

WORLD NEWS

India Bans Muslim Way To Divorce

Court strikes down practice allowing men to instantly declare a marriage to be over

By NIHARIKA MANDHANA

NEW DELHI—India's Supreme Court declared unconstitutional a practice that allowed Muslim men to instantly divorce their wives, in a decision applauded by gender-equality advocates.

The so-called triple talaq practice let Muslim men divorce by saying "talaq"—the Arabic word for divorce—three times, even in a letter or through text messages. Its opponents say it left women vulnerable.

"This is a landmark judgment for Muslim women," said Noorjehan Safia Niaz, founder of a Muslim women's group called the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan. "It has strengthened their hand against unilateral, arbitrary decisions and restored their constitutional rights."

A five-judge panel said in a 3-2 judgment on Tuesday that the practice violated women's right to equality and didn't provide an opportunity for reconciliation. Their decision came in response to a series of petitions challenging the prac-

tice. One petition was filed by Shayara Bano, a 36-year-old Muslim woman whose husband divorced her in a 2015 letter in which he repeated the words "I give talaq" three times.

Conservative Muslim groups had opposed any intervention by the court, saying such action would amount to interference in the observance of their faith.

All India Muslim Personal Law Board, a conservative group fighting against attempts to amend Muslim practices, said on Tuesday it would craft a response after reading the nearly 400-page judgment.

The Indian constitution protects gender equality, but on issues of marriage, divorce and inheritance, religious communities are governed by their own "personal laws." Many Muslim women and activists say the practice of triple talaq misinterprets the Quran and is protected by orthodox Muslim men to perpetuate patriarchy.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose government had strongly criticized the practice, hailed the verdict as "historic" and "a powerful measure for women empowerment" in a tweet from his official Twitter account.

But many of his critics view his party's opposition to the Muslim practice with suspicion.



Farha Faiz, center, an attorney who argues cases before India's Supreme Court, spoke to the media in New Delhi on Tuesday after the high court declared unconstitutional in a 3-2 vote a practice that allowed Muslim men to instantly divorce their wives.

The Bharatiya Janata Party has deep roots in Hindu nationalism and champions a common code to replace religious laws. Many Muslims are worried Mr. Modi's administration could be trying to diminish their religious freedoms and impose the values of the Hindu majority.

The validity of "personal laws," rooted in religious beliefs, has been a contentious and politically charged issue in India. In 1985, the Supreme Court ordered the husband of a 62-year-old divorced Muslim woman to pay her continual alimony, which went beyond the scope of

Muslim laws. Her husband had argued that Islamic law didn't require him to provide financial support to his wife in perpetuity. The judgment met stiff resistance from a section of the Muslim community.

The government, then led by the Congress party that counts millions of Muslims among its supporters, pushed a new law through Parliament that reversed the judgment by limiting a man's financial obligations after divorce.

Mr. Modi's party has said such actions are part of a broader electoral strategy by

the Congress party and other left-leaning political players in India to appease the country's 180 million Muslims, or 14% of the country's population.

The two judges who declined to strike down the practice—including India's Chief Justice Jagdish Singh Khehar—said triple talaq had been prevalent among Muslims for 1,400 years and was protected.

"The Constitution assures believers of all faiths that their way of life is guaranteed, and would not be subjected to any challenge, even though they may seem to others unacceptable in today's world and age," they wrote.

The judges, writing the minority view, said India's lawmakers ought to enact legislation to disallow the practice rather than rely on the judiciary.

But other judges weighed individual rights against religious freedoms. In support of the majority, two of them wrote:

"It is clear that this form of [divorce] is manifestly arbitrary in the sense that the marital tie can be broken capriciously and whimsically by a Muslim man without any attempt at reconciliation so as to save it."

WORLD WATCH

SPAIN

Barcelona Suspects Appear in Court

Four men accused of being members of an Islamist cell behind a van attack that killed 13 people in Barcelona last week appeared in court on Tuesday, a day after the alleged driver was shot dead by police.

The four, the only ones still alive among the 12 men thought to constitute the group, were brought from Barcelona to Madrid and arrived at the High Court, which deals with terrorism cases, in a convoy of police vehicles with sirens wailing.

Police on Monday shot dead 22-year-old Younes Abouyaaqoub, whom they had identified as the driver of the van that careered along the packed Las Ramblas boulevard in Barcelona on Thursday, leaving a trail of 13 dead and 120 injured from 34 countries.

After the attack, Abouyaaqoub escaped on foot, stabbing to death a man who was parking his car and fleeing in the vehicle.

Spanish newspaper La Vanguardia said on Tuesday he walked some 40 kilometers from

Sant Just Desvern, a town on the outskirts of Barcelona where he ditched the hijacked car, to Subirats, where he was shot dead.

Abouyaaqoub, who had changed clothes, walked by night and hid during the day, the paper said, citing sources involved in the investigation.

Carlos Mundó, the top justice official in the Catalan government, said police were investigating whether Abouyaaqoub had any support while on the run. "It is clear that he must have had some form of logistics," he told Catalonia Radio.

—Reuters

BRAZIL

Prosecutors Charge Ex-Corporate Chiefs

Prosecutors leading Brazil's largest-ever corruption probe on Tuesday filed criminal charges against the former chief executive of two of the country's largest state-run firms.

Aldemir Bendine, who was at the helm of state-run oil giant Petrobras SA between 2015 and 2016, and at state-owned bank Banco do Brasil before then, has been charged



tants clinging to strongholds that are shrinking in size and number.

"ISIS is on the run," Mr. Mattis said after meeting with Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and other Iraqi government leaders. "They have been shown to be unable to stand up to our team in combat."

Mr. Mattis spoke alongside Lt. Gen. Stephen Townsend, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, who is due to finish his tour of duty here in early September.

"The fighting is tough," Townsend said, "but the momentum is with our partners."

With Iraqi troops on Tuesday reaching the first urban areas of the IS-held northern town of Tal Afar on the third day of an operation, Mattis has refused to predict victory. He said generals and senior officials should "just go silent" when troops are entering battle.

—Associated Press

IRAQ

Mattis Says ISIS Is 'On the Run'

U.S. Defense Secretary Jim

citors that the firm paid hundreds of millions of dollars in bribes to government officials in many countries to secure contracts in Brazil and elsewhere.

—Luciana Magalhaes

ECONOMY

Mexico Reports Strong Growth

Mexico chalked up its 16th consecutive quarter of economic growth in the April-to-June period as strong services output

compensated for sluggish industrial production.

Gross domestic product, a measure of output in goods and services, expanded 0.6% seasonally adjusted from the first quarter and was up 1.8% from a year before, the National Statistics Institute said Tuesday.

Growth from the first quarter, which translates into an annualized rate of 2.3%, was in line with the preliminary estimate published last month, but marked a slowdown from the 2.7% annualized growth in the previous quarter.

Increased employment, despite the impact of rising inflation on wages, has supported services that led growth in the second quarter, while industrial production was flat.

Services growth has averaged about 3.4% since the beginning of 2015, and could hold around that rate in the foreseeable future given the recovery in the labor market, said Marco Oviedo, head of Latin American research at Barclays.

The weakness in industry is mainly related to the public sector, Mr. Oviedo said. "They have been delivering on fiscal goals, but at a cost to growth."

—Anthony Harrup

Earthquake on Idyllic Italian Island Kills Two People, Sends Tourists Fleeing

An earthquake hit the tourist-packed holiday island of Ischia, killing two people, injuring dozens and trapping three young brothers who survived for up to 16 hours before being rescued.

Tourists and residents on the island off the coast of Naples ran out onto the narrow streets after the quake wrecked a church and several buildings. Fearing aftershocks, many decided to leave the island early.

Rescuers found a baby boy named Pasquale in the wreckage and pulled him out alive early Tuesday, seven hours after the shock. There was a hush followed by loud applause.

Fire crews found his brothers Mattia and Ciro, aged 7 and 11, stuck under a bed nearby. They kept talking to them and fed water to them through a tube. "I promised them that after this was all over we would all go get a pizza together," an emergency worker said.

They freed Mattia late Tuesday morning and extracted Ciro more than 16 hours after the quake hit. The parents were safe because they were in another room.

About six buildings in the town of Casamicciola, including a church, collapsed in the quake, which hit at 8:57 p.m. on Monday. The walls of one were ripped open, at right, exposing a kitchen with a table still set for dinner.

—Reuters



U.S. NEWS

Trump in Speech Calls for End to Bigotry

Remarks come days after he blamed both sides for confrontation in Charlottesville, Va.

BY REBECCA BALLHAUS
AND KRISTINA PETERSON

President Donald Trump called for peace and an end to bigotry in the U.S., nearly a week after a combative news conference in which he said both sides were to blame for a violent confrontation in Charlottesville, Va., between white nationalists and counterprotesters.

"The young men and women we send to fight our wars abroad deserve to return to a country that is not at war with itself at home," Mr. Trump said Monday, speaking at Fort Myer in Arlington, Va., in a speech outlining the nation's Afghanistan policy. "We cannot remain a force for peace in the world if we are not at peace with each other."

Mr. Trump's remarks, which didn't explicitly mention the Charlottesville event, marked a contrast with his news conference last week in which he said there were "very fine people, on both sides" in that confrontation.

One woman was killed and 19 were injured after a man with a history of speaking



'When one part of America hurts, we all hurt,' said Mr. Trump in Arlington, Va., in a speech outlining the nation's Afghanistan policy.

sympathetically about German Nazis rammed a car into her and others protesting the white-nationalist gathering, authorities said.

"A wound inflicted upon a single member of our community is a wound inflicted upon

us all," Mr. Trump said Monday. "When one part of America hurts, we all hurt. And when one citizen suffers an injustice, we all suffer together."

"Loyalty to our nation demands loyalty to one another," the GOP president continued.

"Love for America requires love for all of its people."

Mr. Trump's comments last week drew rebukes from civil-rights groups and from lawmakers, including many Republicans, and prompted business leaders to defect

from two CEO advisory councils created by the White House in protest of what they viewed as the president's failure to condemn racism sufficiently.

On Tuesday, the president was scheduled to attend a

campaign rally in Phoenix, which is expected to draw thousands of protesters in the wake of the president's remarks on Charlottesville. Phoenix's mayor, Democrat Greg Stanton, has urged Mr. Trump to postpone the rally and was consulting with local police about how "to keep everyone safe," a spokesman said.

On Monday, House Speaker Paul Ryan (R., Wis.) in a CNN town hall praised that evening's remarks by the president before a military audience and criticized his comments last week.

"I do believe that he messed up in his comments on Tuesday when it sounded like a moral equivocation or at the very least moral ambiguity when what we need is moral clarity," Mr. Ryan said.

"That was wrong," Mr. Ryan said of Mr. Trump's comments last week. "He has since then cleared that up. It was important that he did that."

Mr. Ryan also declined to support a resolution backed by some congressional Democrats censuring Mr. Trump for his comments from last week.

"The last thing I think we should do is to descend into some fight against each other," he said. Of Mr. Trump, the speaker added: "I just think he needs to do better and I think he did" Monday.

Vulnerable Republican Senator Draws President's Ire

BY SIOBHAN HUGHES

PHOENIX—Donald Trump's impulse to punch back at Republicans who challenge him is dividing the party in Arizona and threatening the 2018 re-election of Sen. Jeff Flake, one of the party's most vulnerable incumbents.

Mr. Flake opposes Mr. Trump's trade and border-wall plans, has criticized the president's remarks about protests over a Confederate statue in Virginia and wrote a book that alluded to "impulse-control problems" and suggested the president had won election on a "sugar high of populism, nativism, and demagoguery."

Mr. Trump, who last week called Mr. Flake "toxic" and "weak on borders," is likely to whip up even more negative feelings about Arizona's junior senator. Tuesday, the president was scheduled to visit a Marine Corps facility in Yuma, near the Mexican border, before holding a rally in Phoenix in the evening.

Already, the senator's criticism is turning off some



Republican Sen. Jeff Flake of Arizona has opposed some of President Trump's policies and remarks.

Trump voters. "It's his attitude across the board to Trump," said Marilyn Higgins, a Republican from Fountain Hills who has called Mr. Flake's office to say she can't vote for the senator next year.

"To him, Trump is the enemy."

Mr. Flake won in 2012 with 49% of the vote, three percentage points ahead of his Democratic rival. His is considered one of the most vul-

nerable GOP-held seats next year, when the overall map favors Republicans as they look to expand their 52-48-seat majority.

Mr. Flake faces a tough primary, with possibly two GOP

challengers, and if he wins the nomination he is expected to face U.S. Rep. Kyrsten Sinema in November 2018.

Monday, at a breakfast in Gilbert, Mr. Flake talked about water management, taxes, health insurance and his interest in staying in trade agreements. He never mentioned Mr. Trump by name, though he did allude to the leader of his party.

"We've got to get away from calling our opponents losers or clowns," Mr. Flake said. He brushed off Mr. Trump's attacks on him. "I don't worry about it at all," Mr. Flake told reporters.

It is an uncomfortable dilemma for Mr. Flake—and other Arizona Republicans.

Saturday at a Fountain Hills Republican Club meeting, things started off with unanimity. An organizer announced a coming picnic and gun raffle. A deep-voiced pastor delivered a rousing endorsement praising a unified GOP. Then the cracks started showing.

"I'm tired of the Republican leadership, congressmen, sen-

ators that are disparaging our president of the United States," Art Tolis, a mortgage broker who serves on the town council, told GOP Rep. David Schweikert.

Mr. Flake has his supporters. His book, "Conscience of a Conservative," is so popular that every copy is checked out of the public library in downtown Chandler. His backers are encouraged by the senator's demeanor and his willingness to speak up against what he has described as a new viciousness in politics.

"The civility that he's trying to bring back really means so much," said Rachel Smetana, a Scottsdale resident who is chief of staff to the city's mayor.

"We know the president holds grudges, and Trump has publicly said that when he is attacked, he will punch back harder," political analyst Nate Gonzales wrote on Inside Elections last week after downgrading his estimate of Mr. Flake's chances of winning. "That's not a good combination for Flake if he's trying to tamp down a primary."

McConnell Says Debt Limit to Be Raised

BY RICHARD RUBIN
AND KATE DAVIDSON

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R., Ky.) said there was "zero chance" that the U.S. would fail to raise the federal debt ceiling.

Mr. McConnell expressed confidence Monday in Congress's ability to avoid missing federal payments in advance of a legislative sprint in September that will also address expiring government funding and several other pressing items.

"There is zero chance, no chance we won't raise the debt ceiling," he said at an event in his hometown, Louisville, Ky., with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin.

Mr. Mnuchin said his "magic super Treasury powers" that allow the government to conserve cash and avoid issuing new debt will run out at the end of September.

The Treasury Department has been employing cash-conservation measures since March, when the previous suspension of the debt limit expired and the new ceiling was set at nearly \$20 trillion.

If Congress doesn't raise the debt ceiling to allow new borrowing, the U.S. could default on its debt or miss payments of benefits and salaries.

"This is not about spending money," Mr. Mnuchin said.

PHILADELPHIA

Scores Injured in Train Crash Outside City

A Philadelphia commuter train crashed into an empty train at a transit station early Tuesday, injuring 42 people, in the latest accident involving commuter rail in the Northeast.

The train hit an unoccupied parked train around 12:15 a.m. at the 69th Street station in Upper Darby, Pa., just outside Philadelphia, said a spokeswoman for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority.

The operator and all 41 passengers on the train that hit the other train reported injuries, said spokeswoman Heather Redfern. She said none of the injuries appeared life-threatening.

The cause of the accident is under investigation, she said, adding that she didn't have information on the train's speed at the time of the collision.

In February four people were hurt near the same station when one out-of-service train rear-ended another.

In New York, Amtrak has reduced service into Penn Station for eight weeks this summer to allow crews to carry out extensive repairs to tracks and switches in the wake of two low-speed derailments in March and April.

Days before those repairs were due to start in July, a North Jersey Coast Line train carrying 180 passengers derailed at New York Penn Station. No injuries were reported.

—Scott Calvert



In this frame from video, a person is pulled away from the scene of a commuter train crash in Upper Darby, Pa., on Tuesday.

BREAKING NEWS

SEPTA TRAIN COLLISION

"Enjoyed talking to my @HouseGOP colleagues on the phone today & look forward to seeing them all once I'm able!" he said.

—Kristina Peterson

LITIGATION

Cosby's New Lawyers Seek to Delay Retrial

Bill Cosby's new legal team said Tuesday it wants to delay the start of his sexual-assault trial, currently set for November, as the 80-year-old comedian's lawyers get up to speed on the case.

Mr. Cosby's new lawyers made their first court appearance on behalf of "The Cosby Show" star, who is charged with drugging and molesting a woman at his home near Philadelphia in 2004. His first trial in June ended in a hung jury.

The attorneys who represented Mr. Cosby at the first trial, Brian McMonagle and Angela Agrusa, had asked to be let off the case. Montgomery County Judge Steven O'Neill granted their request, praising them for their "extraordinary advocacy."

Mr. Cosby's new legal team includes Tom Mesereau, the high-profile attorney who won an acquittal in Michael Jackson's child molestation case. Others on the new team are former federal prosecutor Kathleen Bliss and Sam Silver, who represented now-imprisoned former U.S. Rep. Chaka Fattah in a corruption case.

—Associated Press

PENTAGON

Lockheed Eliminated From Missile Program

The Pentagon eliminated Lockheed Martin Corp. from an \$85 billion competition to refresh the nation's land-based intercontinental ballistic nuclear missiles, one of the most fiercely contested defense contracts this decade. Lockheed said it was disappointed to be cut out of the running to lead the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent program, replacing 400 aging Minuteman III missiles deployed in silos across the Great Plains.

The Pentagon's decision Monday leaves Boeing Co. and Northrop Grumman Corp. to vie for this piece of the three-pronged, \$500 billion refresh of the U.S. nuclear arsenal that has won backing from President Donald Trump.

—Doug Cameron

CONGRESS

Scalise Relearning To Walk, Ryan Says

House Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R., La.) is relearning how to walk after being shot at a congressional baseball practice earlier this year, House Speaker Paul Ryan (R., Wis.) said.

Mr. Scalise joined a conference call of House Republicans on Monday to talk about the fall agenda, the first time many House Republicans had heard his voice since the June shooting, Mr. Ryan said during a CNN town hall late Monday.

"It was very emotional for us," Mr. Ryan said. "He has a long road ahead of him, but he's going to be OK."

Mr. Scalise had tweeted earlier Monday that he had joined his colleagues on the phone to discuss the coming legislative agenda.

U.S. NEWS



A building in Cincinnati's Over-the-Rhine neighborhood in June 2011, left, and October 2016, right. The public-private partnership is gaining attention as other cities look to develop their most ailing areas.

Cincinnati Neighborhood Transformed

Corporate-backed development turned a violent city into mecca; change comes at a cost

By SHIBANI MAHTANI

CINCINNATI—Georgia Keith has seen everything from the segregation of the Civil Rights era to riots and violent crime over some five decades in Ohio's third-largest city.

After a corporate-driven revival of the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood just north of downtown, where Ms. Keith has lived since 1965, she said her greatest challenge today is simply staying in her home.

"I keep saying no to individuals who want to buy the house. There have been maybe five or six different ones, others keep putting mailings in the mail box," said Ms. Keith, 71 years old. "I don't respond."

Over-the-Rhine's transformation has largely been the product of a nonprofit development corporation armed with private capital, a unique concept that is gaining attention as other cities look to develop their most ailing, crime-filled neighborhoods. The success of this approach, however, can come at a cost to some longtime residents, who find themselves priced out or feeling alienated in neighborhoods they have called home for most of their lives.

Named for the Germans who settled here in the 1800s,

Over-the-Rhine was among the country's most blighted neighborhoods in 2001, when riots erupted over the shooting of Timothy Thomas, an unarmed 19-year-old black man killed by a white police officer during an attempted arrest for a nonviolent misdemeanor.

Fearful that the neighborhood's decline would rub off on nearby downtown, the city's corporations—including

Procter & Gamble Co., Kroger Co., U.S. Bancorp and Macy's Inc.—pumped capital into a nonprofit real-estate company that was formed in 2003 with a mission to buy up and repurpose abandoned buildings and vacant lots in the area.

Almost 15 years and over \$1.1 billion later, Over-the-Rhine is now a mecca for trendy restaurants, loft apartments, cafes with home-cured meats and artisan doughnut shops. Modern condominiums have gone up and public spaces, including two parks and a neighborhood pool, have been revived.

The nonprofit behind the development, 3CDC, has won praise from the city and some local residents for revitalizing the neighborhood while maintaining some affordable housing, investing in homeless shelters and consulting with Over-the-Rhine's longtime residents. The experiment has inspired similar efforts in St. Louis and Atlanta, where 3CDC

is consulting with groups trying to revitalize ailing neighbor-

hoods that hug the downtown core.

In Atlanta, not-for-profit development company the West Side Future Fund is borrowing from Cincinnati's playbook, joining with corporations including the **Chick-fil-A Foundation** and **Home Depot** to reduce vacant housing units in neighborhoods west of downtown, implement a job-training program and build mixed-income housing.

U.S. Bancorp Community Development Corporation is among the St. Louis corporate entities talking with developers about similar plans in the city's Near North Side neighborhood, which was awarded a \$29.5 million federal grant last year to rehabilitate a housing complex and fund social-service agencies, including a community center, microloan program and homeowners-assistance program. U.S. Bank CDC also helped fund development in Over-the-Rhine.

Still, some question the sustainability and impact of such efforts, driven by corporate goals and often lacking an economic plan to keep long-time residents, many of whom are low-income, in the area.

"In terms of the development model, what 3CDC did was phenomenal," said Nate Pelletier, executive director of Joseph House, a drug-rehabilitation center for veterans in Over-the-Rhine. "But all the other parts of what makes this sustainable, that's falling apart exponentially," he said, specif-

ically citing economic opportunity for some of the neighborhood's original residents.

Stephen Leeper, 3CDC's president and chief executive since 2004, described the neighborhood as "gone" when the company came in and credits the corporate community with stepping up to the plate. "There was no easy exit strategy, huge financial risk and potential reputational risk," he said.

Cincinnati companies put \$1.2 million into 3CDC in 2003, which amounted to 92% of the company's operating budget that year. Corporate funding has remained steady since, but now only accounts for 15% of 3CDC's budget.

3CDC has been part of redevelopment efforts in 25% of Over-the-Rhine.

3CDC, which also taps other private capital and some government funds, has been part of redevelopment efforts in 25% of Over-the-Rhine. In the early stages, 3CDC courted new business owners with leases based on between 3% and 8% of gross revenue

Holtman's Donuts, a small family-owned chain, opened a shop in Over-the-Rhine in 2013 after getting a loan through 3CDC and its property

development partners, the Model Group, the store's landlord. "A lot of people thought we were crazy," said Katie Plazarin, who co-owns the shop with her husband, Danny Plazarin.

But the bet paid off. The store did so well that the Plazarins are now planning on opening a fourth location in West Chester, Ohio, about 22 miles north of Cincinnati. The couple credit the Over-the-Rhine store for cementing their brand and giving them greater visibility.

3CDC's investments have also helped local social-service agencies grow.

Shelterhouse, a homeless shelter in Over-the-Rhine, was able to sell its existing space and, with added funds from 3CDC, buy two new shelters about a mile away from the neighborhood, tripling the agency's footprint to 100,000 square feet. It now offers health-care, case-management and employment services in addition to temporary housing to nearly twice as many clients as before.

"Obviously, the more money you put into a neighborhood, it is going to change and that may not be good for everyone," said Arlene Nolan, the shelter's director. "But for us and our people, it was a good thing."

Still, rising property values have driven dozens of families out of the neighborhood, and longtime residents like Ms. Keith said the mom-and-pop

shops, laundromats and neighborhood grocery stores they frequented are long gone, replaced by more expensive options.

"The neighborhood has improved, I'm not saying it hasn't," said Ms. Keith. "But who has it benefited? The person with money."

Census figures from 2015 show shifting neighborhood demographics, with residents becoming whiter and wealthier. With landlords, especially those unrelated to 3CDC, able to charge more, affordable units have been lost.

Reginald Stroud, 56, lost his apartment, karate studio and corner store in 2014 when his landlord, who wasn't a 3CDC partner, sold the property, giving him 45 days to move.

"The store was my income and my business, so I basically lost my job," said Mr. Stroud, who now lives about 5 miles north of Over-the-Rhine. He recently found a new shop, which will open in October.

3CDC's Mr. Leeper said the issue of dislocation is "more perception than fact" and that his group is redoubling efforts to build projects with both affordable units and market-rate units in the same building.

"There was a concerted effort to preserve this mixed-income atmosphere," he said, "and we hope our critics would say that there has been some effort and progress and success there."

—Cameron McWhirter contributed to this article.

District Maps Get Further Criticism

By SCOTT CALVERT

As North Carolina lawmakers rush to adopt new state legislative maps not based on race, they can't escape the very issue they are trying to remove: race.

Both the state Senate and the House of Representatives have proposed new maps to address a lower-court ruling—upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in June—that found the existing district lines discriminate against black voters. The proposed maps, unveiled in recent days by GOP-headed committees, would rejigger the boundaries for most of the 120 House and Senate districts.

The lower court said the legislature lacked adequate justification when it created 28 majority-black districts in 2011. Critics said African-American voters were packed into a relatively small swath of the state, hurting their power to shape outcomes elsewhere in North Carolina.

The Republican-led General Assembly faces a Sept. 1 court deadline to pass new district lines, and Gov. Roy Cooper, a Democrat, has no veto power. A three-judge panel will evaluate whether the new maps satisfy the court's stipulations. The public was to have a chance to weigh in at hearings scheduled Tuesday around the



North Carolina state Rep. David Lewis, who oversaw revisions to a majority of the House districts, said race wasn't a factor.

state, and some Democrats were crying foul.

When maps were redrawn recently, race wasn't a factor, said state Rep. David Lewis, a Republican who oversaw revisions to a majority of the 120 House districts. A similar process guided changes in the Senate, which has 50 districts.

"The court said we did not have sufficient data to justify the use of race, so we did not use race," he said. Instead, criteria included factors such as population equality and district contiguity, as well as some past election results and an effort to protect incumbent officeholders.

Because the GOP-led committee didn't consider race, he said, it has no statistics on the racial breakdown of the revamped districts.

That doesn't sit well with Democrats like state Sen. Jeff Jackson of Charlotte, who said the absence of such data makes it impossible to evaluate the proposal.

"The court threw out their maps because they hyper-packed African-Americans into districts," he said. "There's no way they can prove these maps solve that problem without racial data."

Mr. Lewis said he expects critics will use race to challenge the new maps but added: "I hope we can get race out of redistricting, once and for all."

A spokesman for Mr. Cooper criticized Republican legislators for "continuing to rig election maps in their favor" using public funds. The governor favors a nonpartisan redistricting process, he said.

Company Opposes Use of Drug in Florida Execution

By JOE PALAZZOLO

A Johnson & Johnson company opposes plans by Florida authorities to use a drug it developed but no longer makes in a coming execution, marking the first time the world's largest pharmaceutical manufacturer has waded into the death-penalty debate.

Earlier this year, Florida amended its lethal-injection protocol to include etomidate, an anesthetic agent that has never been used in executions, after exhausting its supply of the sedative midazolam.

Florida authorities are slated to use the updated protocol for the first time Thursday in the execution of Mark Asay, who was sentenced to death for the 1987 killings of Robert Lee Booker and Robert McDowell in Jacksonville, Fla.

Scientists at Johnson & Johnson's Janssen Pharmaceuticals NV created etomidate in the 1960s. The company never distributed the drug in North America and divested the rest of the business in 2016.

But the company protested on Monday Florida's plan to use etomidate to render death-row inmates unconscious before injecting them with a paralytic agent and a third drug to stop their hearts.

"We do not support the use of our medicines for indications that have not been approved by regulatory authorities," a Janssen spokesman said in an email. "We do not condone the use of our medicines in lethal injections..."

tions for capital punishment."

No Johnson & Johnson drugs have been used so far in executions, according to Reprieve, an international-rights group that opposes the death penalty.

At least eight companies make etomidate. Florida, like many states, keeps the identity of its suppliers secret.

Many manufacturers have curbed access to their drugs until they came under fire for it," he said. "As a matter of business, the profit from selling to this very small market is not worth the problems the opponents can generate."

Julie Jones, secretary of the Florida Department of Corrections, said in a January letter to Gov. Rick Scott that the new protocol "will not involve unnecessary lingering or the unnecessary or wanton infliction of pain and suffering."

Mr. Scott's press secretary referred questions to a spokeswoman for the Florida Department of Corrections.

The spokeswoman said the department follows the law and carries out sentences of the courts. "This is the department's most solemn duty, and the foremost objective with the lethal injection procedure is a humane and dignified process," she said.

The Florida protocol calls for an injection of etomidate, followed by the paralytic agent rocuronium bromide and potassium acetate to stop the heart.

The Florida Supreme Court ruled last week that Mr. Asay is "at small risk of mild to moderate pain," and declined to halt his execution.

LIFE & ARTS

BY ANNE KADET

A GROUP OF FRIENDS sat in a circle on the beach in Huntington, N.Y., one recent night to talk about their progress cultivating tranquility. Initially, it hadn't gone that well, said Gerard Healy. He'd tried to kayak but the boat he borrowed from his sister was too small. "I got all wet and haven't used it since," he said.

The group of five was the Huntington Ben Franklin Circle, one of more than 70 groups that have formed around the country in the last 18 months. The groups focus on cultivating the founding father's 13 virtues including silence, frugality and humility.

Modeled on Franklin's Junto, his Philadelphia "club for mutual improvement" that met every Friday evening to discuss the virtues, the modern circles range from invitation-only dinner gatherings to public meetings in municipal libraries.

Some adhere to the suggested format: Members commit to practicing a given virtue and report back at the next session. Others simply offer a freewheeling discussion on a meaty topic, free of the rancor that characterizes a lot of contemporary debate.

The idea was spurred by New York City's 92nd Street Y, when a long email conversation between its executives prompted one to comment that the thread was serving as a sort of Junto for them. The cultural and community center began hosting pilot discussions, and eventually produced a downloadable tool kit to help people start their own Ben Franklin Circles.

Some, though, find applying Franklin's 18th century virtues to 2017 a little thorny.

When Lee Kuczewski joined a Ben Franklin Circle in New York City this summer, "I was expecting to discuss virtues and values," says the 35-year-old entrepreneur.

But the dozen attendees meeting in a small Manhattan church weren't totally on board with Franklin's virtues, starting with "temperance".

While Franklin admonished, "Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation," members were far more interested in tempering their internet addictions.

"Drinking and eating disappeared out of the conversation almost completely," Mr. Kuczewski says.

The group's second gathering included wine and dessert. "Strangely, we all lacked self-restraint," he says. But Mr. Kuczewski says that the conversation did help him curb his screen time.

The 20-odd member circle hosted by the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco serves as less of a self-improvement program and more of a forum for discussing the merits of the virtues themselves, says organizer George Hammond, a retired mergers and acquisition lawyer who has written books on Plato and early Christianity.

"We ask, is this virtue actually

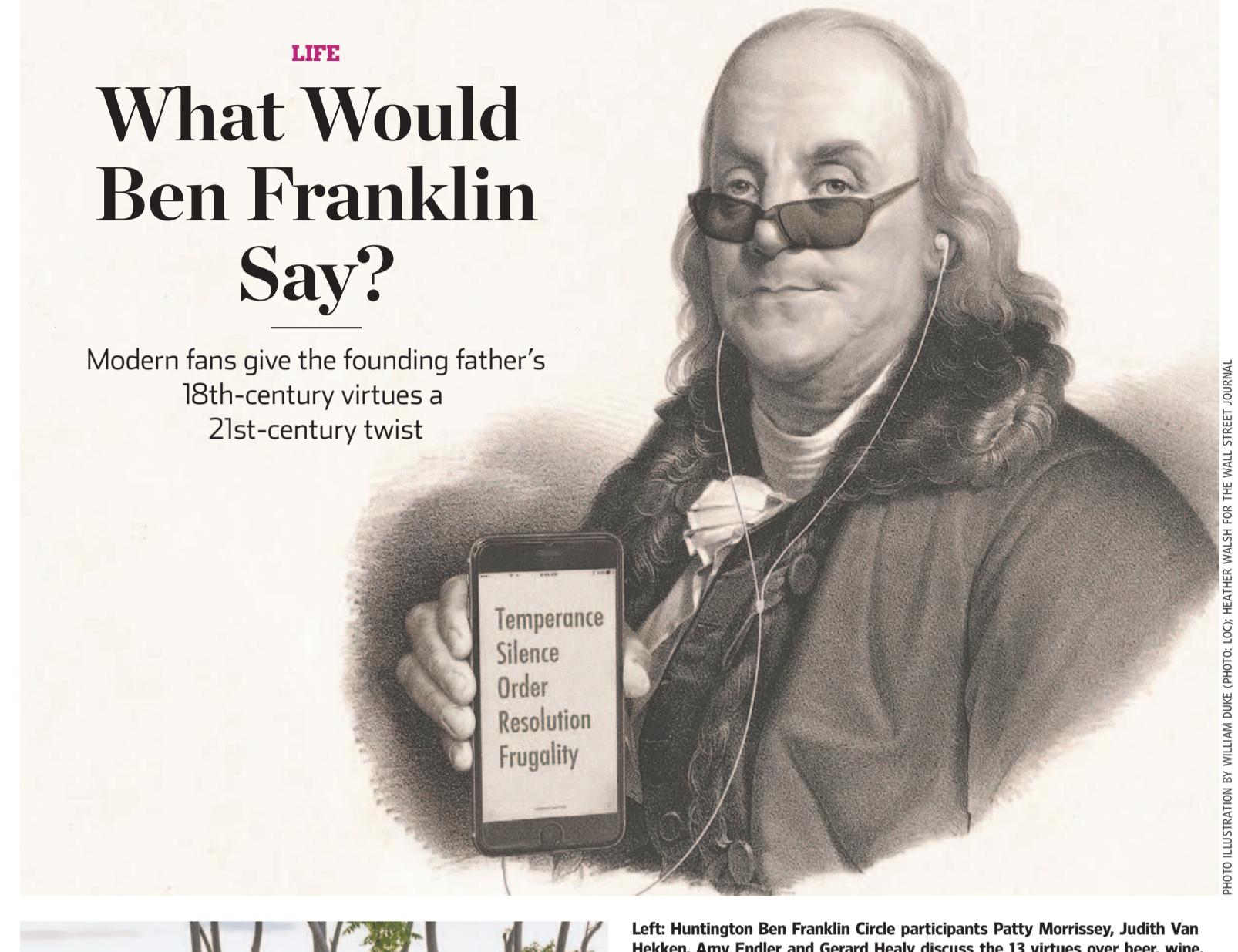


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY WILLIAM DUKE (PHOTO: LOC; HEATHER WALSH FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL)

LIFE

What Would Ben Franklin Say?

Modern fans give the founding father's 18th-century virtues a 21st-century twist



Left: Huntington Ben Franklin Circle participants Patty Morrissey, Judith Van Hekken, Amy Endler and Gerard Healy discuss the 13 virtues over beer, wine, popcorn and chocolate.

fashioned word can apply to modern life is very profound," she says.

The Center, which helped launch the Circles in partnership with the Hoover Institution and the Citizen University, a nonprofit devoted to fostering citizenship, tweaked Franklin's Junto meeting format to broaden its reach via the internet. It also reduced time demands by suggesting a monthly rather than weekly meetup.

"It's an experiment—an open-source model of taking an idea that's 250 years old and updating it for the 21st Century. Who knows what to expect?" says Ms. Curran.

A Denver group combined a Ben Franklin Circle with its walking club. A Miami circle joins children and seniors. In Kittrell, N.C., Art Beveridge and his friends combined their Ben Franklin Circle with a book club, discussing how characters exemplify the virtues. "It works pretty well," says Mr. Beveridge. "Although 'cleanliness' is hard, because it's a book, and we don't know whether they did the dishes."

Mr. Beveridge, a construction consultant and blacksmith, says he does his best to take Franklin's suggestions. Following the discussion of temperance, for example, he be-

gan launching his evening cocktail hour with a soda instead of the usual vodka collins. A born storyteller, he is struggling with silence. "But I think I've gotten better," he says. "I listen to my wife more and she appreciates it."

Like Franklin, Tom McGuire, a web developer in Austin, Texas, selects a different virtue to practice every day. He chooses from a list on his smartphone. The biggest benefit of the circle he started, he says, comes from the monthly commitment.

"I know I need to fix some behavior, and having other people to check in with is really where the power is," he says.

In the Seattle circle, discussions on 'cleanliness' and 'order' stirred a lively debate between the neat-freaks and the artist types who insisted that creativity arises from chaos.

"It seems like a silly thing to talk about whether you are clean and tidy, who cares," says Ms. Cane. "But because of the format, people approached it with a seriousness: 'Why have I not considered this as a virtue?'"

"I still make my bed now," she says. "Even though I hate it."

good for us?" he says.

In many cases, the virtues are found lacking.

Sincerity? A white lie might spare someone's feelings. Silence? Society needs diverse opinions. Chastity? "Mr. Franklin certainly didn't practice it," says Mr. Hammond.

Other groups interpret the virtues to suit their situations. While Franklin issued clear direction on chastity ("Rarely use venery but for health or offspring"), in the Huntington, N.Y., circle, "we committed to more sex rather than less" with their committed partners and spouses, says organizer Patty Morrissey. Franklin forbade using sex for "injury," and some were con-

cerned that withholding sex could be hurtful.

As for industry? While Franklin directed, "Lose no time; be always employ'd in something useful," some participants instead committed to paring their schedules. "We had a great conversation about the myth of multitasking," says Jena Cane, whose Seattle circle includes some hyper-busy entrepreneurs.

Asha Curran, director of the Belfer Center for Innovation & Social Impact, at the 92nd Street Y, says she considered updating Franklin's virtues with contemporary buzzwords such as 'mindfulness' and 'gratitude'. But she ultimately preserved his list verbatim.

"The value of knowing an old-

turned over demos in which she sang complemented by her guitar or piano. Mr. Hillier often began to flesh out the instrumentation by adding drum parts, and many songs on the album have at their center Ms. Shah's voice and the sound of a drum kit. In the songs "2016" and "Evil," a simple pattern is at the center of the mix. "Ordinary" features a high-hat cymbal and bottom-heavy percussion that rumbles as if a microphone were set inside the kick drum. Opening the album, "Place Like This" jumps off with polyrhythmic percussion that intensifies as the track progresses.

Ms. Shah and Mr. Hillier, whom she refers to as a full partner in her music-making, haven't stinted on arrangements. Neill MacColl's big riff on electric guitar rings throughout "Yes Men" and Pete Wareham's staccato saxophone adds bitter commentary to the punk-influenced "Out the Way." In "Mother Fighter," the album's most fully realized track, Ms. Shah and the band charge hard, placing a thick sheet of sound and pounding drums under the top line.

Ms. Shah is a dramatic vocalist who is never overwrought or hyperbolic. She conveys honest emotions in her tales and thus she may be compared with Anna Calvi, Annie Lennox, Nina Simone and Scott Walker, among others—singers who might not share her perspective. But

know sincerity can be dressed up but never feigned. In "Mother Fighter," she pulls back from the rage to sing melodically, rather than bark angrily, "You're not staying with me / I can't promise all will be fine... / Just come back home when land is as calm as the sky," adding, "I'm a mother and a fighter / I can do both just as well."

Though it makes its points repeatedly, "Holiday Destination" is far from a screed. Ms. Shah encourages communication and understanding. Without identifying which side her narrator represents, in "Evil" she sings: "Look I'm standing right here before you / I can only offer what I've been taught." In "Relief," she sees exhausted workers dragging themselves home. "My bus is crammed with sad tired faces" is how the tale begins. Do those faces belong to native British or immigrant laborers? She doesn't specify.

Ms. Shah isn't well known in the States despite her appealing work prior to "Holiday Destination." She may be best recognized by American audiences for her guest slots with Maya Jane Coles and Ghostpoet. Ms. Shah wishes the message of her music could reach more who might not share her perspective. But

Nadine Shah's new album is 'Holiday Destination'



there are advantages to playing to crowds that overwhelmingly agree with your viewpoint: A quietly intense performer on stage who sings standing behind a keyboard, Ms. Shah said she can feel a welcome sense of community at her shows.

"There is something to be said for being among people who are like-minded," she told me. "You can feel desperate, but for that small amount of time, your faith in humanity is restored."

Thus "Holiday Destination" is a balm as well as a provocation. Its

messages can apply not only in the U.K., but in other countries, including the U.S., that face shifting attitudes on human-rights issues and where the goal of mutually beneficial dialogue is being hijacked by extremists. That is quite a lot to ask of a rock-and-pop album, but here Ms. Shah delivers a work that is thoughtful, affecting and satisfying.

Mr. Fusilli is the Journal's rock and pop music critic. Email him at jfusilli@wsj.com and follow him on Twitter @wsjrock.

MUSIC REVIEW | By Jim Fusilli

ROCK AND POP FOR THE MODERN WORLD

ON HER THIRD full-length album, "Holiday Destination" (PIAS America), out on Friday, the British vocalist-composer Nadine Shah steps into the world of geopolitics as she writes about identity, immigration and other related topics. The events of 2016—Brexit, the rise of nationalism, and attacks on immigrants both physical and verbal—shape her latest lyrics. Some appear as reportage, others from a fictionalized first-person perspective; many are informed by experience. The 31-year-old Ms. Shah's father is Pakistani, her mother Norwegian; she was born in Whitburn on the coast of Northeast England.

"I've been told I'm not English enough to be English and not Pakistani enough to be Pakistani," she said by phone last week from the garden at her home in Tottenham, London. She concedes she has an easier time of it than her dark-skinned relatives who, like she, are Muslim.

Accompanied by modern rock influenced by New Wave and the rhythms of Afrobeat, Ms. Shah's dark, burnished voice unwraps her tales with empathy and urgency, resulting in her best recording to date. Working again with Ben Hillier, who produced her first two albums (as well as discs by Blur, Depeche Mode, Elbow, Natalie Imbruglia and others), Ms. Shah

JULIA ROMANOVSAYA

LIFE & ARTS

MY RIDE | By A.J. Baime

The Jaguar XKR-S, Iron Maiden Edition



Nicko McBrain, 65, the Boca Raton, Fla.-based drummer for British hard rock band Iron Maiden, on his 2013 Jaguar XKR-S, as told to A.J. Baime.

I was 10 years old, walking down a street in North London with my dad, when we saw a Jaguar Mark X pass by. I'll never forget it. My dad turned and said, "That is the most beautiful car. I'm going to own one someday." When I started making money in the 1980s, I wanted to buy him a Mark X, but I lost him in 1985. He never did get to own one.

Around the time he passed away, I started driving these cars myself. On Iron Maiden's mid-80s World Slavery Tour, the whole band rented Jaguar XJ6s. There were five of us at the time, driving these cars across Britain. Two years later, I bought my first Jaguar (also an XJ6). Now I have four "cats" in my garage, and my daily driver is Priscilla (my wife Rebecca came up with the name), an XKR-S customized at the factory in England.

I had the Jaguar Growler logo made to look like Eddie, the Iron Maiden mascot, on the center wheel caps, the grille of the car, and embroidered on the seat backs. The writing on the car is done in Iron Maiden font—the word "supercharged" on the hood, the "Jaguar" on the wheels, and on the running board it says "Nicko McBrain XKR-S."

The glove box is done in piano-black lacquer, and on it is written the words "Made In Aluminium," with the extra i, the correct way of spelling the word [as it is spelled



JOSH RITCHIE FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

in Britain]. The car is the only XKR-S in the world with this color, Ultra Blue. At the time it was built, the supercharged 5.0-liter V-8 was the most powerful production Jaguar engine ever (550 horsepower). All in, I paid about \$150,000. I got a VIP deal on the custom work.

Just last week, we got a new cat in the litter. I bought my wife a new Jaguar F-Type R. That car has basically the same engine as Priscilla, but it's a lighter vehicle, so that means it's the fastest pussy-cat in my garage.

I'm not so much a petrol head that I know the torque values on all kinds of cars. I'm just a Jag nut. That's me.

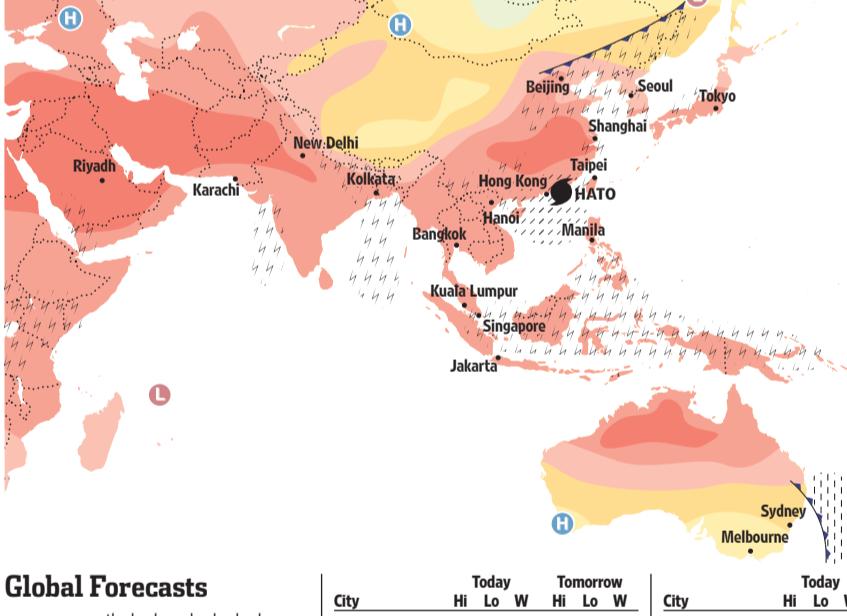
Contact A.J. Baime at Facebook.com/ajbaime.

Nicko McBrain with Priscilla, his custom 2013 Jaguar XKR-S, in his driveway in Boca Raton, Fla.



The Jaguar 'Growler' logo was customized to look like Eddie, Iron Maiden's mascot, on even the lug nuts, left. 'Supercharged' is written in the band's signature font on the hood, above.

Weather

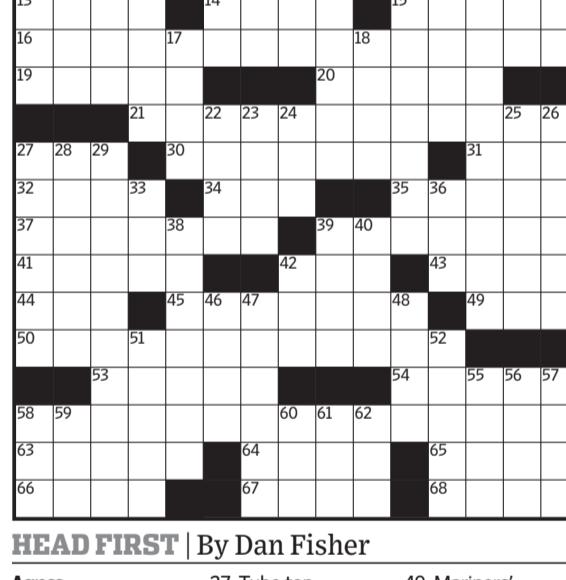


AccuWeather.com

Global Forecasts

City	Today			Tomorrow		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Amsterdam	26	16	pc	21	14	pc
Anchorage	15	11	sh	14	11	sh
Athens	30	23	s	31	23	s
Atlanta	32	22	t	30	20	c
Bahrain	43	27	s	43	27	s
Baltimore	28	16	pc	27	16	s
Bangkok	33	27	t	33	26	t
Beijing	32	21	r	31	19	s
Berlin	21	11	pc	24	14	pc
Bogota	20	8	pc	19	8	c
Boise	33	18	pc	31	15	pc
Boston	28	17	t	26	17	pc
Brussels	28	14	pc	22	13	pc
Buenos Aires	23	14	c	23	16	c
Cairo	36	24	s	36	24	s
Calgary	30	14	s	27	8	c
Caracas	32	25	pc	32	25	pc
Charlotte	33	20	t	30	19	c
Chicago	24	14	s	22	13	pc
Dallas	31	23	t	30	22	c
Denver	31	14	c	31	15	t
Detroit	25	12	pc	22	12	pc
Dubai	42	32	s	40	31	s
Dublin	19	11	c	18	12	c
Edinburgh	20	11	r	18	11	sh
Frankfurt	26	15	pc	25	15	pc

The WSJ Daily Crossword | Edited by Mike Shenk



HEAD FIRST | By Dan Fisher

Across	27	Tube top	49	Mariners' catcher?
1 Burn superficially	30	Like focus groups	50	Site of disgusting swab exhibits?
5 Thames paddler	31	S.E. Hinton novel	53	Prince William's sister-in-law
9 Presumed author of Acts	32	"A Perfect Peace" author Oz	54	Couleur d'une tomate
13 Freight-hopping fellow	33	Capital of Zimbabwe?	55	Benefactor to a harmonica band?
14 Capitol runner	34	Discreet meeting	56	Braves white water
15 Serve a function at a function	35	Still clueless	57	Hail target
16 Job in the cosmetics plant?	36	Early delivery	58	Show Boat writer Ferber
19 Mathematical comparison	37	Automaker Citroen	60	Rats!
20 Bedouin bearer	38	Chantelle product	61	In doubt
21 Florist's reaction to a job well done?	39	Tel Aviv	62	Flight part
	40	Santiago	63	Deal with empty shelves
	41	Stockholm	64	A few pointers, say
	42	Sydney	65	
	43	Taipei	66	
	44	Tehran	67	
	45	Tel Aviv	68	
	46	Tokyo		
	47	Toronto		
	48	Vancouver		
	49	Washington, D.C.		
	50	Zurich		

► Solve this puzzle online and discuss it at WSJ.com/Puzzles.

Previous Puzzle's Solution

A	F	R	O	B	U	T	P	A	R	E	S
S	E	E	N	O	R	S	O	A	W	A	S
S	L	A	T	E	B	L	U	E	N	A	Y
A	L	L	O	T	S	A	T	A	R	I	S
Y	A	M	T	E	S	A	L	M	O	T	R
H	U	G	O	G	P	A	M	O	T	R	
C	L	E	O	E	M	U	S	P	I	C	
L	E	A	S	T	R	E	I	S	T	E	
A	T	S	E	A	M	S	E	S	T	E	
S	I	T	I	P	S	H	I	E	D	I	
S	T	E	A	L	S	E	C	O	N	D	
O	R	E	G	I	N	A	D	A	P	E	
O	U	T	E	T	T	E	R	I	A	R	
A	W	G	E	E	D	Y	E	S	E	L	

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Wednesday, August 23, 2017 | B1

Yen vs. Dollar 109.3760 ▲ 0.37%

Hang Seng 27401.67 ▲ 0.91%

Gold 1286.20 ▼ 0.36%

WTI crude 47.53 ▲ 0.34%

10-Year JGB yield 0.040%

10-Year Treasury yield 2.204%

Bayer's Big Bid Faces Slowdown

EU antitrust regulator to take deeper look at \$57 billion deal to acquire Monsanto

BY NATALIA DROZDIAK

BRUSSELS—Bayer AG's \$57 billion deal for Monsanto Co. will undergo an in-depth investigation by the European Union on concerns the creation of an agrochemicals powerhouse could hurt farmers, throwing into doubt the companies' plans to complete the takeover by year-end.

The European Commission, which has antitrust powers in the EU, said on Tuesday it aims to complete its review by Jan. 8, 2018, but that date could be pushed back if there



OLIVER BERG/EPA/SHUTTERSTOCK

Bayer said it still hopes to gain EU regulatory approval by year-end.

are delays or extensions. Regulators rarely complete their analyses well in advance of set deadlines.

The commission said it was concerned the acquisition of St. Louis-based Monsanto would lead to higher prices,

lower quality, limited choice and less innovation in the markets for pesticides and seeds and for plant genetic traits, which are developed in laboratories and introduced in some varieties of plants.

Bayer and Monsanto have already submitted commitments to the EU in a bid to win approval, but regulators deemed them insufficient to dismiss their "serious doubts" about the merger.

"We need to ensure effective competition so that farmers can have access to innovative products, better quality and also purchase products at competitive prices," Margrethe Vestager, the EU's antitrust chief.

A review by U.S. regulators is ongoing. Bayer earlier this year said it had received re-

quests for information from the U.S. Department of Justice.

In the EU, complex mergers often engender full-blown reviews, which allow companies several more months to come up with additional concessions. The commission could still clear the deal with or without conditions, or block it if it still deems the remedies inadequate.

In a statement, Bayer said it "looks forward to continuing to work constructively with the commission with a view to obtaining the commission's approval of the transaction by the end of this year."

The Bayer-Monsanto deal is the last in a batch of three major mergers that are set to reshape the agrochemicals industry. Companies in the sec-

Please see DEAL page B2

Volvo Deal as Example For Jeep

BY TREFOR MOSS

SHANGHAI—Many assumed it was a disaster in the making when Geely Automobile Holdings Ltd.—a little-known Chinese car maker with virtually no international experience—bought Sweden's Volvo Cars from Ford Motor Co. in 2010.

Seven years later, Geely and Volvo are both motoring along, and inspiring other Chinese auto makers to take the same road.

Great Wall Motors Co.'s interest in buying the legendary Jeep brand from Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV is being seen as fitting a bid for global prominence—an ambition that analysts are taking seriously in part because of the success of the Geely-Volvo marriage.

"Volvo is certainly much better off than it was under Ford," said Janet Lewis, Macquarie Capital Research's managing director of equity research.

Great Wall said Tuesday that it was still evaluating a move for Jeep or Fiat Chrysler itself. Amid speculation over its plans, the Hong Kong stock exchange suspended trading of its shares.

Acquiring a marquee name like Jeep would help Great Wall in its long-running rivalry with Geely, which as of late is in the lead. The unit of Zhejiang Geely Holding Group Co. recently took control of a second foreign auto maker, Malaysia's Proton.

Last week, Geely said its first-half revenue more than doubled to \$5.88 billion, with profit rising sharply to \$739 million. Auto sales were up 89% at 530,627, more than the company sold in the whole of 2015.

Geely is significantly outperforming the Chinese passenger car market, which grew only 1.6% in the first six months of this year.

"Right now Geely is in a class by itself" among Chinese auto makers thanks largely to its technology connection with Volvo, said Michael Dunne, president of consultancy Dunne Automotive.

China has scores of domestic car makers, most of them state-run: They are broadly considered mediocre by industry analysts. Many operate joint ventures with foreign auto makers, but that structure has proved an ineffective means of absorbing advanced technologies.

In contrast, buying Volvo proved a transformative moment for privately owned Geely, Mr. Dunne said, giving the Chinese car maker access to the Swedish outfit's world-class resources and handing it a ready-made global sales and

Please see GEELY page B2



NOAM GALAI/WIREIMAGE/GETTY IMAGES

Sahara Group, a conglomerate based in India, intends to sell the New York City property, which could fetch more than \$500 million.

Famed Plaza Hotel Is on the Block

BY CRAIG KARMIN

The Indian owners of the Plaza Hotel have hired a broker to sell the New York City landmark, a sign that a worldwide scramble among investors, celebrities and governments to acquire the property could be nearing an end.

Sahara Group, a Lucknow, India-based conglomerate and the hotel's majority owner, has enlisted JLL Hotels and Hospitality Group, a unit of real-estate firm **JLL**, to find a buyer, according to a person familiar with the matter.

While it is unclear how much a buyer would pay for a trophy property like the Plaza, hotel investors and brokers suggest it could be one of the most expensive hotel sales on a per-room basis, a popular industry metric. By that method of valuation it could bring in more than \$500 million.

A Sahara spokesman didn't comment on the hiring of a broker but said a "sale is under process and it has not yet concluded."

Pricey Lodging

Top 10 largest U.S. hotel sales

PROPERTY NAME	YEAR SOLD	PRICE
Waldorf Astoria New York	2015	\$195B
Waldorf Astoria Orlando & Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek	2015	\$1.76B
The Palace Hotel (New York)	2015	\$805M
Hilton New York Midtown	2007	\$765M
Hyatt Regency Waikiki Beach Resort (Hawaii)	2016	\$756M
Hotel del Coronado (California)	2006	\$745M
Peabody Orlando	2013	\$717M
Fontainebleau Miami Beach Resort	2008	\$700M
The Plaza Hotel (New York)	2004	\$675M
Hilton San Francisco Union Square	2005	\$668M

Source: STR

Dozens of real-estate moguls, foreign government funds and other hotel investors around the globe in recent years have looked into

buying the Plaza after Sahara indicated it would listen to offers, according to people familiar with the matter.

A Qatari sovereign-wealth

fund, a Shanghai municipal investment fund and Pras Michel, the Grammy-winning co-founder of the hip-hop group Fugees, are among those that have expressed interest, say people who have been close to the process.

Sahara founder and Chairman Subrata Roy, who spent two years in a New Delhi jail on contempt charges, even negotiated with potential buyers from the jail's guesthouse, according to people familiar with the situation.

None of those talks led to a sale, and several of the Plaza's suitors walked away frustrated, some questioning whether Sahara was a serious seller, according to hotel brokers and investors involved with the discussions.

But recruiting a broker to run a formal sales process signals that Sahara is getting more serious about unloading its crown jewel, said Sean Hennessey, chief executive of the hotel consultants Lodging Advisors, whose firm isn't involved.

Please see PLAZA page B9

Norway Fund Approaches Asset Milestone

BY DOMINIC CHOPPING

Norway's sovereign-wealth fund, the world's biggest, continues its march toward a \$1 trillion valuation after the best half-year return in its history.

The fund announced a 2.6% return on its investments in the second quarter of this year, helped by a solid performance from its stock-market portfolio.

Norges Bank Investment Management, the arm of the central bank that manages the fund, said Tuesday the quarterly return equated to 202 billion Norwegian kroner (\$25.6 billion).

The total value of the fund on June 30 was 8.02 trillion kroner—or \$957.13 billion calculated at the exchange rate on that date. This figure would have been even higher weren't

for a 16 billion kroner withdrawal by the government and the strong krone, which in combination reduced the value of the fund by 32 billion kroner, NBIM said.

Norway approached the trillion-dollar milestone despite pressure on sovereign-wealth funds globally. Ultra-low interest rates are crimping returns and cheap oil is cutting into the income of the largely resource-dependent countries rich enough to possess such funds.

Last year was the first time Norway's government, seeking to fill a hole in its budget, withdrew more money from the fund than it put in.

However, stock markets have set record after record in 2017, powered in large part by a revival in U.S. corporate earnings.



KRISTER SOERBOE/BLOOMBERG NEWS

Deputy CEO Trond Grande.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average passed 22,000 in August, more than tripling from a low in March 2009.

The stock markets have performed particularly well so

far this year, and the fund's return in the two first quarters was 6.5%, said Trond Grande, deputy chief executive of Norges Bank Investment Management.

"This gives a total return of 499 billion kroner, which is the best half-year return measured in Norwegian kroner in the history of the fund. We cannot expect such returns in the future. The record-high return is primarily due to the fact that the fund has become so large."

Equity investments generated a 3.4% return for the fund with fixed income and unlisted real-estate providing 1.1% and 2.1% returns respectively.

NBIM said the fund had 65.1% of its reserves invested in equities on June 30 with 32.4% in fixed income and 2.5% in unlisted real-estate.

INSIDE



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MANAGEMENT, B5

BUSINESS NEWS

J&J Loses Trial Over Talc

BY SARA RANDAZZO

LOS ANGELES—A jury on Monday awarded a woman with ovarian cancer \$417 million in a case against **Johnson & Johnson**, the latest hit to the pharmaceutical company in widespread litigation over the alleged harms of its baby powder.

The verdict here comes in the sixth completed trial alleging the talcum powder in J&J's popular bath product causes ovarian cancer, and that the company failed to warn about the risks. The company won a trial in March but lost four others, leading to jury awards totaling more than \$300 million that are now on appeal.

A J&J spokeswoman said Monday that the company plans to appeal the latest verdict. Individual jury awards in mass tort litigation are idiosyncratic and are often reduced on appeal. At the same time, the outcome of early trials can give plaintiffs and defendants a better sense of how to value any eventual global settlement.

J&J said in a recent securities filing that as of July 2 it faced 4,800 pending claims in U.S. courts over its talc products.

J&J has repeatedly said talc is safe to use as an ingredient in cosmetic products and that its baby powder is labeled appropriately. The company spokeswoman said Monday that while they sympathize with those affected by ovarian cancer, "we are guided by the science, which supports the safety of Johnson's Baby Powder." She pointed to an April finding by a National Cancer Institute board that "the weight of evidence does not support an association between perineal talc exposure and an increased risk of ovarian cancer."

J&J has latched on to a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in June limiting where cases can be filed in an effort by the company to shed other pending talc cases. A judge declared a



The company has repeatedly said that talc is safe to use as an ingredient in cosmetic products.

mistrial in one such case in St. Louis days after the Supreme Court ruling, and J&J has asked for other verdicts and pending cases to be thrown out.

That ruling didn't come into play in the California state court trial, the first to take place outside of St. Louis. The plaintiff, Eva Echeverria, is a 63-year old Californian who was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2007. Jurors heard from Ms. Echeverria via video that she had used talc for feminine hygiene for more than 40 years and would have stopped using it had there been a warning label.

Mark Robinson, an attorney for Ms. Echeverria, said Monday, "These cases are about fighting for justice for women all over California who are suffering from ovarian cancer because of Johnson & Johnson's covering up the truth for so many years."

During closing arguments, a different attorney for Ms. Ech-

everria stressed that the jury didn't need to prove that talc was the sole cause of his client's cancer, only that it was a "substantial factor," according to video of the proceedings provided by Courtroom View Network.

The four-week trial hinged largely on a battle of the experts, with pathologists, oncologists and other specialists called in by both sides.

The American Cancer Society has said research linking women's use of talcum powder in the genital area to ovarian cancer has been "mixed, with some studies reporting a slight increased risk and some reporting no increase."

One plaintiffs' expert showed that talc causes inflammation in human tissues, and that chronic inflammation can cause ovarian cancer. Another found 11 talc particles on Ms. Echeverria's tissue. Ms. Echeverria's own treating gynecologic oncologist testified that she believed talc was

more likely than not the cause of her patient's cancer.

J&J tried to discredit the opposing side's witnesses by pointing out that the experts only began linking talc to ovarian cancer after they were hired to assist in the litigation.

Bart Williams, an attorney for J&J, explained to jurors during closing arguments that finding talc possibly causes the disease isn't the same as deciding that it probably does, which is the stricter standard required under California law for when a product needs a warning label. "It's about establishing causation," he said.

Lawyers took out 16,000 advertisements warning television viewers of the potential risks of talcum powder in the first half of the year, according to an X Ante analysis of Kantar Media CMAG data. That makes it the fifth most-popular target of mass-tort TV ads focused on drugs and medical devices, X Ante said.

BHP Considers Selling Its U.S. Shale Operations

BY ROBB M. STEWART

MELBOURNE, Australia—Activist investors scored a victory after **BHP Billiton** Ltd. said it was looking to sell its onshore U.S. oil-and-gas operations.

The Melbourne-based company, the world's largest listed miner by market value, said it had determined its shale operations in the U.S. weren't core and it was actively looking at exit options. The news was accompanied by a sharp lift in BHP's second-half dividend as it swung back to an annual profit.

The move follows months of campaigning by New York hedge fund **Elliott Management** Corp. Elliott had questioned the fit between BHP's petroleum division and mining of iron ore, copper and other minerals, calling for sweeping changes including spinning off the shale business, launching an independent review of BHP's global petroleum operations, and collapsing its dual British-Australian structure around a single main listing in Sydney.

BHP said it would complete well trials, swap some acreage and look at ways to increase the value, profitability and marketability of its extensive shale operations.

BHP holds more than 838,000 acres in the shale-rich Eagle Ford, Permian, Haynesville and Fayetteville regions of the U.S.

BHP has been on the defensive in recent months against the campaign waged by Elliott, which has criticized the company for wasting billions of dollars in shareholders' money investing in U.S. shale at the height of the natural-gas boom and mistimed share buybacks. The fund last week raised its stake in BHP's London-listed

shares to 5% to put it in a position to call a shareholder meeting when it chooses.

Chief Executive Andrew Mackenzie recently admitted the company had overspent on its shale assets and had since pivoted toward conventional assets.

However, BHP has said the cost of unifying its share structure would outweigh any savings.

The world's big mining companies have restored profits selling commodities including iron ore and copper needed for everything from high-rise apartments and office towers to power and communications cables. Although growth in China has been cooling, its demand for metals has remained strong, supported by various stimulus measures.

The move is a win for Elliott Management, which campaigned for sweeping changes.

The prices for most of the commodities BHP extracts rose strongly over the past year.

Iron ore, a big engine for its earnings, climbed by more than 30% and steelmaking coking coal more than doubled.

Also on Wednesday, BHP said it was launching a multi-currency bond repurchase plan capped at US\$2.5 billion, that would target certain euro medium-term notes and bonds issued under a U.S. debt program.

Funded by a US\$14.2 billion cash position, it said the purchases would extend its average debt-maturity profile.

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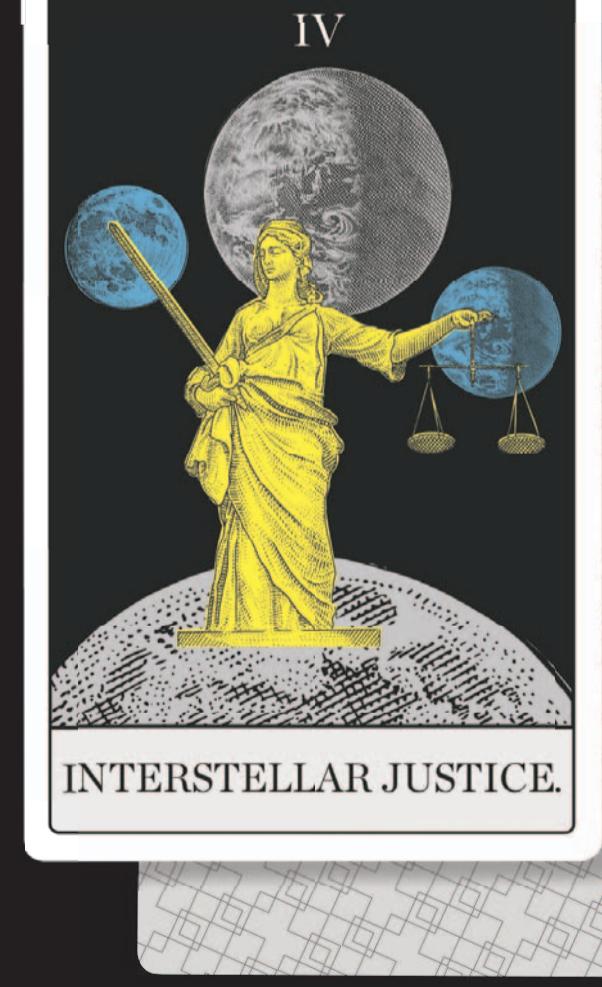
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MANAGEMENT

Mozilla Motivated Its Staff To Fix Bugs

BY LAUREN WEBER

How do employers motivate workers to do the unglamorous tasks that keep companies running?

Mozilla Corp., maker of the Firefox web browser, faced that question last year when it weighed how to fix the bugs in its bug-fixing process. Programmers considered the task, which solves issues that slow or impede the browser, tedious compared with the flashier work of designing new features.

To kindle interest and get more employees involved, the company reorganized the process earlier this year. Previously, there was no systematic method for correcting problems that, for example, slowed the browser's ability to load images or froze the screen after a user tried to submit information to a website. Repairs were simply folded into the other responsibilities of separate engineering teams.

Fixes usually meant rewriting small sections of software code. But the teams had other priorities and sometimes took too long to make the revisions. More important, says Naveed Ihsanullah, the senior engineering manager who led the overhaul, they often focused too narrowly on glitches with a minor element of the browsing experience rather than address bugs that affected a key issue for all users, such as the speed of a new tab opening.

Mr. Ihsanullah says Mozilla needed to focus on Firefox's responsiveness—its ability to operate smoothly and without the interruptions signified by, for example, the spinning color wheel on a Mac—to make progress against another industry leader, the Chrome browser from Alphabet Inc.'s Google.

Mr. Ihsanullah revamped the tracking database where any employee can report a bug. He designated a core team of engineers, including himself, to prioritize problems, assign them to the right teams, and track progress.

Mozilla also had to engage the entire engineering organization. To sell employees, managers and senior leaders on the idea that everyone should pitch in, Mr. Ihsanullah gave employees two big goals: close 40 high-priority bugs between the effort's launch in February and the next beta release of Firefox on Sept. 20, and bring Mozilla within 20% of Chrome's score on a benchmarking service that evaluates browsers' performance.

Google didn't respond to a request for comment.

Since February, 165 Mozilla employees have closed 400 high-priority bugs and Firefox is "within the margin of error" of its goal of closing the performance gap with Chrome, Mr. Ihsanullah says.

The idea of catching up to a chief rival "resonated with everyone I talked to and that was motivation enough for them to jump on board," says Mr. Ihsanullah.

CEO Weighs In on Rivals, Ugly Produce

Head of Kroger grocery chain copes with slowing growth, Amazon and Wal-Mart

BY HEATHER HADDON

If you run America's largest supermarket chain, it should be easy to travel anywhere in the country and answer questions about where you work. But for **Kroger** Co.'s Rodney McMullen, those conversations can be a chore.

"I'll say 'Kroger,' and they don't even know what that is," says Mr. McMullen, who became the company's chief executive in 2014. Then, "they will **Google** it and go 'oh, wow.'

Until recently, investors were just as enthralled with the world's third-largest retailer. But after three years presiding over steady growth, Mr. McMullen, a farm-raised Midwesterner, has been navigating Kroger through its stormiest period in more than a decade.

The Cincinnati-based company's stock fell 19% in June after it reported a slide in sales growth and lowered its guidance for the year. The next day, **Amazon.com** Inc. announced it was buying **Whole Foods Market** Inc.

To fend off Amazon and other online grocery services, Kroger is sacrificing profits to provide e-commerce pickup options at hundreds of stores. It is also lowering prices on staples as it competes with **Wal-Mart Stores** Inc. and European discount chains **Aldi** and **Lidl** for value-oriented shoppers.

Mr. McMullen, 57 years old, sat down with The Wall Street Journal this month to

talk about the competition, Kroger's future and the value of ugly vegetables.

Edited excerpts:
WSJ: Where were you when you got news of the Amazon-Whole Foods deal?

Mr. McMullen: I was with our internal audit team. The average age is in their low 20s. One of our interns who is 20 years old, the very first question to the group is, 'I thought bricks and mortar was dead? If it's dead, why is Amazon buying Whole Foods?' It didn't surprise me at all. Several years ago, we decided that the customer wants a physical experience and an online experience. Obviously, it surprised the market a lot more than it did me.

WSJ: What does the deal mean for Kroger?

Mr. McMullen: There isn't anything from a strategy standpoint that we will change because the strategy we've been executing assumed something [like the Amazon deal] would happen. It makes it a lot easier in terms of helping [Kroger executives] understand the sense of urgency.

WSJ: Given the competition, have you had conversations with, say, **Albertsons Cos.**, about a deal?

Mr. McMullen: I always tell people that if there's anything out there, you should assume we've looked at it.

WSJ: Which of these developments is making you lose the most sleep: Whole Foods/Amazon, a revitalized



SANGJUK SYLVIA KANG/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

How I Work

Biggest distraction in your workday? Unhelpful meetings.

You love cheese. Also stinky cheese? Absolutely.

One trait that won't get you hired: No values.

have been product we'd have thrown away. We were able to partner with local food banks so fresh product that is still high quality to eat, but you wouldn't sell from an appearance standpoint, [is donated]. We legitimately believe we will be able to get every store to be zero waste.

WSJ: Much of the food that's wasted in the U.S. is edible produce that doesn't meet aesthetic standards. Do you believe customers are open to eating less-attractive tomatoes?

Mr. McMullen: I grew up on a farm. Last Sunday, I went out to see my parents and their garden, and I find the produce that looks the ugliest tastes the best.

WSJ: You started as a stock clerk for Kroger. How does that experience inform the way you do your job today?

Mr. McMullen: I've done a lot of different jobs in the company so it helps you understand how hard each person's job is. You know how hard it is to stock shelves, to work an eight- or 10-hour

shift. Every year I'll go and work in a store. In the old days, I could do any job in the store. Today, bagging is about the only job I can do. Which is embarrassing but at least I can still do something.

WSJ: Time travel to Kroger 2025. What would it look like?

Mr. McMullen: It wouldn't surprise me that customers would be in the store eating but they would use an app to order what they want. When they are finished, [the store clerk] would deliver the groceries to them. It will be so easy because we'll be able to predict a lot of the things you want. The associates you engage with will be so knowledgeable about where tortillas came from. I believe some stores will be big and some small. And it will be the combination of all those things that make it special.

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Macy's Hires eBay Executive Amid Shake-Up

BY SUZANNE KAPNER

Macy's Inc. poached a senior **eBay Inc.** executive and streamlined top management in an effort to speed up decision making at the struggling department-store chain.

Hal Lawton, 43 years old, will join Macy's on Sept. 8 as president, the company said. He will report to Macy's Chief Executive Jeff Gennette, who had previously held the president's title. Earlier Monday, eBay announced Mr. Lawton's resignation as senior vice president, North America.

Macy's also restructured its merchandising ranks by consolidating merchandising, planning and private-label functions into a single unit, resulting in the elimination of about 100 jobs. The move is expected to save about \$30 million annually with \$5 million of the savings coming in



Hal Lawton helped lead eBay's turnaround after the 2015 split from PayPal. He will report to Macy's CEO Jeff Gennette.

GETTY IMAGES

the fourth quarter of the current fiscal year.

"We had a lot of decision makers at the table, and we weren't as fast as we needed to be," Mr. Gennette said of the old structure.

The new slimmed-down

group will be run by Jeff Kantor, a 35-year Macy's veteran who is currently head of stores and human resources. As chief merchandising officer, he will succeed Tim Baxter, who is expected to leave the company early next month.

Since taking the helm in March, Mr. Gennette has vowed to cut through a "sea of sameness" in Macy's offerings and add more exclusive merchandise as the chain tries to keep shoppers from fleeing to fast-fashion retailers and off-price stores like T.J. Maxx.

To that end, he said Monday that he wants exclusive merchandise to account for 40% of Macy's sales, up from 29% currently. He is also bolstering the Macy's analytics team so the retailer can use more data to better inform how it marks down unsold goods.

Key to his idea was to hire an executive with a solid digital and technology background. Mr. Lawton fit the bill, according to Mr. Gennette, because he also has a strong merchandising track record.

At Home Depot Inc., where Mr. Lawton worked before

joining eBay in 2015, he served as senior vice president of hardlines and was instrumental in expanding Home Depot's digital business to nearly \$2 billion from \$400 million, Mr. Gennette said.

At eBay, Mr. Lawton immersed himself in the details of the business, at one point becoming a top-rated seller, in an effort to improve the experience for other sellers on the site.

Mr. Lawton was a key player in eBay's turnaround effort following its 2015 split from PayPal, helping lead initiatives such as guaranteed delivery for millions of items in three days or less, as well as price-matching. The online marketplace is promoting Scott Cutler, now leading its StubHub ticket marketplace division, to the role of senior vice president, Americas.

—Laura Stevens contributed to this article.

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FINANCE & MARKETS



Debt issued by Tesla is being closely watched because the electric-car manufacturer has become a stock-market favorite.

Tesla Bonds Fall as Investors Fret

BY MATT WIRZ

Tesla Inc.'s first bonds have fallen about 2% in price since their issuance 11 days ago, a sign of Wall Street's ambivalence over the electric-car maker.

The Palo Alto, Calif., company sold \$1.8 billion of low-rated bonds on Aug. 11 to help pay for the Model 3, its first mass-market car.

Tesla took advantage of investors' thirst for higher-yielding securities, selling debt at an annual yield of 5.3%—more than 3 percentage points above the yield on comparable Treasury debt.

Many investors sat out the deal, questioning the wisdom of buying bonds from a company that hasn't turned an annual profit and is drastically increasing its spending in an attempt to break into the capital-intensive automobile market.

"God love them, they took

advantage of a super strong market to get superlow financing," said Jack Flaherty, a bond portfolio manager at GAM Holdings AG who didn't buy into the new deal.

A spokesman for Tesla declined to comment.

The price of the bond was 98 cents on the dollar in early Tuesday trading, leaving the yield at 5.62%, according to data from MarketAxess.

Bond yields rise when prices fall.

Trading has been heavy. Tesla bonds were the most actively traded junk bonds Monday, with about \$96 million of the debt changing hands, according to figures from MarketAxess.

The bonds are being closely watched by investors because Tesla has become a stock-market favorite.

As of Monday, Tesla shares were up 58% this year despite a 2.8% decline that day. At early afternoon Tuesday, the

Downshift

Tesla bond price
101 cents on the dollar



Note: As of noon EDT Tuesday
Source: MarketAxess
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

stock was up 0.9%.

The company until this month had never issued traditional bonds that must be paid off at maturity. Instead, Tesla has raised \$6 billion by selling shares or bonds convertible into stock.

Many high-yield bond

prices fell last week, as investors pulled about \$1 billion from junk-bond funds, according to Thomson Reuters Lipper data.

Investors cited a perception that uncertainty tied to policies in Washington and events around the globe has been rising.

The average yield of corporate bonds rated single-B was unchanged last week, according to the Bloomberg Barclays U.S. High Yield Index.

Tesla bonds declined more than similarly rated ones because they pay less interest, investors said, though a person familiar with the Tesla bond sale pointed out that some other recent bond issues have also declined in price.

"It's more attractive now, but it's not a level I'm willing to step into yet," Mr. Flaherty said.

—Charley Grant
and Sam Goldfarb
contributed to this article.

Gold Declines, Hurt By Trump's Speech

BY AMRITH RAMKUMAR

Gold prices fell, weighed down by a rising U.S. dollar.

Gold for December delivery was down 0.4% at \$1,286.20 a troy ounce at midday on the Comex division of the New York Mercantile Exchange.

The precious metal had hit its highest levels since November on Friday as U.S. political uncertainty pushed investors toward the haven asset, but it hasn't been able to stay above \$1,300, a key psychological barrier for many analysts and investors.

News that President Donald Trump's chief strategist Steve Bannon was leaving the administration pulled gold down from its Friday highs, and a stronger U.S. currency kept the precious metal down Tuesday.

A stronger dollar makes dollar-denominated metals such as gold more expensive to foreign buyers. The WSJ Dollar Index, which tracks the dollar against 16 other currencies, was up 0.3% around midday.

Some analysts and investors said Mr. Trump's speech

late Monday about the U.S. mission in Afghanistan was strong. That hurt the outlook for gold, which tends to rise in times of geopolitical turmoil.

"Over all, it came across as positive for the market," said Walter Pehowich, senior vice president at Dillon Gage Metals. Mr. Pehowich said he sees gold staying in its current trading range unless more investors rotate out of stocks—which were rising Tuesday—because of an unexpected political disruption.

Another potential boost for the precious metal could come from the Federal Reserve's annual Jackson Hole, Wyo., conference later this week.

Many analysts and investors will be watching for clues about the timing of future interest-rate increases. Minutes from the Fed's latest meeting, released last week, showed officials were divided on when to raise rates amid tepid economic growth.

A longer period without a rate increase boosts the outlook for gold, which typically struggles to compete with yield-bearing assets when borrowing costs rise.

Dollar Adds to Strength

BY IRA IOSEBASHVILI

The U.S. dollar rose Tuesday, as investors awaited comments from central bankers at the end of the week.

The Wall Street Journal Dollar Index, which measures the U.S. currency against a basket of 16 others, was up 0.3% at 86.16 by midday.

Some investors believe Federal Reserve Chairwoman Janet Yellen may make the case for a third interest-rate increase this year in her speech at the central bank's annual economic symposium at Jackson Hole, Wyo., on Friday, said Joe Manimbo, a strategist at Western Union.

Expectations of higher interest rates are a boon to the dollar, as they make the currency more attractive to yield-seeking investors.

With the U.S. currency down more than 7% this year, the dollar would have plenty of room to rally on hawkish comments from the Fed, Mr. Manimbo said.

At the same time, some investors believe European Central Bank President Mario Draghi, also scheduled to speak in Jackson Hole, may use dovish rhetoric to curb the euro's strength. The single currency's rally may make it more difficult for the ECB to spark inflation.

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