise is that a documentary crew has come to make a film about a crumbling but beloved upstate New York camp, AdirondACTS, run by Amy Sedaris' character. In the first few minutes she has a seizure, and her son, a finance bro (Jimmy Tatro), steps in to try to run the camp. Gordon and Platt play camp teachers and former students, while Galvin is a techie with unsung talents.

Features

ARABO TIMES

FRIDAY-SATURDAY, JULY 14-15, 2023

LONDON: Scottish singer-songwriter Lewis Capaldi said that he's taking a break from touring for the foreseeable future as he seeks to adjust to the impact of Tourette syndrome.

His announcement follows performance at the Glastonbury Festival where he appeared to lose his voice and the crowd carried him through his songs.

"First of all, thank you to Glastonbury for having me, for singing along when I needed it and for all the amazing messages afterwards," he said in a statement.

"The fact that this probably won't come as a surprise doesn't make it any easier to write, but I'm very sorry to let you know I'm going to be taking a break from touring for the foreseeable future," he added.

Tourette syndrome is a neurological disorder that causes individuals to make involuntary sounds and movements, often referred to as tics. Capaldi revealed last September that he had been diagnosed with the condition. His current tour, which would include venues in Australia, South Korea and Iceland among others, was due to climax in the United Arab Emirates on Oct 7.

In his statement, Capaldi said he was "still learning to adjust to the impact of my Tourette's and it became obvious that I need to spend much more time getting my mental and physical health in order, so I can keep doing everything I love for a long time to come."

In an interview with The Associated Press in April following the release of a Netflix documentary about the Grammy-nominated star, Capaldi said he was happy to have had his symptoms diagnosed. At the time, he said he was trying "not to learn too much" about Tourette's because it would often make his condition feel even worse.

The documentary, entitled "How I'm Feeling Now," shows the fear and anxiety that plagued Capaldi as he returned home to Scotland and tried to write new songs during the pandemic. (AP)

NEW YORK: Fox News will pay one of its former producers \$12 million to settle her claims that she faced a discriminatory workplace and that the network

tried to coerce her into giving false testimony in Dominion Inc's defamation lawsuit against the network, her lawyer said.

The payout to Abby Grossberg will settle all litigation that she brought against Fox Corp, Fox News Network and her former co-workers, including former Fox host Tucker Carlson.



Carlson



Capaldi

The settlement was revealed with the filing of a "Notice of Voluntary Dismissal" in a lawsuit she had filed this year in Manhattan federal court.

Although the notice did not reference the terms of the settlement, Grossberg's attorney, Paris G. Filippatos, said in an interview that his client will receive \$12

million.

In a statement, Fox News said: "We are pleased that we have been able to resolve this matter without further litigation."

The lawsuit claimed that Fox's legal team "coerced, intimidated, and misinformed" Grossberg during preparations for her testimony in a legal battle between the net-

work and Dominion, an elections technology company.

She maintained in the lawsuit that she had received "damaging and woefully inferior and inadequate legal representation" compared to male counterparts at Fox News and that the experience had resulted in "irretrievable reputational and emotional harm." (AP)

## People &amp; Places

## People

## Japan's #MeToo?

## Ex-teen performers claim sexual assault

TOKYO, July 13, (AP) — Kazuya Nakamura says he was 15 when one of the most powerful men in Japanese entertainment history forced him to have sex while he was part of a troupe of backup dancers managed by the legendary talent agent.

At least a dozen other men have come forward this year to say they were sexually assaulted as teenagers by boy band impresario Johnny Kitagawa, who died in 2019, beginning with three who spoke anonymously to the BBC for a documentary broadcast in March.

The story has all the elements of a major #MeToo reckoning, but in Japan, response has been muted.

While opposition politicians set up a committee in parliament to investigate, and the talent agency Kitagawa founded promised to do the same and offered a brief apology, the news still rarely makes the front pages or lead television news broadcasts.

Kitagawa shrugged off similar allegations for decades. National media almost completely ignored the story, and Kitagawa's business continued to thrive, even when a Tokyo appeals court found several accusers to be credible in a libel case in 2003. When Kitagawa died, he was honored with a massive funeral that filled a stadium.

Nakamura hopes that this time, Japanese society will acknowledge what happened to him.

"I just want to speak the truth," Nakamura said. "It happened."

The Associated Press does not usually identify people who say they were sexually assaulted, but Nakamura has chosen to identify himself in the media.

Kitagawa's agency, Johnny and Associates said in response to the AP's request for comment that all matters had been placed under investigation, and that it will also help with the "mental care" of those who come forward.

In 1999, Japanese weekly magazine Shukan Bunshun wrote in a series of articles based on anonymous interviews with former performers that Kitagawa forced boys to have sex.

## Harassment

Kitagawa sued the magazine for libel in 2000, beginning a four-year legal battle that ended with an appeals court finding that "it was demonstrated that the sexual harassment was factual," and the testimony of the accusers, who appeared in court anonymously, was reliable.

In Japan, the imported phrase "sekuhara," short for "sexual harassment," is used to refer to all kinds of sexual misconduct.

However, the magazine was ordered to pay damages over assertions that Kitagawa gave minors cigarettes and alcohol.

Mainstream Japanese media almost completely ignored the story. No criminal charges were filed, and Kitagawa and his agency remained popular and powerful.

Toshio Takeshita, who teaches journalism at Meiji University in Tokyo, blames cozy relationships between corporate media and entertainment companies for the long silence. Access to stars is essential to media companies, so they're often afraid to cross powerful entertainment figures.

Nakamura joined the Johnny's Jr. backup dancers in 2001, after his mother helped him apply.

Johnny's Jr. is the first step on the ladder for many aspiring Japanese male performers, a barely paid training camp for dancers and singers. Hundreds of boys practice with the group every year, and the most successful are picked to perform alongside stars represented by Johnny's. A select few become stars themselves.

Nakamura said that on Oct. 19, 2002 - he remembers the exact date - he spent the night at Kitagawa's home after a performance at the Tokyo Dome stadium.

Kitagawa regularly invited dozens of boys to stay at his home, which had a swimming pool, and was stocked with snacks and video games, according to Nakamura and other accusers.

Nakamura said he was sleeping in a bed with two other Johnny's Jr. members, lying in the middle, when Kitagawa, then 70, forced him to have sex. He just closed his eyes and prayed it would be over. The other two boys kept quiet, sleeping or feigning sleep.

The following day, Nakamura said, Kitagawa handed him one or two 10,000 yen (\$125 at the time) bills. He refused, but Kitagawa squeezed the money into his hand.

He performed again that evening. "When you're on stage at the Tokyo Dome, the view of the penlights is so beautiful," he said. "It was still so beautiful, but I couldn't feel the joy."

He stopped going to the dance lessons. For years, Nakamura felt ashamed and told only a few close friends and his mother.

## Silence

He said that he decided to break his silence after another accuser came forward earlier this year. Kauan Okamoto alleged in a press conference at the Foreign Correspondents' Club in Tokyo that Kitagawa forced him to have sex repeatedly, a month after the BBC's documentary aired. Okamoto was the first person in decades to accuse Kitagawa without anonymity.

Okamoto said he was assaulted beginning in 2012, a decade after Nakamura. It made Nakamura regret not coming forward sooner.

He gave an interview to Shukan Bunshun in June, and was asked to speak to the committee in parliament later that month.

In May, following a new series of public allegations and the start of a parliamentary investigation of the new head of Johnny's apologized to fans in a YouTube video. Company President Julie Keiko Fujishima also hired former prosecutor Makoto Hayashi to head a three-person investigation.

Hayashi said that the company is not considering monetary compensation, but he said the investigation will move forward with the assumption the sexual assault took place.

But Nakamura said he couldn't reach the investigators.

He filled out a form on the company's website to take part in the investigation, he said, and was given a time for a phone call with an administrative assistant, which led to another call, and then an email about scheduling yet another, still not with Hayashi or his team. Nakamura gave up after two weeks of back and forth.

Hayashi declined to be interviewed for this story, and said he did not have a timeline for completing the investigation.



Nakamura



This image released by Amazon Prime Video shows Rachel Brosnahan in a scene from 'The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel.' (AP)



Isabella Esler arrives at the premiere of 'Beetlejuice: The Musical' LA Celebration on Wednesday, July 12, at the Pantages in Los Angeles. (AP)



Beeks



Edwards

## Variety

LONDON: There's no evidence a BBC presenter who allegedly paid a teenager for explicit photos committed a crime, London police said Wednesday as the broadcaster's wife publicly identified him for the first time as veteran news anchor **Huw Edwards**.

Metropolitan police decided to take no further action after speaking with the alleged victim and that person's parents. The parents told The Sun newspaper last week that the presenter had been allowed to remain on air after the mother complained to the BBC in May that he paid the youth 35,000 pounds (\$45,000) starting in 2020 when the person was 17.

As the story topped the news in Britain all week and embroiled the BBC in scandal, speculation swirled about the identity of the presenter. Some of the BBC's biggest on-air personalities publicly said it wasn't them and others called on the unnamed presenter to come forward.

Edward's wife, **Vicky Flind**, named her husband late Wednesday and said he was hospitalized with serious mental health issues.

After "five extremely difficult days for our family," Flind said she was naming him "primarily out of concern for his mental well-being and to protect our children."

"The events of the last few days have greatly worsened matters, he has suffered another serious episode and is now receiving in-patient hospital care where he'll stay for the foreseeable future," she said.

Edwards, 61, is one of Britain's best-known and most authoritative news broadcasters, lead anchor on the BBC's nighttime news and the face of its election coverage. He led BBC coverage of the funeral of **Queen Elizabeth II** in September. He's among the broadcaster's best-paid stars, with an annual salary of at least 435,000 pounds (\$565,000).

The father of five said in a 2021 documentary that depression had left him bedridden for periods over two decades.

The BBC said it would continue its investigation into the matter. The UK's publicly funded national broadcaster had scrambled to deal with the crisis after the claims were first published by The Sun over the weekend. It said it became aware of a complaint in May but "new allegations were put to us on Thursday of a different nature."

It did not name Edwards, but said it had

## Television

## 'Last of Us' and 'White Lotus' give HBO top 3 spots

## 'Succession' tops Emmy nominations

LOS ANGELES, July 13, (AP) — HBO dominated Wednesday morning's Emmy nominations, with the elite trio of "Succession," "The White Lotus" and "The Last of Us" combining for a whopping 74, but the dominant theme darkening the scene is the ongoing writers strike and the looming possibility that actors may join them in as little as a day.

"Succession" and its deeply dysfunctional dynasty of one-percenters led all Emmy nominees in its fourth and final season with 27, including best drama, which it has won two of the past three years. It got three nominations for best actor in a drama, with Brian Cox, Jeremy Strong and Kieran Culkin all getting nods for playing men of the Roy clan, and Sarah Snook getting a best actress nomination. It also got four nominations for best supporting actor in a drama.

The cursed vacationers at a Sicilian resort from the second season of "The White Lotus" truly dominated the supporting categories, however, landing five nominations for best supporting actress in a drama - including nods for Jennifer Coolidge and Aubrey Plaza - and four more for best supporting actor.

Bella Ramsey and Pedro Pascal, the duo on a fungus-filled quest in "The Last of Us," each got lead acting nominations. The show, based on a popular PlayStation video game, was second behind "Succession" with 24 nominations. "The White Lotus" had 23.

"Ted Lasso" was tops among comedies with 21 nominations, including best comedy series and best actor for Jason Sudeikis. The Apple TV+ series won both awards for each of its first two seasons, but its threepart prospects depend on whether Emmy voters favor other contenders like "The Bear" or "Marvelous Mrs. Maisel."

The nominations suggested that HBO - which got the most overall nominations by far with 127 - can still dominate even as streaming-only outlets have taken over so much of elite TV. The distinction is increasingly blurred, however, with a huge segment of viewers watching "Succession" and the cable channel's other offerings on the streaming service now known as Max.

Cox, 77, got his best actor in a drama nod despite appearing in fewer than half of this season's "Succession" episodes, though as the Roy family patriarch he loomed just as large over the episodes he didn't appear in. A win would be his first for the role, though he won an Emmy for best supporting actor in a TV movie in 2001.

Strong won in 2020 for playing "eldest boy" Kendall Roy. Culkin got his first nomination for best actor after two previous nominations in the supporting category.

Actors joining movie and television writers on strike would further shut down the industry and be the first time since 1960 that two Hollywood unions were simultaneously striking. While show and film releases will continue, work on upcoming projects will cease - as would actors' interviews and appearances to promote the projects.

## Emotional

The possibility of an industry debilitated by strikes could dampen any joy for the new nominees, and could put the damper on the ceremony scheduled for Sept. 18 on the Fox network.

Sheryl Lee Ralph, who provided the emotional high point of last year's ceremony with her half-sung victory speech for her best supporting actor Emmy in "Abbott Elementary," said she is a "puddle of emotions" after getting nominated again amid the strife.

"Change is hard. Change is difficult. And in the midst of once again of a great moment in my life, I am surrounded by a difficult moment," Ralph told The Associated Press. "This is a fight for artistry, this is not a fight to make people rich."

The nominations were announced by "Community" star Yvette Nicole Brown and Television Academy CEO Frank Scherma, who referenced the labor disputes before at the top of Wednesday's livestream.

"We hope the ongoing guild negotiations can come to an equitable and swift resolution," Scherma said.

But the announcements, while low-key, proceeded as though a show will go on in the fall.

It was not a strong year for Emmy diversity, with the lead categories

dominated by shows with largely white ensembles. Pascal, the first Latino nominated as lead actor in a drama in more than two decades, was the only minority nominee in any of the drama series categories.

Representation was stronger in the comedy categories, where Jenna Ortega of Netflix's "Wednesday" was nominated for best actress. The Black actors of ABC's "Abbott Elementary" were again a high point for Emmy diversity, and for the otherwise largely absent broadcast networks. Creator Quinta Brunson was nominated for best actress, while Ralph and Janelle James were nominated for best supporting actress, as was Ayo Edebiri for "The Bear."

That FX series showed some of the Emmys' quirks with its 13 nominations. It appeared in the comedy categories despite its half-hour episodes having more drama than some of the drama nominees. And the awards' eligibility calendar means it got the nominations for its first season, even after many viewers have seen - and largely loved - its second, bringing buzz that probably helped it.

Speaking of quirks, the genre-defying "Jury Duty" rode its cult status to four nominations for streamer Amazon Freevee. A faux reality show for most of its cast and a reality show for one man, it was nominated for best comedy series and best supporting actor in a comedy for James Marsden.

Netflix led streamers with 103 nominations, but its showing was meager in many of the top categories. "The Crown" received its nearly annual deference for best drama and, along with Ortega, Christina Applegate was nominated for best supporting actress in a comedy for the third and final season of Netflix's "Dead to Me." Applegate, who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2021, has said the role may be her last.

Netflix fared better in the limited series category, where "Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story" and "Beef" managed 13 nominations apiece.

More than a year after his death, Ray Liotta, was nominated for best supporting actor in a limited series or TV movie for "Black Bird" on Apple TV+.

suspended a male star over the allegations. He last appeared on air a week ago in **Edinburgh** for a special broadcast on Scottish celebrations of the coronation of **King Charles III**. (AP)

WASHINGTON: A former "Jesus Christ Superstar" actor was acquitted Wednesday of conspiring with members of the far-right Oath Keepers extremist group to obstruct Congress in the Jan. 6, 2021, US Capitol attack.



Robert Downey Jr. poses for photographers at the photo call for the film 'Oppenheimer' on Wednesday, July 12, in London. (AP)

**James Beeks** was cleared of conspiracy to obstruct Congress' certification of the 2020 election and civil disorder after a trial in federal court. US District Judge **Amit Mehta** convicted Beeks' co-defendant, **Ohio** resident **Donovan Crowl**, of the same charges after hearing evidence without a jury.

The Beeks acquittal is a rare loss for the Justice Department in the massive Jan. 6 prosecution, which has led to the arrest of more than 1,000 people across the U.S. Beeks is only the second Jan. 6 defendant to be acquitted of all charges after a trial. Beeks represented himself at trial, though he was assisted by a lawyer who served as stand-by counsel and delivered his closing argument.

Approximately 100 others have been found guilty of at least one count after a trial decided by a jury or judge, and more than 600 have pleaded guilty.

The trial for Beeks and Crowl was what's called a "stipulated bench trial," which means the judge decided the case based on a set of facts that both sides agreed to before the trial started. Such trials allow defendants to admit to certain facts while maintaining a right to appeal any conviction.

Prosecutors had previously charged Beeks with other lower-level offenses - including illegally entering the Capitol - but agreed to only go to trial on the two felony offenses and dismiss the remaining counts. (AP)

## Health

## 'Over 700m face hunger'

## 148m kids stunted by hunger, UN says

UNITED NATIONS, July 13, (Agencies): The UN delivered grim news on global food security Wednesday: 2.4 billion people didn't have constant access to food last year, as many as 783 million faced hunger, and 148 million children suffered from stunted growth.

Five UN agencies said in the 2023 State of Food Security and Nutrition report that while global hunger numbers stalled between 2021 and 2022 many places are facing deepening food crises. They pointed to Western Asia, the Caribbean and Africa, where 20% of the continent's population is experiencing hunger, more than twice the global average. "Recovery from the global pandemic has been uneven, and the war in Ukraine has affected the nutritious food and healthy diets," **Qu Dongyu**, director-general of the Food and Agriculture Organization said in a statement. "This is the 'new normal' where climate change, conflict, and economic instability are pushing those on the margins even further from safety."



Qu

FAO chief economist Maximo Torero said the FAO food price index has been declining for about 15 months, but "food inflation has continued." But he said not knowing if the deal that has enabled Ukraine to ship 32 metric tons of grain to world markets and is trying to overcome obstacles to Russian grain and fertilizer shipments will be renewed when it expires on July 17 "is not good for the markets."

If it isn't renewed immediately "you will have a new spike for sure" in food prices, but how much and for how long will depend on how markets respond, he said.

According to the report, people's access to healthy diets has deteriorated across the world.

More than 3.1 billion people - 42% of the global population - were unable to afford a healthy diet in 2021, an increase of 134 million people compared to 2019, it said.

Torero told a news conference launching the report that reducing the number of people eating unhealthy diets "is a big challenge, because it's basically telling us that we have substantially to change the way we use our resources in the agricultural sector, in the agri-food system."

## Pandemic

According to the latest research, he said, between 691 million and 783 million people were chronically undernourished in 2022, an average of 735 million which is 122 million more people than in 2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Torero said UN projections for 2030 indicate that 600 million people will still be suffering from chronic undernourishment in 2030, far from the UN development goal of achieving "Zero Hunger" by that date.

In the report's foreword, the heads of FAO, the World Food Program, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the UN children's agency UNICEF and the World Health Organization wrote that achieving Zero Hunger "poses a daunting challenge." They called for redoubled efforts "to transform agri-food systems and leverage them" to reach the target.

As for children, the report says they are continuing to suffer from malnutrition, with not only 148 million younger than 5 stunted but 45 million too thin for their height or "wasted," while 37 million youngsters were overweight.

Torero said the five agencies also looked at increased urbanization and found that people in rural and semi-urban areas are also consuming mass market products.

"Normally, we used to believe that rural people will consume what they produce, but that's not the case," he said, explaining that in rural areas about 30% of the family's food basket is purchased from the market, and in semi-urban and urban areas it is higher, which has implications for nutrition because of the consumption of more processed foods.

WFP chief economist Arif Husain told reporters in a virtual briefing that in 2022 when the war in Ukraine was ongoing the food situation didn't get worse because the donor community stepped up with about \$14.2 billion, and the agency was able to provide aid to 160 million people, up from 97 million in 2019.

"My concern is that moving forward we are looking at huge funding cuts," he said, citing WFP donations of just \$4.2 billion by last week, 29% lower than at the same time last year.

Over 122 million more people are facing hunger in the world since 2019 due to the pandemic and repeated weather shocks and conflicts, including the war in Ukraine, according to the latest State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report published Wednesday jointly by five United Nations specialized agencies.

The 2023 edition of the report reveals that between 691 and 783 million people faced hunger in 2022, with a mid-range of 735 million. This represents an increase of 122 million people compared to 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Malnutrition

If trends remain as they are, the Sustainable Development Goal of ending hunger by 2030 will not be reached, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) warn.

Presenting the report in Brussels today, David Laborde, Director, FAO Agrifood Economics Division, said "urbanization is a mega trend that must factor into our efforts to end hunger, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition."

On her part, Magda Kopczynska, Deputy Director-General for Agriculture in the European Commission said "thorough analysis such as the SOFI report is key to help policy makers address global food insecurity and the challenge of transforming agriculture" underlined.

While global hunger numbers have stalled between 2021 and 2022, there are many places in the world facing deepening food crises. Progress in hunger reduction was observed in Asia and Latin America, but hunger was still on the rise in Western Asia, the Caribbean and throughout all subregions of Africa in 2022.

Africa remains the worst-affected region with one in five people facing hunger on the continent, more than twice the global average, notes the report.

Meanwhile, the United States humanitarian agency told The Associated Press it is horrified by conditions in Ethiopia, where local officials have reported hundreds of hunger deaths in recent weeks after the US and the United Nations paused food aid for one-sixth of the country's population over massive theft of the aid.

In an unusually strong statement emailed to the AP, the US Agency for International Development called the aid suspension "wrenching" and a measure of last resort because of the "extreme scale and coordination of food aid diversion identified across the country."

US officials have said in private that this could be the biggest-ever theft of aid in any country.

The US and UN have not said who was involved in the theft, which was first discovered in March in the northern Tigray region when tons of food meant for needy people were instead found for sale in sacks branded with the US flag.



A Pteranodon skeleton is displayed at Sotheby's during a media preview, Monday, July 10, 2023, in New York. The prehistoric predator will headline Sotheby's Live Natural History Auction, Wednesday, July 26th. (AP)



This photo provided by Peter M. Fischer, Senior Professor Cypriot and Near Eastern Archaeology University of Gothenburg, Dept. of Historical Studies, shows a skeleton and ceramics, pottery's during the excavations at Hala Sultan Tekke at the Salt Lake area in southern coastal city of Larnaca, Cyprus, Friday, June 2, 2023. 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 archaeologist said Tuesday, July 11. (AP)



Hatton



Sabry

## Discovery

'Skeletons' to be auctioned: The fossilized skeletons of an aerial predator with a 20-foot (6-meter) wingspan and an aquatic reptile with a snake-like neck will be auctioned in New York this month, Sotheby's announced Tuesday.

The two creatures, both tens of millions of years old, will be sold July 26 in the latest sale of prehistoric fossils from the auction house that launched a new era of fossil auctions by selling a Tyrannosaurus rex named Sue in 1997.

"More than 25 years since the groundbreaking sale of Sue the T. rex at Sotheby's, we are very excited to now turn our attention to its predatory peers of the sky and the sea," **Cassandra Hatton**, Sotheby's head of science and popular culture, said.

The mounted skeletons that will be auctioned this month are a pteranodon, a huge bird-like animal that lived about 85 million years ago, and a plesiosaur, an 11-foot (3.3-meter) marine reptile of the type that is thought to have inspired the legend of the Loch Ness monster.

The pteranodon specimen, nicknamed Horus after the falcon-headed Egyptian god, was discovered in 2002 in Kansas in what was once an inland sea that divided the continent of North America during the Cretaceous Period, Sotheby's said.

One of the largest winged creatures that ever lived, the pteranodon flew over water and used its long beak to fish for prey.

Almost all of the specimen's original fossil bones have been preserved, Sotheby's said.

"To get something of this size with the level of preservation is incredibly rare," Hatton said. "Generally, if you go to a museum and you find a specimen that's super well preserved, it's going to be something on the smaller side."

Sotheby's is estimating that the pteranodon will sell for \$4 million to \$6 million.

The 11-foot-long plesiosaur was discovered in the 1990s in Gloucestershire, England and is believed to have lived about 190 million years ago.

According to Sotheby's, many have drawn comparisons between plesiosaurs and the Loch Ness monster of Scottish folklore, as the plesiosaur's long neck, small head and flippers mirror recorded descriptions of the fabled monster.

Sotheby's is calling its specimen Nessie. The estimated auction price is \$600,000 to \$800,000.

Sotheby's has not identified the seller of either fossil. (AP)

## The Conversation

## 'All sore throats are not due to strep throat'

## Strep throat vs throat infections

By Allen Shaughnessy  
Tufts University

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

My sore throats, you know, are always worse than anybody's."

So declares Mary to Anne in "Persuasion," Jane Austen's 1817 book. Most of us can relate to this feeling. There is no such thing as "just a sore throat." The pain, headache, fever and aches associated with a sore throat can make you feel terrible.

While sore throats can occur at any time of year, strep throat is more common in the fall, winter and early spring.

I am a professor of family medicine, a pharmacist and an expert on evidence-based medicine. My work involves the evaluation of research performed by others, and I have been following and analyzing research findings on strep for the past 30 years.

Many people incorrectly assume that all sore throats are due to strep throat, a bacterial infection of the pharynx, the middle throat area behind the nose and mouth, and patients often come to our family medicine office wanting to be checked and treated for strep with antibiotics.

However, neither testing nor treatment is always needed for a sore throat. Regardless of the cause, rest and pain relievers form the cornerstone of sore throat treatment.

Here's some guidance on whether and when testing is necessary.

Most sudden-onset sore throats are caused by viruses - the same ones that cause the common cold, the seasonal flu and COVID-19. There are more than 200 viruses that can cause sore throat and other symptoms related to the common cold.

But bacteria can also be the culprits behind a sore throat. One of the most common examples is strep throat, or group A pharyngitis.

Strep is caused by certain strains of Streptococcus pyogenes bacteria.

There are many species of strep; other common forms of strep that cause different infections in humans include "group B strep" and "group D strep." Group A strep usually lives peacefully among the many other types of bacteria growing on our skin and doesn't cause any problems, until we get a break in the skin such as a cut or a scrape. This allows it to overwhelm the immune system's ability to keep it in check.

Group A strep can also live in the back of the throat - up to 30% of people without any evidence of a sore throat will have this strain in their throat. Up to 3 in 10 children and 1 in 10 adults feeling sick with a sore throat due to a virus or other cause will test positive for group A strep. That means that people with a sore throat caused by a virus could also be positive for strep, even if it's not causing the symptoms.

Not all group A strep bacteria are the same, though. Some varieties are better at evading the immune system than others and can grow quickly. Others produce byproducts that can cause a sore throat and sometimes lead to tonsillitis, an infection of the tonsils, or cause ear or sinus infections.

Still other strep strains produce a toxin that can cause a characteristic skin rash or lead to effects on the heart, kidneys or even the brain.

## Syndrome

Rarer still, group A strep can enter the bloodstream and cause toxic shock syndrome, a life-threatening, overwhelming infection. These latter conditions are examples of invasive strep, meaning that the infection is in parts of the body typically free from germs; they seem to be on the rise after a marked reduction in their occurrence during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Doctors or other clinicians can easily test for strep by using a swab to collect a bit of the fluid from the back of the throat. This sample can identify group A strep in about a minute.

While researchers have been studying group A strep for over 75 years and there are thousands of research papers focused on infections caused by strep, there is still controversy over whether it needs to be tested for and treated.

To decide whether to test for group A strep, clinicians use a set of criteria based on five questions that can help determine whether strep testing is needed. These are:

■ How old is the patient? Strep throat is most common in children between ages 5 and 15 and least common in adults over age 45.

■ Are the tonsils swollen or do they have a white or yellow coating? Both conditions often accompany strep. However, this question alone isn't definitive, since viruses can also affect the tonsils.

■ Are the cervical lymph nodes swollen or tender? Normally these bumps, which are in the front of the neck along the sides of the windpipe, cannot

be seen or felt, but are often palpable when strep is present.

■ Does the person have a fever? Lack of a fever makes strep less likely.

■ Does the person have a cough? A cough is indicative of a viral cause and makes strep the less likely cause of the sore throat.

While none of these questions alone can provide a clear answer, taken together they can tell your clinician whether strep is more or less likely.

Using this scoring tool, an adult with a sore throat but without changes to the tonsils or lymph nodes, without a fever and with a cough has only a 1 in 40 chance, or 2.5%, of having strep throat. For such patients, a strep test is not necessary.

On the other hand, when a first grader meets all five of these criteria, there is a 50% chance that strep is causing his or her sore throat. Based on recent research I have reviewed, by using these questions adults can determine when strep is the likely cause of a sore throat.

In the United Kingdom and other European countries, doctors do not routinely test for strep. Antibiotic treatment can at times cause allergic reactions, rash, diarrhea, stomach upset, yeast infections and other side effects. Authorities in these countries feel any benefit of testing and treatment does not outweigh these risks.

Once group A strep is confirmed, doctors may prescribe an antibiotic treatment.

Penicillin or amoxicillin are the most commonly prescribed antibiotics for strep. These medicines will not reduce pain or tiredness but may help symptoms resolve earlier, typically by about a day. Doctors may also suggest use of a pain reliever such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen to help relieve symptoms.

Antibiotic treatment does not seem to lower the likelihood of spread of the infection between children - which is common in schools and dormitories - or adults.

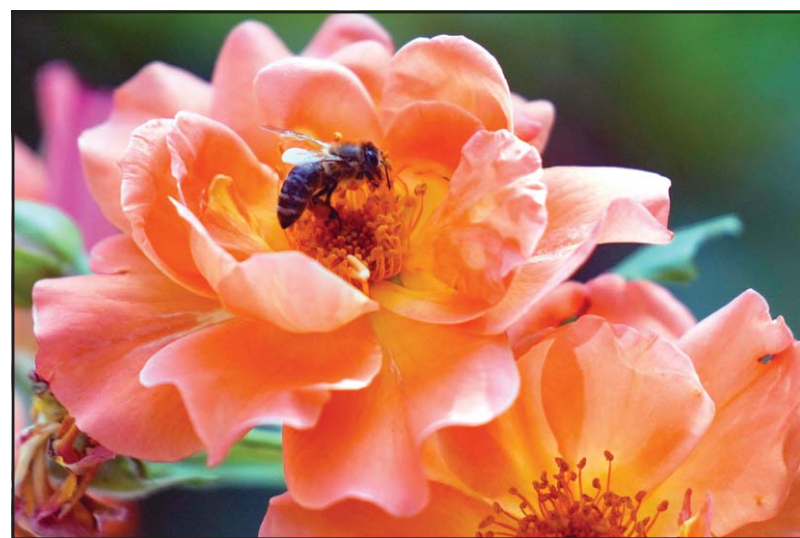
Health care practitioners recommend staying home until fever has subsided. They also recommend taking the full course of antibiotics, even if the symptoms have abated.

With sore throats caused by viruses - against which antibiotics are ineffective - few treatments exist aside from using pain relievers to help soothe immediate symptoms. For this reason and because antibiotic overuse is a major problem in the US, it is best not to assume that your sore throat is caused by strep and to treat it accordingly. (AP)

Sri Lanka to receive 6 artifacts: Sri Lanka's foreign minister said Monday that his country welcomes the Netherlands' plan to return hundreds of colonial-era artifacts -

including a bejeweled, ceremonial cannon - and said the Indian Ocean island is working to preserve the historic items.

The Dutch government last week an-



A bee searches for pollen on a flower during a sunny day in Belgrade, Serbia, Thursday, July 13. Hot weather has set in with temperatures rising up to 38 Celsius (100.4 Fahrenheit) in Belgrade. (AP)

nounced that it will return 478 objects of cultural significance to Indonesia and to Sri Lanka. It said the objects were wrongfully brought to the Netherlands during the colonial period, acquired under duress or by looting.

Under the plan, Sri Lanka is to receive six artifacts, including the cannon and guns currently in the collection of the National Museum of World Cultures and the Rijksmuseum. The transfer of ownership to Sri Lanka will take place later this year.

Foreign Minister **Ali Sabry** said Sri Lanka is "very grateful" for the items' return. Discussions continued, he said, to "identify the number of artifacts."

"We need to have the mechanism here to continue to preserve them," Sabry told reporters, adding that the government will look to the Cabinet for direction.

The decision to return the artifacts came after a Dutch committee was set up in 2022 to assess requests for the restitution of artifacts in state museums. It is considering more restitution requests from Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Nigeria.

One of the highlights of the looted objects being returned to Sri Lanka is the Cannon of Kandy, a ceremonial weapon made of bronze, silver and gold and inlaid with rubies. The barrel is decorated with a sun, a half-moon and a Sinhalese lion, the symbols of the King of Kandy. (AP)

## Clippers overcome Grizzlies

## Holmgren continues strong return in Thunder win

LAS VEGAS, July 13, (AP): Chet Holmgren made it two big nights in a row for No. 2 picks.

A night after Brandon Miller had his best game in Las Vegas, Chet Holmgren was dominant on both ends to lead the Oklahoma City to a 98-87 victory over Indiana on Wednesday night.

Holmgren had 25 points, nine rebounds and five blocks, continuing his strong return after missing the 2022-23 season following surgery on his right foot. The No. 2 pick in the 2022 draft got back on the court when the Thunder played in the Salt Lake City Summer League, then had 16 points and 10 rebounds Saturday in a victory over Dallas in his Las Vegas debut.

Miller, picked behind Victor Wembanyama in this year's draft, scored 26 points Tuesday in Charlotte's 97-93 loss to Portland.

## Thunder 98, Pacers 87

Ousmane Dieng added 22 points, nine rebounds and six assists for Oklahoma City.

Dieng made 9 of 11 from the field and 3 of 4 from 3-point range. Jared

Butler had 18 points, seven assists and three steals for the Thunder (2-1) and Keyontae Johnson also scored 18.

## Clippers 83, Grizzlies 74

Jason Preston had 13 points, 10 rebounds and five assists for Los Angeles. Kobe Brown added 12 points, 10 boards, two steals and two blocks.

Xavier Moon scored 16 points and Brodrick Thomas 14 for the Clippers (2-1).

## BASKETBALL

## Hawks 99, Timberwolves 93

Tyrese Martin shot 9 of 15 from the field and finished with 25 points and nine rebounds to lead Atlanta.

Seth Lundy added 14 points, including four 3-pointers, for the Hawks (2-1). Kobe Bufkin and Mfiondu Kabengele scored 13 points apiece and Mouhamed Gueye added 11.

## Mavericks 98, Warriors 96, OT

Oliver-Maxence Prosper and Dereck Lively II each had a double-double, and Braxton Key threw down



Los Angeles Lakers guard Bryce Hamilton (36) drives between Boston Celtics guard J.D. Davison (20) and forward Jordan Walsh during the first half of an NBA summer league basketball game in Las Vegas. (AP)

a two-hand follow dunk to help Dallas edge Golden State.

Prosper had 17 points and 10 rebounds and Lively finished with 11

points and 10 boards. Jaden Hardy led the Mavericks (2-1) with 21 points but shot just 6 of 19 from the field, 1 of 9 from 3-point range and 8 of 15 from

the free throw line. Mike Miles Jr. added 19 points.

## Pistons 94, Raptors 90

Ausar Thompson, the No. 5 overall pick in last month's draft, had 17 points on 7-of-14 shooting and grabbed nine rebounds, while Jared Rhoden scored 18 points in Detroit's win over Toronto.

Thompson also had four steals, three assists and two blocks. Marcus Sasser added 15 points, seven assists and two steals for the Pistons (2-1).

## Knicks 82, Magic 80, OT

Charlie Brown Jr. scored 19 points and blocked four shots, QJ Peterson added 16 points, nine rebounds and five assists, and New York beat Orlando.

Undrafted rookie Jaylen Martin, who signed a two-way contract with the Knicks (1-2), took a dribble hand-off near the right elbow and drove into the lane, where he hit a floater to give New York the win. The 19-year-old from Overtime Elite finished with 12 points.

Jett Howard led Orlando (0-3) with

22 points, including four 3-pointers, and Quinnndary Weatherspoon added 17 points. Anthony Black scored just eight points on 3-of-10 shooting but finished with 14 rebounds, four assists and two blocks.

## Jazz 96, Nuggets 91

Ochai Agbaji and Luka Samanic each scored 14 points to lead five Utah players in double figures in its victory over Denver.

Keshawn Justice added 12 points and eight rebounds for the Nuggets (3-0). Colbey Ross and Nick Ongenda scored 11 points apiece.

## Celtics 95, Lakers 90

Jordan Walsh scored 25 points for Boston and JD Davison added a double-double in the win over Los Angeles.

Davison finished with 11 points, 11 rebounds, six assists, two steals and two blocks. Jay Scrubb hit four 3-pointers and finished with 18 points for Boston (1-2). Dalano Banton had 12 points and six assists but was just 3-of-19 shooting, 1 of 7 from 3-point range. Justin Champagnie scored 10 points with seven rebounds and two blocks.

## Mahomes, Shiffrin win top athlete honors

## LeBron says at ESPYS he will play for LA Lakers in upcoming season

LOS ANGELES, July 13, (AP): LeBron James will play another season for the Los Angeles Lakers.

The 38-year-old superstar announced his intentions on stage at The ESPYS on Wednesday night after accepting the record-breaking performance award for becoming the NBA's career scoring leader.

At the end of last season, in which he surpassed Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's mark, James had said he wasn't sure if he would be back.

"In that moment I'm asking myself if I can still play without cheating the game. Can I give everything to the game still? The truth is I've been asking myself this question at the end of the season for a couple years now. I just never openly talked about it," James said.

"I don't care how many more points I score or what I can and cannot do on the floor. The real question for me is can I play without cheating this game? The day I can't give the game everything on the floor is the day I'll be done. Lucky for you guys that day is not today."

The crowd at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood let out a huge cheer.

"So yeah, I still got something left," James said. "A lot left."

He was presented his trophy by wife Savannah, sons Bronny and Bryce and daughter Zhuri. In her introductory remarks, Savannah said, "I think LeBron James is the baddest ..."

She began to say an expletive but cut herself off as Zhuri exclaimed, "Mom!"

James later returned and was joined by Chris Paul and Dwyane Wade to honor Carmelo Anthony, who recently retired after a 19-year career.

Earlier, Chicago White Sox reliever Liam Hendriks told the audience that he pitched much of the 2022 season with non-Hodgkin lymphoma before being diagnosed with an advanced stage of the disease.

He accepted the Jimmy V Award for Perseverance. The 34-year-old Australian was declared cancer-free in late April and returned to the mound a month later.

"That was an eye-opener. I didn't feel too many symptoms but I had some lumps around. It just shows you the power of the mind. When you don't think anything's

wrong and you believe that you can do anything, you can do anything," Hendriks said.

"I was throwing 100 miles per hour while going through Stage 4 lymphoma and then coming back after doing eight rounds of chemotherapy and four rounds of immunotherapy and was able to get out there and throw 96 miles per hour. That isn't physically who I am. That's all this, that's all mental."

The U.S. women's soccer team was honored with the Arthur Ashe Award for Courage for its fight to receive equal pay. The players sued U.S. Soccer in 2019 and last year reached agreement on a deal that splits men's and women's pay equally.

Briana Scurry, goalkeeper for the national team from 1994-2008, saluted the 1985 team.

"They are the foundation of this entire community of giants," she said.

The Buffalo Bills training staff received the Pat Tillman Award for Service, honored for saving the life of safety Damar Hamlin, who went into cardiac arrest at a game in Cincinnati in January.

The staff was greeted by a standing ovation. They huddled around Hamlin on stage, hugging him and patting his back. With his back to the audience, Hamlin bent his head and appeared to break down. He has since recovered and plans to play this fall.

"Damar, first and foremost, thank you for staying alive, brother," said Nate Breske, head trainer for the Bills.

"We're not used to having the spotlight on us. We were just doing our job, but the idea of service is definitely something that is engrained in our profession and that we take great pride in," he told the audience.

Breske urged support for funding for automated external defibrillators and CPR training, especially in underserved communities, as well as for athletic trainers in youth sports.

"Learn CPR and how to use an AED because they save lives," he said.

Patrick Mahomes was honored as best men's sports athlete, while skier Mikaela Shiffrin received the women's sports honor.

The Kansas City Chiefs quarterback has won two Super Bowls in his five seasons and was named MVP of the game each time, including this past February. He turns 28 in September.

## Liberty edge Fever, advance to Commissioner's Cup final



Los Angeles Sparks forward Nneka Ogumike (30) lays the ball up against the Las Vegas Aces during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Los Angeles. (AP)

## Dream beat Storm for 6th straight win

Sunday.

## Dream 85, Storm 75

In College Park, Allisha Gray scored 19 points, Cheyenne Parker added 18 and Atlanta beat the Seattle Storm 85-75 Wednesday night for the Dream's sixth straight win.

Rhyné Howard added 15 points, six rebounds, five assists and two steals, but made just 5 of 15 from the field and tied her season high with five turnovers for Atlanta (11-8).

Kia Nurse hit a 3-pointer to give Seattle its first lead at 9-7 with 6:41 left but Howard answered with a 3 of her own just 13 seconds later and the Dream led the rest of the way. Howard followed with a runner in the lane before Gray made back-to-back baskets to make it 21-12 late in the first quarter and the Storm trailed by double figures the rest of the way.

Jewell Loyd, the WNBA's leading scorer this season (25.7 per game), did not play (foot) for Seattle. The five-time All-Star tied the WNBA record of nine 3-pointers during a 93-86 road loss to the Washington Mystics on Tuesday.

Jordan Horston, the No. 9 pick in the 2023 WNBA Draft, had a season-high 23 points, 10 rebounds and three steals for the Storm (4-16). The 6-foot-2 wing out of Tennessee made 8 of 16 from the field, including 3 of 4 from 3-point range.

Dulcy Fankam Mendjiadeu

scored 11 points - her third consecutive game in double figures. Gabby Williams and Joyner Holmes added 10 points apiece.

Seattle has lost seven in a row and eight of its last 10.

## Wings 107, Lynx 67

In Minneapolis, Natasha Howard scored 28 with 14 rebounds, Arike Ogunbowale also had her first career double-double and the Dallas Wings blew out the Minnesota Lynx 107-67.

Satou Sabally, with five 3-pointers, and Teaira McCowan both had 19 points for the Wings (11-9). Ogunbowale had 16 with a career-high 11 assists.

Napheesa Collier had 11 points and Kayla McBride 10 for the Lynx (9-11), who gave up 113 points to Las Vegas on Sunday.

In addition to having a season-high for points in a game, 52 came inside the paint, also a season-high for Dallas. The Wings had a 43-28 rebounding advantage and turned 15 turnovers into 25 points. They had a season-high 31 assists on 41 baskets, shooting 52%.

Sabally hit a jumper to put Dallas up 10-9 and start an 8-0 run. The Wings steadily pulled away, leading 28-19 after one quarter and 50-32 at the half before outscoring the Lynx 31-18 in the third quarter.

## Sun 84, Sky 72

In Chicago, Tiffany Hayes scored 22 points, DeWanna Bonner added 21 and the Connecticut Sun de-

feated the Chicago Sky 84-72 on Wednesday.

Alyssa Thomas added 19 points and 10 rebounds for the Sun (15-5), who would have advanced to the Commissioner's Cup championship game against Las Vegas if the New York Liberty hadn't pulled out an overtime win in Indiana.

Kahleah Cooper had 22 points and Elizabeth Williams 16 for the Sky (8-12), who have lost three straight.

Bonner scored 10 points in the third quarter when the Sun turned a two-point halftime deficit into a 10-point lead.

The Sun, who have won three straight heading into the All-Star break, outscored the Sky 46-30 in the paint and had 26 points off 17 Chicago turnovers.

The Sky took a 38-36 halftime lead by closing with an 18-7 run. Chicago shot 40% for the game.

## Aces 97, Sparks 78

In Los Angeles, A'ja Wilson had 25 points and 12 rebounds to help the Las Vegas Aces beat the Los Angeles Sparks 97-78 on Wednesday night.

Kelsey Plum added 21 points and five steals for the Aces (19-2), who were playing the second half of a back-to-back. They routed Phoenix on Tuesday night.

Wilson made back-to-back baskets to open the scoring before Jackie Young hit a 3-pointer to make it 7-0. Plum hit a 3-pointer that made it 21-11 with 3:14 left in the first quarter and the Aces led by double figures the rest of the way.

Azura Stevens had a season-high 22 points and tied her career best with 12 rebounds, and Nneka Ogumike scored 20 points on 10-of-15 shooting and grabbed 11 rebounds, for the short-handed Sparks (7-13).

Lexie Brown (non-COVID illness), Layshia Clarendon (foot), Chiney Ogumike (foot) and Nia Clouden (knee) did not play for Los Angeles.

Candace Parker (ankle) missed her third consecutive game for Las Vegas.

Gray was called for a flagrant 1 foul early in the fourth quarter for unnecessary contact to the head of the Sparks' Destanni Henderson.



Chris Paul, (from left), LeBron James, and Dwyane Wade do a tribute to Carmelo Anthony at the ESPYS awards at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP)

## IOC declines to give Russia and Belarus formal invitations

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, July 13, (AP): Russia and Belarus will not get a formal invitation to the 2024 Paris Olympics when more than 200 national teams receive their traditional invites later this month, the IOC said Thursday.

## OLYMPICS

It is an International Olympic Committee tradition exactly one year before

## Change Name

I, Huzefa holder of Indian Passport No T8209865 Having Permanent Address (201,204 Al Rahem Apartment, Opp Tekrawala masjid, Ambawadi kalipul, Surat, Gujarat, India- 395003) Residing In Kuwait at present hereby declare that Hence Forth my name will be Read As under given name Huzefa and Surname Bhinderwala

a Summer Games or Winter Games opens to invite all the national teams worldwide to the event.

Despite the protocol move, some Russian and Belarusian athletes could still compete in Paris - despite their countries' war on Ukraine - without their national teams being invited.

The IOC said Thursday that 203 eligible national Olympic committees (NOCs) will be sent their invitations to Paris on July 26.

"For the reasons given, this will exclude the NOCs of Russia and Belarus, plus the NOC of Guatemala, which is currently suspended," the Olympic body said in a statement.

The president of the Belarus NOC is Viktor Lukashenko, the son of state leader Alexander Lukashenko. He followed his father in the Olympic post.

The IOC urged international sports bodies last year

to block and isolate athletes, officials and host cities from Russia and Belarus within days of the war starting 17 months ago.

This year, as the next Olympics approach, the IOC has pushed those sports bodies to try to let some Russians and Belarusians evaluated as neutral individuals to compete in qualifying events for Paris.

The IOC has consistently said it can choose not to invite Russia and Belarus at all to what is its own event.

"The IOC will take this decision at the appropriate time, at its full discretion, and without being bound by the results of previous Olympic qualification competitions," it said Thursday.

Guatemala is currently suspended from the Olympic movement because of alleged government interference with the independence of the NOC there.

## BASKETBALL

Breanna Stewart had 18 points and 10 rebounds for the Liberty (14-4), who play at Western Conference winner and defending champion Las Vegas for the Commissioner's Cup on Aug. 15. Courtney Vandersloot had 12 assists, the last going to Betnijah Laney for a 3-pointer that broke an 85-85 tie with 1:52 left in overtime.

Vandersloot's layup with 7:27 left in regulation had the Liberty up 74-56 but their next field goal was Ionescu's 3 to open overtime. The Fever reeled off 16-straight points and Erica Wheeler had a three-point play with 12.9 seconds to go and Boston's 3 completed the comeback.

Boston had 23 points for the Fever (5-15), who have lost eight-straight. Emma Cannon had a career-high 19 on 7-of-9 shooting, Kelsey Mitchell added 16 and Grace Berger also had a career high with 15.

The Fever had a different starting lineup for the first time this season with leading rebounder NaLyssa Smith and Lexie Hull injured. Smith will miss two weeks with a stress fracture in her left foot and Lexie Hull has a broken nose. Both played

## SPORTS

# Panama upset US to reach Gold Cup final

Mexico rout Jamaica to advance

**SAN DIEGO, July 13, (AP):** After winning the CONCACAF Gold Cup with its junior varsity two years ago, the United States failed to repeat.

Adalberto Carrasquilla converted the decisive penalty kick after Cristian Roldan was stopped in his attempt, and Panama beat the Americans 5-4 in a shootout following a 1-1 tie on Wednesday night to reach the CONCACAF Gold Cup final against Mexico.

"There's a lot of learning lessons that we're all going to take away as we now continue our preparation to the path of 2026," U.S. interim coach B.J. Callaghan said, looking ahead to the Americans co-hosting the World Cup.

"You had some older senior guys that had experience that we challenged to take on more leadership roles, mentorship roles, and that came out," Callaghan said. "And then we had a group of young players, whether they are U-20 - had played at the U-20 - or Olympic age, and all striving to become part of that roster in 2026."

Iván Anderson put No. 57 Panama ahead in the ninth minute of extra time with his first international goal, and Jesús Ferreira tied the score six minutes later for the 11th-ranked U.S.

Panama reached the final for the third time after losing to the U.S. in 2005 and 2013. Panama will play Mexico, an eight-time champion, on Sunday at Inglewood, California.

## SOCCER

The U.S., a seven-time winner of the championship of North and Central America and the Caribbean, failed to reach the final for the first time since losing a 2015 semifinal to Jamaica. The Americans have not won consecutive Gold Cups since 2005 and '07.

The game marked the finale of Callaghan, who led the U.S. to five wins, one loss and one draw as the Americans' second interim coach this year. Gregg Berhalter returns for the Sept. 9 exhibition against Uzbekistan.

The U.S. had just 34% possession in the first half.

"The first half is my fault," Callaghan said. "I didn't set the team up the way they should have been set up."

American Cade Cowell hit a post about 20 seconds in and that was the closest to a goal until Panama went ahead nine minutes into extra time.

Carrasquilla played a through pass to Anderson, who was kept outside by DeAndre Yedlin. Anderson took a touch and played the ball past on-rushing goalkeeper Matt Turner, then kicked the ball into the open net for his first international goal.

Turner, who saved two penalty kicks against Canada, was the only U.S. player on the field who saw extensive time at last year's World Cup.

Ferreira scored six minutes later after Matt Miazga played a long pass to Jordan Morris, who headed the ball into the penalty area. Ferreira volleyed the ball with his right shin from 16 yards past the outstretched left hand of a diving Orlando Mosquera for his 15th international goal, his seventh of the tournament.

With the U.S. going first in the shootout, Ferreira was stopped by Mosquera.

Fidel Escobar and Ismael Díaz beat Turner, while Djordje Mihailovic and Morris were successful for the U.S.



Jamaica's Shamar Nicholson (11) and Mexico's Cesar Montes vie for the ball during the second half of a CONCACAF Gold Cup semifinals soccer match in Las Vegas. (AP)

Turner dove to his left to stop Christian Martínez and Julian Gressel and Miazga converted around Édgar Bárcenas successful kick for Panama, leaving the U.S. ahead 4-3.

Cecilio Waterman tied the score with Panama's fifth shot, Mosquera dove right to parry Roldan's attempt and Carrasquilla put his shot inside Turner's right post.

Henry Martin scored 80 seconds in, Luis Chávez converted a free kick in the 30th minute and Mexico beat Jamaica 3-0.

Roberto Alvarado added a goal in the third minute of second-half stoppage time as Mexico advanced to play Panama on Sunday at Inglewood, California. El Tri, under interim coach Jaime Lozano, is seeking a ninth Gold Cup title.

Martín scored his ninth international goal and third of the tournament, settling the ball with a touch after Jesús Gallardo's cross and beating Andre Blake from 8 yards. Luis Romo had scored 51 seconds in during Mexico's opener, a 4-0 win over Honduras.

Chávez curled a 25-yard free kick to Blake's upper right corner for his fourth international goal and third of the tournament. Chávez's first international goal was on a free kick against Saudi Arabia at last year's World Cup.

Alvarado got his fifth goal when he tapped in a pass from Gallardo.

Mexico won the 2019 title and lost the 2021 final in extra time to the United States at Las Vegas.

## SOCCER

### Fire 3, Montreal

In Chicago, Xherdan Shaqiri and Maren Haile-Selassie both had a goal and an assist in the first half to power the Chicago Fire to a 3-0 victory over CF Montreal.

Chicago (7-7-8) struck quickly when Brian Gutiérrez used a pass from 19-year-old Georgios Koutsias in the 9th minute to score his first goal of the season.

Haile-Selassie and Shaqiri set each other's goals up. Haile-Selassie's fourth netter this season came two minutes after Gutiérrez scored. Shaqiri scored his third goal of the season in the 34th minute to give the Fire a 3-0 lead at halftime.

Chicago snapped a four-match losing streak to Montreal (8-12-2) with its first multi-goal margin of victory this season.

### Union 2, Nashville 0

In Nashville, Dániel Gazdag scored on a penalty kick in each half and the Philadelphia Union beat Nashville SC 2-0 in a match that saw three players exit in the second half due to red cards.

Gazdag gave the Union (11-7-4) a 1-0 lead in the 40th minute after a foul by Nashville's Daniel Lovitz. He added an insurance goal in the 84th minute after a second yellow card on Lovitz - forcing Nashville (11-7-5) to play a man down. Gazdag has nine goals and nine assists this season.

Nashville's Shaq Moore and Philadelphia's Julián Carranza both received red cards in the fifth minute of stoppage time for violent conduct.

Joe Bendik did not have to make a save to earn the clean sheet for the Union. Joe Willis stopped three shots for Nashville.

### Cincinnati 2, Red Bulls 1

In Harrison, Luciano Acosta scored on a late penalty kick and Obinna Nwobodo found the net in stoppage time to rally FC Cincinnati to a 2-1 victory over the New York Red Bulls.

Omír Fernández scored on a penalty kick in the 28th minute and the Red Bulls took a 1-0 lead into halftime. It was his third goal of the season.

Acosta answered with a PK goal of his own in the 80th minute to knot the score. Obinna followed with his second goal of the campaign, scoring unassisted in the third minute of extra time. Acosta's goal was his 11th of the season, third highest in the league.

## Shaqiri, Haile-Selassie star as Fire dominate Montreal

## Hlongwane, Pukki propel Minnesota Utd over Dynamo

HOUSTON, July 13, (AP): Bongokuhle Hlongwane and Teemu Pukki scored five minutes apart early in the first half and Minnesota United breezed to a 3-0 victory over the Houston Dynamo on Wednesday night.

Hlongwane found the net for a sixth time this season, scoring unassisted in the 15th minute to give Minnesota United (7-8-6) a lead it would not relinquish. Pukki, scored the first goal of his MLS career, using an assist from Emanuel Reynoso. Pukki, Finland's all-time leading goal scorer, debuted for the club last week in a 4-1 loss to Austin FC. Pukki scored 38 goals in 110 appearances for Finland's national team.

Ismael Tajouri-Shradi notched his first goal of the season, scoring unassisted in the 84th minute to help guide Minnesota United to its seventh straight victory and a season sweep over the Dynamo (8-10-4).

Cincinnati (14-2-6) improves to 5-1-3 in its last eight matches with the Red Bulls (6-8-8). The Supporters' Shield leaders entered play on their first skid of the season after a 0-1-2 three-match run. Cincinnati allowed multiple goals in all three matches.

The Red Bulls had scored multiple goals in three of their previous four matches after doing so just twice in their first 17.

### Revolution 2, Atlanta United 1

In Foxborough, Matt Polster and Giacomo Vriani scored in the first nine minutes, Djordje Petrovic made a career-high 10 saves and the New England Revolution defeated Atlanta United 2-1.

Polster netted his second goal of the season to give the Revolution (11-4-7) the lead, scoring unassisted in the 4th minute. Vriani stretched the advantage to 2-0 when he took a pass from Carles Gil and scored his fifth goal this season. Gil returned from a one-match suspension for accumulating five yellow cards. He missed the Revs' 2-1 loss to the New York Red Bulls on Saturday.

Djordje Petrovic missed his shot at a clean sheet when Machop Chol scored unassisted in the third minute of second-half stoppage time for his second goal this season and the second of his career. Brad Guzan had four saves for Atlanta United (9-6-8).

New England improves to 4-0-2 in its last six matches against Atlanta United after going 0-5-2 in the previous seven.

Atlanta United was coming off back-to-back shutout victories. The club had three straight shutouts once in a club-record five-match run in 2019.

### LAF3, St Louis City 0

In Los Angeles, Carlos Vela and Stipe Biuk scored goals 10 minutes apart late in the second half to lead Los Angeles FC to a 3-0 victory over St. Louis City.

LAF3 (10-6-6) has never lost to an expansion team, winning all seven contests by a combined 16-1 score. Defending champions are now 10-4-5 against expansion teams since 2010. Two of the four wins by an expansion team over the reigning champs came



Vancouver Whitecaps' Andres Cubas, (left), and Austin FC's Maxi Urruti vie for the ball during the first half of an MLS soccer match in Vancouver, British Columbia. (AP)

last season when Charlotte FC swept New York City FC.

Neither team scored until Vela took a pass from José Cifuentes in the 72nd minute and scored his seventh goal of the season. Biuk added his second goal of the campaign, using an assist from Denis Bouanga to push the lead to 2-0. Cifuentes netted his first goal this season, scoring with an assist from 19-year-old Nathan Ordaz in the second minute of stoppage time to complete the scoring. It was the second assist for Ordaz, who also has a goal in his rookie season.

John McCarthy stopped two shots to earn the clean sheet for LAFC. Roman Bürki did not have a save for St. Louis City.

### Whitecaps 2, Austin 1

In Vancouver, Pedro Vite scored in the first minute and Sergio Córdova accounted for the only goal of the second half to lead the Vancouver Whitecaps to a 2-1 victory over Austin FC.

Córdova used a pass from Ryan Gauld in the 72nd minute to score the winner for the Whitecaps (7-7-7). It was his first goal this season for Vancouver after scoring nine times for Real Salt Lake last season.

Vite used an assist from Brian White to score for a fourth time this season and give Vancouver the lead.

### Earthquakes 2, Sounders 0

In San Jose, Cristian Espinoza scored on a first-half penalty kick and assisted on a second-half goal by Miguel Trauco to lead the San Jose Earthquakes to a 2-0 victory over the Seattle Sounders.

Espinoza picked up his 11th goal of the season, scoring after a foul in the 19th minute to give the Earthquakes (8-7-8) the lead.

Espinoza had an assist on Miguel Trauco's insurance goal in the 65th minute. It was Trauco's third netter this season.

### Real Salt Lake 2, Sporting KC 2

In Kansas City, Danny Musovski and Anderson Julio scored second-half goals as Real Salt Lake came from two scores down to earn a 2-2 draw with Sporting Kansas City, upping its unbeaten streak on the road to 11 in all competitions.

Real Salt Lake (9-7-7) is just the third team in league history with a double-digit unbeaten run on the road and the first since the Portland Timbers had an 11-match run spanning the 2012-13 seasons.

Dániel Sallói staked Sporting KC (6-10-8) to a 1-0 lead in the 30th minute, using an assist from Johnny Russell to score his fifth goal of the season. Russell took a pass from Erik Thommy six minutes later and found the net for a third time this season as Sporting KC took a 2-0 lead into halftime.

### Timbers 0, Rapids 0

In Commerce City, the Portland Timbers and Colorado Rapids finished off a scoreless draw Saturday night in a match that began on July 4 before being abandoned due to thunderstorms.

William Yarbrough had two saves to complete a clean sheet for the Rapids (3-10-9). David Bingham needed one save to notch the shutout for the Timbers (5-9-8).

The match was resumed in the 46th minute. Only players who were active on July 4 were eligible to play. That ruled out Colorado's Andrew Gutman, who joined the Rapids after that date.



Players celebrate after defeating the United States in a CONCACAF Gold Cup semifinal soccer match in San Diego. (AP)

## FIFA to lift Saudi club Al Nassr's player registration 'ban' when debt is paid

ZURICH, July 13, (AP): Cristiano Ronaldo's Saudi Arabian club Al Nassr will have its FIFA ban on registering new players lifted when it settles a debt with Leicester, soccer's governing body said Thursday.

Al Nassr was ordered to pay English club Leicester 460,000 euros (\$513,000) plus annual interest of 5% in an October 2021 ruling by a FIFA-appointed judge at its players' status committee.

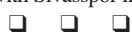
Leicester filed the complaint in April 2021 because of unpaid additional clauses due from the 18 million euros (\$20 million) sale of Nigerian forward Ahmed Musa in 2018.

Currently, Al Nassr - which was taken under majority ownership last month by the \$700 billion sovereign wealth Public Investment Fund - can still buy new players though not register them to play.

Al Nassr's signing of Ronaldo as a free agent in January sparked an unprecedented spree of spending by clubs in the Saudi Pro League, with four now majority-owned by PIF. The fund is chaired by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman.

Al Nassr signed Croatia midfielder Marcelo Brozović this month from Inter Milan in a transfer reportedly valued at 18 million euros (\$20 million).

Musa left Al Nassr in 2020 and played last season with Sivasspor in Turkey.



**Golfers Jordan Spieth and Justin Thomas** are set to become minority owners of English soccer club **Leeds United**, Spieth told Sky Sports.

Spieth and Thomas are investing in the **San Francisco 49ers'** ownership group, 49ers Enterprises, which is in the process of taking over Leeds after its relegation from the Premier League to the second-tier Championship for next season.

## SOCCER

Spieth said fellow PGA Tour player **Rickie Fowler** decided against investing after Leeds was relegated.

A message left with the 49ers on Wednesday wasn't immediately returned.

The 49ers' ownership group first invested in Leeds in 2018 and increased its share to 44% in late 2021. The NFL club last month reached an agreement to take over Leeds with NBA players **Larry Nance Jr.** and **T.J. McConnell** joining as minority partners. Leeds didn't specify the sale price for the remaining 56% but British media reported it to be 170 million pounds (\$214 million).



Seattle Sounders midfielder Léo Chú (right), moves the ball while defended by San Jose Earthquakes midfielder Judson during the second half of an MLS soccer match in San Jose, Calif. (AP)



Czech Republic's Marketa Vondrousova returns to Ukraine's Elina Svitolina in a women's singles semifinal match on day eleven of the Wimbledon tennis championships in London. (AP)

# Sports

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## Jabeur reaches 2nd Wimbledon final in a row

Vondrousova becomes first unseeded women's finalist at Wimbledon in 60 yrs

**WIMBLEDON, England, July 13, (AP):** Ons Jabeur came back from a set and a break down to defeat Aryna Sabalenka 6-7 (5), 6-4, 6-3 on Thursday and reach the Wimbledon final for the second consecutive year.

This will be the third title match for Jabeur in the past five Grand Slam tournaments. The 25-year-old from Tunisia already was the only Arab woman and only North African woman to get to a major final.

So far, she is 0-2 at that stage after losing to Elena Rybakina at the All England Club last July and to Iga Swiatek at the U.S. Open last September.

The sixth-seeded Jabeur's victory Thursday, which came by collecting 10 of the last 13 games, prevented the second-seeded Sabalenka from replacing Swiatek at No. 1 in the rankings. Sabalenka came into the match with a 17-1 record at majors in 2023, including a trophy at the Australian Open.

### TENNIS

Jabeur's opponent for the championship on Saturday will be Marketa Vondrousova.

Vondrousova became the first unseeded women's finalist at Wimbledon since Billie Jean King in 1963 by eliminating Elina Svitolina 6-3, 6-3 earlier Thursday.

Vondrousova reeled off seven consecutive games in one stretch and then held off a brief comeback bid for the victory. She is ranked 43rd and reached the second Grand Slam final of her career after getting that far as a teenager at the 2019 French Open.

"I was crazy nervous," said Vondrousova, who bowed her head and knelt at the baseline when the match was over. "I was nervous, actually, the whole match."

Marketa Vondrousova became the first unseeded women's finalist at Wimbledon since Billie Jean King in 1963, eliminating Elina Svitolina 6-3, 6-3 on Thursday by reeling off seven consecutive games in one stretch and then holding on for the victory.



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz returns to Denmark's Holger Rune in a men's singles match on day ten of the Wimbledon tennis championships in London. (AP)

Vondrousova is a 24-year-old left-hander from the Czech Republic who is ranked 43rd. She reached the second Grand Slam final of her career after getting that far as a teenager at the 2019 French Open.

"I was crazy nervous," said Vondrousova, who bowed her head and knelt at the baseline when the match was over. "I was nervous, actually, the whole match."

Ranked No. 76 and also unseeded, Svitolina returned to the tour from maternity leave just three months ago. She was trying to become the first woman from Ukraine to make it to the title match at a major tennis tournament and received loud support from thousands in the crowd, the applause and yells echoing off the closed Centre Court roof.

"She's such a fighter," said Vondrousova, who compiled a 22-9 edge in total winners, "and she's also such a great person."

Svitolina has said that she is playing more freely and more calmly nowadays, something she attributed to having the dual motivations of playing for her baby daughter, who was born in October, and of trying to bring happiness to people in her home country, where an ongoing war began with Russia's invasion in February 2022.

From 3-all in the opening set Thursday, Svitolina's level began to dip, while Vondrousova's rose. Over the ensuing half-hour, Vondrousova was in complete control, so much so that she took that set and pulled ahead 4-0 in the next.

And then came something of a course correction. At 4-0, 40-love, Vondrousova was a point from being up 5-0. Indeed, she wound up with five opportunities to take one point for that huge margin. But she couldn't quite do it, and Svitolina suddenly surged to get within 4-3.

Vondrousova righted herself, though, and put an end to that mini-streak, collecting the last two games to move on to the final. She missed much of last season because of an operation on her left wrist, but she is now back at the height of her powers and back in the spotlight of a Grand Slam final.

A year ago, she came to Wimbledon with a cast on that arm to watch her best friend play in the qualifying rounds.

"I didn't play for six months last year. You never know if you can be at that level again," Vondrousova said. "And I'm just so grateful to be here and to be healthy. To play tennis again."

Asked during her on-court interview how she plans to prepare for Saturday, Vondrousova laughed.

"I'm just going to chill now," she replied.

Chris Eubanks woke up Wednesday morning ahead of playing for a berth in the final four at Wimbledon against 2021 U.S. Open champion Daniil Medvedev and, first thing, like so many of us, reached for his phone to see what the buzz was about on Twitter.

"It was just constant me," Eubanks said. "I was just like, 'This is so

weird.' I looked at it. I was like, 'Man, I'm really about to play a Grand Slam quarterfinal today. This is cool.'"

He took less than 10 minutes to let that sink in, then, as the 27-year-old American who captivated the crowds at the All England Club and many folks back home put it, "was able to lock back in." And so he pushed Medvedev the distance, taking a two-sets-to-one lead before running out of aces and energy.

Basking in the roars from the stands at No. 1 Court, the unseeded Eubanks came within four points of winning to extend his deepest run, by far, at a major tournament before Medvedev pulled away for a 6-4, 1-6, 4-6, 7-6 (4), 6-1 victory to reach the Wimbledon semifinals for the first time.

"It's like his level elevated into the fifth," Eubanks said, "where I had a little bit of a drop."

If Medvedev was unsteady for a bit, perhaps distracted by a back-and-forth with the chair umpire over a stray ball that headed toward the stands, he gathered himself well.

"Happy that I managed to put myself back together. There was a moment in the match I started just losing kind of everything - the focus, the momentum of the match," said the No. 3-seeded Medvedev, who will face No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz in the semifinals on Friday. "When I started losing it, I was like, 'All right, what's happening? Why is it happening like this?'"

Alcaraz's 7-6 (3), 6-4, 6-4 victory over No. 6 Holger Rune at Centre Court was the first men's quarterfinal at Wimbledon in the Open era, which dates to 1968, with two players who are not yet 21. Both Spain's Alcaraz, who won last year's U.S. Open, and Denmark's Rune are 20.

When Alcaraz smacked a backhand return winner to seal the first set, he threw his head back and screamed. He paused for a second and screamed again. He strutted to the sideline, head held high, and yelled, then got to the sideline and yelled "Vamos! Vamos!"

"It was nerves. Tension. It was everything," Alcaraz explained later.

### Saudi Arabian clubs lead Asian list

City get \$4.6m from FIFA to top list of club payments from player fund

GENEVA, July 13, (AP): For the second straight World Cup, Manchester City topped the list of FIFA payments to clubs whose players were selected for the 32 national teams in Qatar.

From the \$209 million fund allocated by FIFA, the Premier League and Champions League winner received almost \$4.6 million - eclipsing the total sent to the entire continent of Africa, which had five national teams at the World Cup. The list published Thursday showed a total of 18 African clubs combined to earn \$4.57 million.

FIFA said 440 clubs in 51 countries were rewarded with payments funded by the governing body's \$7.5 billion income for the four-year commercial cycle mostly tied to the 2022 men's tournament.



De Bruyne

The project that was launched for the 2010 World Cup again starkly showed how clubs in soccer's wealthiest and dominant continent have nurtured, lured and retained much of the best talent.

Clubs in UEFA member countries got \$159 million, 76% of the total fund, and clubs in England accounted for \$37.7 million, FIFA said.

A fifth-tier club in England, Boreham Wood, got double the FIFA payment - \$31,026 vs \$15,513 - given to Santos, the storied Brazilian team that was Pelé's home and where Neymar started his career.

FIFA calculated the payments at a daily rate of \$10,950 for each of 837 players doing duty in Qatar until the day after their team's last game. Each player's allocation was divided among clubs who held their registration since the 2020-21 season.

Man City was due payments for players ranging from Julián Álvarez and its former defender Nicolás Otamendi in Argentina's title-winning team, six

members of England's quarterfinalist team and Belgium playmaker Kevin De Bruyne, who exited in the group stage. City had received a list-leading \$5 million from FIFA's \$209 million at the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

Barcelona was the next highest earner on the 2022 list with \$4.54 million, including \$131,405 for Lionel Messi's time with the club in 2020-21 until leaving for Paris Saint-Germain.

Bayern Munich's share was more than \$4.3 million, including payments for four players from runner-up France's squad.

Though Italy did not qualify for the World Cup, 27 Italian clubs earned a total of \$18.7 million from their foreign players. Juventus got more than

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\$3 million, including \$394,215 for France's Adrien Rabiot and allocations from Argentina trio Angel Di María, Leandro Paredes and Paulo Dybala.

A player with finalists Argentina and France who had been with the same club since the start of the 2020-21 season earned \$394,215 for that club.

However, storied Argentinian club Boca Juniors is due just \$32,851 for defender Nahuel Molina's brief stay with the club in the 2020-21 season before moving to Europe. River Plate, Boca's rival in Buenos Aires, was due \$1.2 million.

Spanish clubs collectively earned \$24.2 million, German clubs shared a little over \$21 million and French clubs' payout was \$16.5 million.

Saudi Arabian clubs led the Asian list with \$6.6 million and host nation Qatar's clubs got \$6.3 million. Clubs in the United States got \$5.4 million, topped by \$827,000 for the Seattle Sounders.

Morocco's historic run as the first African team to reach the semifinals was achieved with many Europe-based players. Just two Moroccan clubs in Casablanca earned money from FIFA: \$1.4 million to Wydad and \$31,938 to Raja.

BELLEVILLE-EN-BEAUJOLAIS, France, July 13, (AP): Ion Izagirre emerged victorious from an absorbing mid-mountain Tour de France stage which started with a flurry of attacks that lasted to the end on Thursday.

The Cofidis rider posted his second career Tour stage win in the 12th stage.

The 169-kilometer (105-mile) stage took riders across the Beaujolais vineyards on a route with two big climbs in the second half of the trek. The first two hours of racing were furious, with several dozen riders dropped over the first 25 kilometers.

Izagirre attacked from a group of strong and experienced breakaway riders in the final climb - the brutal ascent of the 5.3-kilometer Col de la Croix Rosier. Tucked in an aerodynamic position, the Basque rider took all the risks in the downhill, then used his strong time trial skills to thwart his rivals' chase after a tremendous 31-kilometer solo effort.

"It's incredible. For the whole Tour so far I tried to break away and it didn't work out but today, yes," he said. "I was confident in my strength. I knew that if I earned enough lead, my adversaries wouldn't have me in

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sight and it would play in my favor." It was also the second stage win for a Basque rider after Pello Bilbao claimed Stage 10.

"It's a very Basque Tour de France. It started at home for us and we took two stage wins," said Izagirre, in reference to the Tour start from the Spanish town of Bilbao this year.

Mathieu Burgaudeau was second in the stage, and Matteo Jorgenson completed the podium.

### Vingegaard keeps overall lead

## Izagirre solos to victory in lively Tour 12th stage

### Kuwaiti fencers grab two gold medals at Arab Games

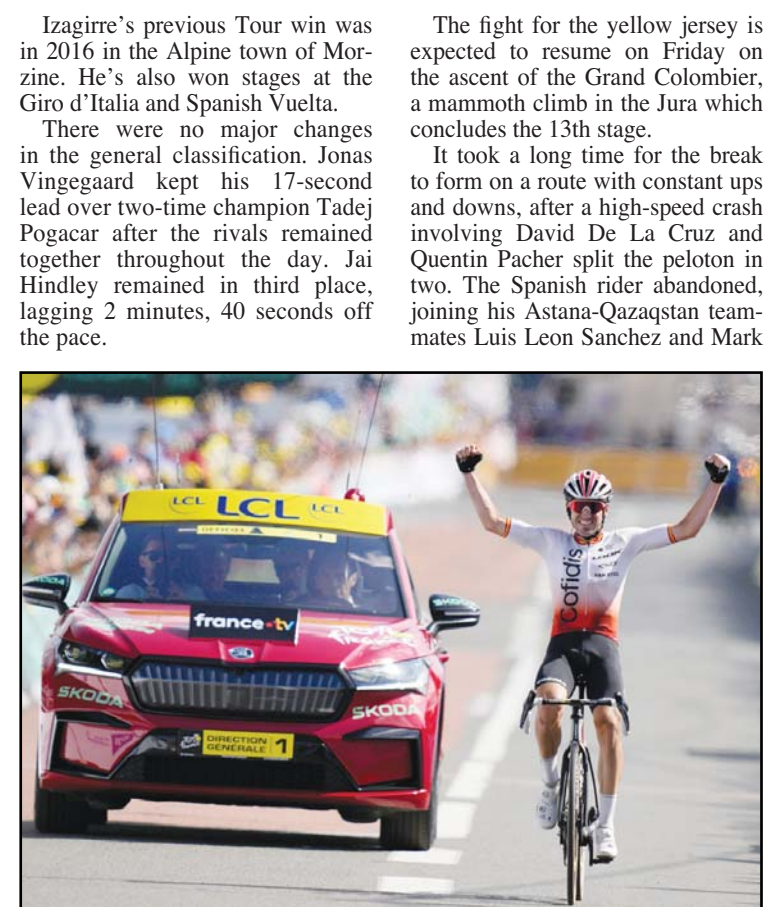
ALGIERS, July 13, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti fencing teams, taking part in the Arab Sports Games in Algiers, won two gold medals on Wednesday - the fourth day of the championship, raising their tally of medals to 11.

The epee fencers Abdulaziz Al-Shatti, Ali Al-Kannas, Abdulrahman Al-Yaqout and Hassan Al-Foudry

won the first gold.

Their compatriots Bander Al-Shamlan, Ali Fadel, Abdulaziz Du'aj and Mohammad Mahdi claimed the title of the sabre fencing competition.

The results of today's competitions raised Kuwait's tally to 11, including the two golds, four silver and five bronze.



Spain's Ion Izagirre celebrates as he crosses the finish line to win the twelfth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 169 kilometers (105 miles) with start in Roanne and finish in Belleville-en-Beaujolais, France. (AP)

Cavendish on the list of withdrawals.

Pogacar and Vingegaard rode at the front and were among the most attacking of the leading group alongside the fiery Mathieu van der Poel and Wout van Aert.

Dylan Teuns and Tiesj Benoot finally managed to go clear after 65 kilometers as the leading pack entered the Beaujolais wine region. The pace did not slow down and riders were scattered everywhere.

The Belgian pair was joined by a dozen rivals as the attackers finally managed to open a decent gap. The breakaway included one-day classic specialists, giving it a great chance to succeed.

The 15 men collaborated well and quickly brought a two-minute lead over the yellow jersey group, which was happy to let them go after two hours of hard-out bike racing.

The battle for the stage win started in the downhill of the Col de la Casse Froide, where Van der Poel and Andrey Amador went on their own. Amador then tried to drop Van der Poel but the Dutch rider countered and went solo.

Van der Poel crested the Col de la Croix Montmain first and pushed hard in the technical descent in a bid to increase his lead ahead of the Col de la Croix Rosier. He could not prolong his effort in the climb and was caught with 32 kilometers left, before Izagirre made his decisive move.