

Iran delays nuclear negotiations with US

Bloomberg News

Iran delayed the start of negotiations over a permanent peace deal with the U.S. after fighting intensified in southern Lebanon, a potential setback to Donald Trump's efforts to end the war and curb Tehran's nuclear program.

The talks, which were meant to take place in Switzerland on Friday, were delayed because of those clashes between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah militants, according to two people familiar with the situation, who asked not to be identified due to the sensitivity of the matter.

Israel and Hezbollah have now agreed to a ceasefire as of 4 p.m. local time, according to a U.S. official, who asked to remain anonymous because the

agreement isn't public. Both sides said they would commit to a truce if the other side does the same, but would respond otherwise.

Iran insisted on a ceasefire in Lebanon as part of the interim peace deal finalized with the U.S. this week, and didn't send a delegation to the talks as a result of the fresh hostilities. U.S. Vice President JD Vance, who was to represent Washington, also didn't travel.

There's as yet no indication of a new start date for the discussions.

The postponement represents a blow to Trump, who signed a memorandum of understanding with Iran on Wednesday despite widespread criticism he was conceding too

much in terms of financial benefits and relief from sanctions. He said the agreement would prevent a global economic crisis, given the critical Strait of Hormuz would reopen to oil and gas shipments.

"We didn't meet out of desperation, Iran did. They are FINISHED!" Trump posted on Truth Social on Friday. "We'll play out the 60 days. They get no money, not ten cents!"

It's not yet clear if the latest developments will affect the strait, where maritime activity has picked up since Trump and Iranian counterpart Masoud Pezeshkian signed the agreement.

Traffic through the waterway — critical for global energy supplies — appeared to thin early

Friday, a day after a surge in renewed oil flows as the two countries vowed to lift a dual blockade.

Iran said Friday that ships that cross the Strait of Hormuz will need its permission, setting the stage for a likely contentious debate over future tolling arrangements.

Vessels that cross the strait will need a mandatory insurance policy that is currently free but could have a cost in the future, the country's Persian Gulf Strait Authority said in a document on its website.

The U.S., Europe and Gulf Arab states have balked at the idea of Iran imposing fees on the transit point, and Vance downplayed the possibility on Thursday.

Long list of US concessions to Iran draws criticism

Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — The White House pushed back against growing bipartisan criticism of a negotiated settlement to the war with Iran, arguing its concessions to the Islamic Republic were contingent on its conduct and essential to securing peace.

The administration's defensive posture came as details of the agreement, known as a memorandum of understanding, were finally shared with the public, revealing a raft of compromises with Tehran long opposed by Republicans.

Vice President JD Vance, who helped negotiate the deal, said the deal was structured to reward Iran for good behavior. But the text of the agreement suggests otherwise.

The Trump administration agreed to release billions of dollars in Iranian assets that were

frozen and restricted by the United States "upon the implementation" of the memorandum — before any further actions are taken or additional negotiations begin. The president will issue sanctions waivers on Iranian oil, allowing Tehran to resume trading its most valuable export and breaking with decades of policy. And to facilitate that trade, boosting Tehran's revenues, Trump agreed to immediately end a U.S. naval blockade of Iranian ports.

Still more concessions were offered to the Iranians, including a commitment by the U.S. administration to establish a fund of "at least \$300 billion for the reconstruction and economic development of the Islamic Republic" — in effect providing reparations for the war Trump started.

Taken together, the docu-

ment reads as a stunning reversal of U.S. policy toward Iran after decades of concern across administrations in Washington — including throughout Trump's two terms — that the Islamic Republic represents the nation's greatest security threat as the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism.

Criticism from Republican senators, in particular, has been sharp and swift.

Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said the \$300-billion fund "would make Iran's payoff under President Obama's 2015 deal look like a pittance by comparison."

Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, accused the Trump administration of giving Iran money it would use to kill Americans.

"Unless you were homeschooled by a day drinker, no

one's confident that Iran is going to do anything," Sen. John Kennedy, R-La., told reporters.

And Sen. Bill Cassidy, also R-La., called the deal "the worst foreign policy blunder in decades" that would have President Ronald Reagan "rolling over in his grave."

"Iran's nuclear ambitions were not curbed, and they have learned that threatening the Strait of Hormuz works and will undoubtedly leverage it in the future. Now, Iran gets to build brand-new infrastructure under this deal," Cassidy said.

"Before the war, the strait was open, Iran was being crushed by sanctions, and 13 service members were still alive," he added. "Now, 13 Americans are dead, families have paid billions at the pump, sanctions will be lifted and the bombing has stopped."

JD Vance defends Iran deal, warns Israel

New York Daily News

Vice President JD Vance aggressively defended the controversial peace deal with Iran, and warned Israel not to criticize President Donald Trump over the agreement.

In a White House press briefing, Vance embraced his new role as the top cheerleader for the deal that some critics say amounts to a capitulation to the Islamic Republic and a sellout of Israel.

“This is an excellent thing for the American people,” Vance said.

He also delivered an extraordinary shot across the bow at Israel, where the deal has come under withering attack because

it calls for Israel’s withdrawal from Lebanon and makes no mention of Iran’s ballistic missiles that can strike Israel, nor ending aid to anti-Israel proxy groups like Hezbollah, Hamas and the Houthis.

“Donald J. Trump is the only head of state in the entire world who is sympathetic to the nation of Israel,” Vance said.

He added, “If I was in the cabinet of the Israeli government, I might not be attacking the only powerful ally that I have anywhere left in the entire world.”

Vance asserted that the memorandum of understanding with Iran, with Trump signed at the Versailles Palace in Paris the night before, amounted to a dip-

lomatic win and a no-brainer good deal for the U.S.

He claimed Iran made many additional verbal agreements, including commitments on its nuclear program, though they don’t appear in the deal.

“Fundamentally, whether they’re written down or spoken, this is why we structured the deal the way we did,” he said. “We don’t trust words. We trust actions.”

Vance laughed off Trump’s joke from a day earlier that he would blame the veep if the deal goes sour. But the joke spotlights the political danger Vance is assuming by becoming the top defender of the deal.

Vance was originally sup-

posed to sign the deal on behalf of the U.S. on Friday in Geneva. But Trump signed it himself in France.

The veep now says he expects to lead a team that will launch negotiations with Iran as soon as this weekend on the proposed 60-day period of talks on Tehran’s nuclear program.

Iran’s Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei endorsed the deal, although he suggested the talks would not be smooth sailing for the U.S.

“It is obvious that the face-to-face negotiations that will be held in the future will not mean accepting the enemy’s opinion,” Khamenei said in a statement read on state media.

Rubio lets Vance take fall as deal questions mount

Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Marco Rubio stood silent and stone-faced behind Donald Trump on Wednesday as the president joked of passing the buck if his deal with Iran, under increasingly withering criticism and scrutiny, ultimately falls apart.

The blame, Trump said, would likely fall on his vice president, JD Vance, who led the negotiations toward a memorandum of understanding with Iran and is openly considering a run for the White House.

The controversial diplomatic breakthrough poses a quandary for Vance, whose aides see Rubio as his most viable challenger for the Republican presidential nomination should the secretary choose to run.

“If it works out, I’m going to take the credit,” Trump said of the deal, with Rubio by his side.

“If it doesn’t work out, I’m blaming JD,” he joked. “You better be careful, JD!”

Rubio, who also serves as the president’s national security

advisor, has remained effectively mum since news of a preliminary peace deal was announced on Sunday.

His absence has drawn notice across foreign policy circles — not only because Rubio has served as chief architect of the administration’s global strategy thus far, but also because he has become one of the president’s most effective communicators, both at home and abroad.

By contrast, Vance, on a press tour promoting his new book, has emerged as the face of an agreement that appears to be fracturing a Republican Party already divided over America’s role in the world.

The administration’s internal divide over Iran extends beyond the war to broader U.S. support for its historic allies, including Israel in the Middle East, Canada and Mexico in this hemisphere, and Ukraine and Europe against a revanchist Russia.

“Rubio has always been a hawk on Iran, and Vance has always been an appeaser,” said

Danielle Pletka, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, describing the vice president as positioning himself “as Trump without the flaws.”

“Rubio has a harder job because he’s more of a traditional Republican,” she said, adding that a presidential run by the secretary might require him to pitch “a return to normalcy.”

Rubio had advocated against the deal in its current form, citing intelligence reports that found it highly unlikely Tehran would give up its nuclear ambitions, according to two sources familiar with the matter.

The deal kicks down the road highly technical discussions over the mechanics of unwinding Iran’s nuclear program — with no guarantee of success — while granting Tehran immediate relief, lifting a U.S. naval blockade of Iranian ports that will allow Iranian imports and exports to resume.

In exchange, Iran has only agreed in principle not to pursue nuclear weapons — a vow it has made multiple times before

— and to do its “best” to return commercial shipping traffic through the Strait of Hormuz back to prewar levels. It commits in the deal to refrain from implementing a toll system in the strait, according to U.S. officials, for a mere 60-day period.

Despite mounting skepticism, Vance has embraced his role in ending a war that a powerful faction of Trump’s base aggressively opposed from the start.

“I think there are some people who just want the bombing to continue, regardless of whether it accomplishes anything for Americans,” Vance told CBS News on Wednesday.

“I do think there are people,” he added, “who sometimes confuse the ends with the means.”

Because the preliminary Iran deal leaves key details unresolved, further negotiations virtually ensure the agreement remains in flux through the election season — potentially thrusting the talks into the center of the presidential primary campaign.

AI deepfakes bill advanced by Senate Judiciary Committee

CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — Unauthorized deepfake images generated by artificial intelligence would need to be removed from online platforms if they weren't licensed by the person portrayed, under a bill the Senate Judiciary Committee advanced on Thursday.

The bill, which was approved by voice vote, would give individuals an intellectual property right to their voice and visual likeness, despite concerns from some senators that the bill needs refining in order to avoid chilling speech.

The bill would also prohibit distributing unauthorized deepfakes or offering a product or service primarily designed to create them.

Dubbed the "Nurture Originals, Foster Art, and Keep Entertainment Safe" or NO FAKES Act, the bill is sponsored by Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., and has 15 co-sponsors, in-

cluding seven Democrats and eight Republicans. Sens. Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn., and Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., have both been particular proponents of the legislation.

The bill attempts to address the proliferation of deepfakes online without infringing on speech rights. To that end, it includes exemptions for parody, news and documentaries, among others. It also would create a system for counter notifications if an individual believes their content has been mistakenly removed online.

Coons said the bill is the product of extensive conversations with stakeholders and that the bill is a "real compromise."

"This bill is about protecting what's most personal to us, what makes us us: our voice and our likeness," Coons said. "Every American should have the right to decide how their voice and likeness will be used, especially when generative AI can create

highly realistic digital replicas that make it look like we said things we never said and did things we never did."

The legislation takes cues from a Tennessee law passed in 2024 that also created a right to an individual's voice and visual likeness. That law is referred to as the Ensuring Likeness Voice and Image Security or ELVIS Act, and includes a section intended to protect the rights not just of individuals but of music labels that have contracts with recording artists. The Coons bill contains a similar provision.

Blackburn, who is running for governor in Tennessee, has been a vocal advocate for AI regulation and online safety legislation, and she framed her support for the antideepfake bill as part of that work.

"I've always said that America needs one set of rules for AI, and NO FAKES is a critical component of that rulebook," Blackburn said.

Obama's presidential center opens in Chicago

Chicago Tribune

CHICAGO — The Obama Presidential Center was dedicated Thursday in Jackson Park to the sounds of celebration and aspiration, music and motivation to amplify Barack and Michelle Obama's message that it serve as a "beacon of hope" for democracy and help pave the way for a new generation of political leadership.

Surrounded by former Presidents Joe Biden, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, their spouses, former foreign leaders, federal, state and local politicians and a bevy of celebrities, Barack Obama urged Americans to look past the political turbulence and controversies of the Trump era that have fostered cynicism and to recapture the message of hope and change that catapulted him to the White House in 2008.

Obama said the exhibits inside the \$835 million center "are not meant to evoke nostalgia for some gauzy bygone era, some unattainable past we that we can dream about and say, 'Oh, we miss you, Barack.'"

"They're meant to remind us of who we can be, to remind us of what's possible, so we can forge ahead, clear-eyed and confident and do the work that still needs to be done," he said. "There is a new generation out there ready to write the next chapter of our story. We intend to help them do it and we ask that you join us."

During her speech, Michelle Obama paid tribute to her husband as "unflappable at every turn, always focused, always calm, always looking at the long view," as she called the center "a beacon of hope, a monument to our unshakable values, the ones my husband has exemplified his entire life — equality, empathy, honesty, inclusion, fairness."

Sanders unveils tax on AI companies

CQ-Roll Call

Newly released text offers details on legislation from progressive Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., for the federal government to take a 50% share in leading artificial intelligence companies.

The text of the as-yet unnumbered bill, released Thursday, would put a one-time tax on AI companies with more than \$200 million in annual sales, to be paid in stocks. The resulting sovereign wealth fund would then be used to pay dividends to taxpayers and to fund social priorities like education, health care and housing.

The bill, titled the "American A.I. Sovereign Wealth Fund Act," is unlikely to become law

under Republican control of Congress, but the idea of creating a system for the public to benefit from AI profits has supporters within the industry and on both sides of the political spectrum.

Speaking to reporters on Thursday, Sanders said that by establishing public control over voting shares in AI firms, the bill would give "the American people the ability to prevent AI developments which will negatively impact their lives."

Under the legislation, the fund would be overseen by a seven-member board appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate.

"The decisions they make will be accountable to the public,

which we do not have right now," Sanders said, adding that board members could work to stop decisions that could lead to widespread job loss.

The bill would require companies that operate AI-related and non-AI elements of business to implement "structural separation" so that the tax would only be on AI businesses. It also contains rules to prevent companies from "from moving offshore to avoid the tax," according to a summary.

The bill would authorize annual appropriations from the fund of 5% of the stocks' average market value. Sanders estimated that initial annual dividends would be about \$1,000 per person.

Cuba rushes to pass Chinese-style reforms

Miami Herald

With an unusual tone of urgency, Cuban leader Miguel Díaz-Canel defended Chinese-style reforms he said must be implemented without delay, including allowing foreign investment in the country's private sector and liberalizing the communist country's centrally planned economy.

In an urgent meeting on Wednesday, the Communist Party's Central Committee approved 176 measures that Díaz-Canel said were intended to address the country's severe economic crisis, resist U.S. sanctions and continue advancing in the "construction of socialism."

In a speech published Thursday on state media, Díaz-Canel expanded on the measures he teased in remarks to reporters last week that he described as an "emergency economic and social agenda."

"Reality imposes urgent and necessary changes upon us," he said. "And when the life of the people becomes so hard, the primary duty of the Communist Party and the revolutionary government is not to better explain the crisis, but to change whatever must be changed to overcome it."

The measures include reducing the size of the government, granting greater autonomy

to state enterprises, liberalizing import and export activities, expanding the scope of what private enterprises are allowed to do and opening the tourism sector to "all actors" in the economy, among others.

He also announced that the government will authorize direct foreign investment in the national private sector "with clear rules on ownership, repatriation, reinvestment and dispute resolution."

In 2022, the Biden administration authorized an American company to finance and invest in a private business in Cuba, but the Cuban government never approved it.

The Cuban government,

which carries a large debt with the Paris Club, Spanish companies and several other creditors, will also "pursue a debt-for-assets swap process" without permanently transferring ownership, Díaz-Canel said.

The Cuban leader said the measures had been inspired by reforms in China and Vietnam. Similarly to what happens in those two Asian nations ruled by communist governments, the Cuban government will expand the lease of farmland, but the state will continue owning the land.

Overall, he said, the government will give up central economic planning and assume a regulatory role instead.

Testosterone therapy warnings can be lifted

Bloomberg News

The Department of Health and Human Services wants to remove some of the stigma from testosterone treatment.

The agency, through the Food and Drug Administration, is asking manufacturers to take off warnings that have long appeared on hormone replacement therapy labels for older men whose testosterone levels decline naturally with age, it said in a statement Thursday.

The FDA a decade ago required drugmakers to study the impact of testosterone use on men at high risk of heart problems. They also had to note that the safety and efficacy of the products had not been established due to limited evidence. Now, those warnings are no longer needed, the agency said.

"By updating testosterone therapy labels to reflect current evidence, we are giving patients and physicians clearer information, supporting informed medical decisions and improving care for millions of American

men," said Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., a self-described testosterone user and proponent.

Testosterone replacement in men with low levels is known to improve sexual function, lean body mass, bone mineral density and mood, according to the Cleveland Clinic. It can also cause a range of side effects, including acne, fluid retention, breast enlargement, smaller testicles, urinary symptoms, elevated red blood cell counts and suppressed sperm production, which can impair fertility.

The recommendation follows a review of new clinical data and scientific evidence, the agency said. Researchers found testosterone had about the same effect on heart attacks, strokes and death from cardiovascular disease as a placebo in a study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. The trial, funded by AbbVie Inc. and others, did find a higher rate of atrial fibrillation, kidney damage and pulmonary embolism.

Starmer tests Cabinet's loyalty after foe's victory

Bloomberg News

Keir Starmer's refusal to cede power after Andy Burnham's election to parliament leaves the Labour Party in a standoff and the Cabinet considering if they should tell the prime minister his time is up.

A clear majority of the Cabinet think it is now inevitable Burnham will take over from Starmer as premier, according to people familiar with the thinking of more than 15 Cabinet ministers, who spoke to Bloomberg on condition of anonymity on Friday.

However, at the moment most remain unwilling to force the matter and are not ready to tell Starmer to set out a timetable for his departure, they said. The key question is how many shift over the coming days toward telling him they think he should go, they added.

The prime minister on Friday vowed to fight any leadership contest triggered by Burnham, insisting: "If there is one, I'll stand" and "I'm not going to walk away." He told a call with

Labour staffers: "Let's pull together as a party and a movement. The one thing we've got to avoid doing is plunging our party and our country into chaos by turning on each other."

Burnham, who won a parliamentary by-election in the early hours of Friday morning and is now able to launch a leadership challenge, does not intend to do so immediately, people familiar with his plans said. The scale of Burnham's victory over Nigel Farage's Reform U.K. in the Makerfield constituency was proof he was best placed to lead Labour against the populist right, they said, arguing the longer Starmer tries to resist the more damaging his exit will be.

The mayor of Greater Manchester since 2017, Burnham will stand down from that position and take his seat in Westminster on Monday but doesn't have any further interventions planned, they said, suggesting they want to let pressure on Starmer build. He wants to speak to Starmer in the coming days, they said.

Mexico is first to reach knockout stage

Team defeats South Korea 1-0 on home soil in World Cup competition

Associated Press

GUADALAJARA, Mexico — Mexico took advantage of a defensive blunder by South Korea to win 1-0 and become the first team to advance to the knockout stage of the World Cup on Thursday, sending fans onto the streets across the country to celebrate.

It marks a major triumph for a team that failed to get out of the group stage in 2022 and now has won twice on home soil in front of jubilant crowds. Mexico players celebrated at midfield and waved to the fans who cheered and sang from the packed stands at Estadio Akron.

As soon as the final whistle blew, the mariachis began to sing at the Ángel of Independence in Mexico City while thousands of people walked in from all directions.

Luis Romo scored in the 50th

minute after South Korea goalkeeper Kim Seung-gyu collided with defender Lee Gi-hyuk and dropped the ball inside the area. Romo easily found the open net after picking up the loose ball.

The South Koreans nearly equalized in the 87th minute when Mexico goalkeeper Raúl Rangel stopped a header from close range by Cho Gue-sung, then made an even better save of Yang Hyun-jun's attempt on the rebound, extending his right arm to keep the ball from crossing the line.

Mexico won Group A with six points in two matches, three more than South Korea and five more than the Czech Republic and South Africa, who drew 1-1 earlier Thursday in Atlanta.

The top two teams from each group move on to the knockout stage, along with the best eight third-place teams. A round of 32

is being played for the first time at the World Cup after the tournament was expanded to 48 teams.

"We've been doing very well," Mexico coach Javier Aguirre said. "It wasn't a great match, but I think that our opponent didn't let us do too much. But we still were able to score, on that mistake, in addition to another two or three opportunities."

Mexico opened with a 2-0 win over South Africa, while South Korea rallied for a 2-1 victory over the Czechs. Mexico closes group play on Wednesday against the Czech Republic in Mexico City, while South Korea takes on South Africa.

Thursday's match got off to a lackluster start, with neither team creating significant scoring opportunities and both squads getting loudly booed af-

ter the halftime whistle.

Mexico, ranked 13th, was eliminated in the group stage four years ago in Qatar. That followed seven straight eliminations in the round of 16.

South Korea star Son Heung-min had another disappointing game and was substituted out in the 57th.

The 33-year-old Son is looking to become South Korea's top goal scorer at the World Cup and the Asian player with the most goals in the tournament. The former Tottenham star, currently with Los Angeles FC, entered with three goals over three prior World Cups.

Kim kept Mexico from adding to the lead by coming up with a tough save off a close-range shot by Raúl Jiménez in the 75th.

The South Koreans pressed through the end but fell short.

David's hat trick propels Canada to its first cup win

Associated Press

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — While Canada made World Cup history against Qatar, its celebration was tempered by concern for an injured teammate.

Jonathan David scored three goals and Canada won its first World Cup match while all but securing a spot in the knockout round with a 6-0 victory over Qatar on Thursday.

Qatar was reduced to nine players because of red cards in the chaotic match. Assim Madibo was handed a red early in the second half after a tackle on Is-

maël Koné, who was stretched off with a broken left leg. Homan Ahmed was sent off in the first half for a challenge on Tajon Buchanan.

With the outburst of scoring, Canada tripled its overall World Cup goal total. Cyle Larin scored in the Canadians' opening draw against Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Alphonso Davies scored four years ago in a loss to Croatia in Qatar, where Canada also got on the board with an own goal by Morocco. The Canadians were shut out three times in the 1986 World Cup.

"No one will forget this, and

no Canadian will forget this day," said coach Jesse Marsch, who held up six fingers as he walked off the field. "It's an incredibly seminal moment for everyone to understand that there's talent in this country, that there's mentality, that there's desire, that there's a lot of things that make this country special."

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney was among the 52,497 fans in attendance after missing the game in Toronto last week because of the G7 summit in France.

"It was amazing. After every

goal it got louder and louder," David said. "It gave us motivation to get the next goal and the next goal."

Canada's triumph was marred by its anguish over Koné's injury. Teammates surrounded him in concern after he was tackled from behind and crumpled to the pitch with his lower left leg bent at a gruesome-looking angle. Madibo was clearly distraught before he was ejected.

Koné was taken to a hospital, where he was preparing for surgery. Marsch confirmed the player's leg was broken.

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Switzerland rebounds after hydration break

Associated Press

INGLEWOOD, Calif. — Some teams at this year's World Cup have blamed FIFA's new hydration breaks for killing momentum.

Switzerland used the break to seize it.

Coach Murat Yakin said he timed a triple substitution of speedy players for the second-half pause Thursday, betting that plucky Bosnia-Herzegovina couldn't handle an abrupt change of pace in what had been a nervy, scoreless match.

Johan Manzambi and Rubén Vargas made their coach look awfully clever while they led a spectacular barrage of goals that put the Swiss in control of the game and atop their group.

Manzambi scored his first World Cup goal on an outstanding volley in the 74th minute, and Switzerland erupted late for a 4-1 victory over Bosnia.

Despite controlling possession deep into the second half, Switzerland couldn't break through against the Dragons

until Yakin used the FIFA-mandated pause to turbo-charge its attack with the 20-year-old Manzambi and the dynamic Vargas.

Both substitutes immediately altered the tempo, and both played roles in multiple goals while Bosnia went down to 10 men.

"It was very important that after the second hydration break, we would change a few things, because then the opponent can't react immediately," Yakin said through an interpreter. "Maybe that was the edge we had. We brought in very fast players, and our opponent couldn't run (with them), and it opened up gaps on the edge. That was my strategy. I waited until the break."

Vargas scored in the 84th minute shortly after Tarik Muharemovic was sent off for a dangerous tackle. Manzambi scored again in the 90th on a pass from Vargas, and captain Granit Xhaka converted from the penalty spot with the final

kick of the game in stoppage time.

Switzerland opened the World Cup with a disappointing 1-1 draw with Qatar last week, stoking concern about the team's mental state. The Swiss then struggled to get loose from the Dragons, who were unbeaten in their past nine competitive matches.

Backed by tens of thousands of raucous fans in the Los Angeles area, Bosnia capably hung with Switzerland into the second half — until the hydration break led to a moment of brilliance from Manzambi, a 20-year-old Geneva native who plays for German club Freiburg.

"This is probably the best moment of my career so far," Manzambi said. "We knew we didn't start the match in the best way, but we had to be patient. We know we're a good team, and we showed it."

Three minutes after Manzambi replaced standout winger Dan Ndoye, he jumped and

connected perfectly on Amar Memic's attempted clearing header. The volley set off a wild celebration in the nervous Swiss sections of SoFi Stadium.

"He's a boy who learned how to play football on the streets, but on defense he also has a lot of discipline," Yakin said. "He still needs to learn how to be more structured, but we are making progress. We try to give him a lot of freedom to play, and he handles it very well."

Substitute Ermin Mahmic scored in second-half injury time for Bosnia, which still has a legitimate chance of reaching the knockout stage of only its second World Cup. Mahmic's vicious goal in traffic salvaged some good feeling before a decisive showdown with Qatar next week.

Czechia ties S. Africa

Czechia tied South Africa, 1-1, in a Group A match played Thursday in Atlanta, according to the FIFA website.

Ticket buyers left stranded as resales fall through

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Bina Ramroop broke down in tears when she realized she wasn't going to get the World Cup tickets she had bought for her grandson's 13th birthday.

As thousands poured into Atlanta Stadium on Monday to see Spain face Cape Verde in what turned out to be a remarkable scoreless draw, Ramroop stood outside, increasingly stressed as she went back and forth for hours between StubHub representatives on the phone and FIFA representatives in the ticket booth. Each blamed the other.

No one could figure out why the tickets Ramroop bought months ago on StubHub for \$485 apiece couldn't be transferred from the original seller to the FIFA ticketing app. Stub-

Hub offered her a refund and, as Ramroop heard the crowd roar for the start of the match, she knew she had no choice but to give up and take the offer.

"I didn't want a refund, I didn't want my money back," Ramroop said. "I wanted to go to the game."

The World Cup has delivered thrills on the pitch, but fans have flooded social media with complaints about tickets that never arrived, orders that were canceled at the last minute and hours they spent trying to sort out problems between FIFA's ticketing system and outside resale platforms.

The vast majority seem to be about industry titan StubHub, but people who bought through competitors such as SeatGeek and Vivid Seats have also re-

ported issues. Interviews with fans and industry experts show that some cases stem from technical glitches in the transfer process, while others could involve sellers who never had tickets to deliver in the first place, though StubHub denies such sales happen on its platform.

FIFA has urged fans to buy resale tickets through its own marketplace, where it slaps a 30% surcharge on every resold ticket — 15% each from the buyer and seller. But many fans bought through other resale sites, either out of habit or because those sites have lower prices or are easier to navigate.

StubHub blamed FIFA for the transfer problems. In a statement, it said FIFA has "poor technology infrastruc-

ture," enacted last-minute transfer restrictions and didn't launch its new ticketing app until a few weeks before the tournament. The company also called out organizers that "take anti-competitive actions" that limit where fans can buy and sell tickets.

Asked about the technical issues, FIFA on Wednesday reiterated that sales through its official site are guaranteed to go through.

Industry observers say the problems appear to stem from more than one cause. For some, it may indeed be technical glitches — an issue that StubHub says is "very, very rare" and one that it is hard at work to solve. For others, they say it's likely a more longstanding scourge: speculative sellers.

Valenzuela hits go-ahead double for Jays

Associated Press

BOSTON — Brandon Valenzuela hit a go-ahead RBI double off Aroldis Chapman with two outs in the ninth inning and the Toronto Blue Jays completed a three-game sweep of the Boston Red Sox with a 4-3 win Thursday.

Valenzuela's tiebreaking hit clanked off the Green Monster and came after Red Sox catcher Connor Wong misplayed a pop-up in foul territory that would have been the final out of the ninth.

Vladimir Guerrero Jr. and Nathan Lukes homered for Toronto, which has taken five of six matchups against Boston this season.

Trailing 3-1, the Red Sox tied it in the eighth on back-to-back homers by Isiah Kiner-Falefa and Caleb Durbin.

Tommy Nance (1-2) picked up the win after recording the final two outs in the eighth and Mason Fluharty pitched a perfect ninth for his first save of the season.

Chapman (0-2) took the loss as Boston fell to 12-25 at Fenway Park and 6-17 against AL East teams this season.

Guardians 4, Brewers 2: Travis Bazzana hit a go-ahead solo homer in the seventh inning, Parker Messick pitched six effective innings and Cleveland beat Milwaukee.

David Fry and Kyle Manzardo also homered for the Guardians, who lost the first two games of the series.

Messick (7-3) held the Brewers to two runs and four hits while striking out nine in his 96-pitch outing. Cade Smith got four outs for his 24th save in 26 opportunities.

Bazzana's towering home run off Grant Anderson (1-3) in the seventh gave the Guardians a 3-2 lead. Cleveland tacked on a run in the inning on Drew Rom's bases-loaded wild pitch.

The Brewers loaded the bases with two outs in the seventh, but Colin Holderman retired An-

drew Vaughn, who worked a full count, to end the inning on a grounder. Milwaukee loaded the bases again in the eighth with two outs before Smith struck out Christian Yelich.

Twins 9, Rangers 3: Brooks Lee hit a three-run homer as Minnesota scored multiple runs in the first inning for the third consecutive game, and the Twins went on to complete a series sweep of Texas with a win.

Lee's 12th homer capped a four-run first off Jack Leiter (3-7). Trevor Larnach made it 6-0 in the fourth with a two-run shot to straightaway center that just cleared the extended glove of leaping Alejandro Osuna. Larnach's third hit was an RBI single in the fifth, and Ryan Kriedler hit a two-run homer in the eighth.

Joe Ryan (5-3) struck out seven but needed 97 pitches to get through five scoreless innings while allowing three singles. Leiter was done after the fourth, and has given up 17 runs while losing three starts in a row.

The Twins never trailed in the three-game sweep that extended their winning streak to four, matching their longest this season.

Mariners 3, Orioles 0: Bryan Woo pitched seven shutout innings, Colt Emerson drove in two of Seattle's three first-inning runs and the Mariners beat Baltimore.

Woo (6-5), who pitched into the eighth inning for the first time this season, allowed just three hits and matched his season high with nine strikeouts. He walked one and hasn't allowed a run in his past four home starts.

It was a solid bounce-back outing for Woo, who gave up a career-high seven runs in five innings in a 7-5 loss at Baltimore on June 11.

Eduard Bazzardo kept the Orioles off the scoreboard in the eighth after their first two runners reached against Woo. Andres Munoz got three outs for

his 12th save.

Mets 6, Phillies 4: Juan Soto hit two solo homers and made a sliding catch in the left-field corner to rob Bryce Harper of a run-scoring hit in New York's defeat of Philadelphia.

Pinch-hitter Eric Wagan provided the tiebreaking single with two outs in the seventh inning, and Marcus Semien followed with a two-run triple off reliever Jose Alvarado (3-2).

Soto took Phillies starter Aaron Nola deep in his first two at-bats to give him 16 homers this season. It was the 30th multi-homer game of his career. Soto also took away an extra-base hit from Harper when he lunged and slid to catch a ball on the warning track in the third.

Huascar Brazobán (4-1) earned the win in relief of starter Sean Manaea, and Devin Williams worked the ninth for his 11th save.

White Sox 5, Yankees 1: Andrew Benintendi launched a pinch-hit grand slam off Camilo Doval in the eighth inning and Chicago ended a nine-game losing streak at Yankee Stadium with a victory over New York.

Benintendi batted for Randal Grichuk and was Chicago's third pinch hitter of the inning. He snapped a 1-all tie by driving Doval's first pitch, a 100 mph sinker, into the right-center seats.

It was the fourth career slam for Benintendi, who played 33 games for the Yankees in 2022, and his second pinch-hit homer.

Benintendi went deep after pinch-hitter Sam Antonacci doubled off Fernando Cruz (4-2). Tim Hill plunked pinch-hitter Jacob Gonzalez and Tristan Peters with pitches before getting an out.

The White Sox won in the Bronx for the first time since June 8, 2023. Chicago was outscored 22-7 in the first two games of the three-game series and 58-18 during its skid in the Bronx.

Royals 14, Cardinals 6: Bobby Witt Jr. hit the first of Kansas City's three home runs before leaving with a sore right knee, and the Royals smacked a club-record five doubles in a six-run second inning on the way to a victory over the St. Louis.

Jac Caglianone and Salvador Perez also went deep for the Royals, who set season highs for runs and hits (17). Each of the first eight batters in the starting lineup had at least one RBI.

Witt homered in the first inning and delivered an RBI single in the second. But he was lifted for a pinch hitter in the fourth after making a sliding play at shortstop in the top of the inning.

Kansas City took a 7-2 lead in the second on the strength of five doubles. Carter Jensen, Isaac Collins, Lane Thomas and Starling Marte each had an RBI double. Perez led off with a two-bagger.

Royals starter Noah Cameron (4-4) threw 108 pitches in five innings. He gave up four runs, three earned, and eight hits.

Athletics 5, Angels 0: Gage Jump gave up one hit over seven sparkling innings, and Shea Langeliers and Tyler Soderstrom hit back-to-back homers in a five-run first that boosted the Athletics past Los Angeles.

The first six A's batters got hits off Ryan Johnson, recalled from Double-A Rocket City before the game.

Zack Gelof singled leading off to extend his hitting streak to 22 games, the longest current run in the majors, and Nick Kurtz doubled. Langeliers drove a three-run shot 430 feet to center field for his 19th homer this season, and Soderstrom followed with his 13th.

Jacob Wilson and Jonah Heim singled before Johnson (0-2) got his first out of the game on Carlos Cortes' fly to center that advanced Wilson to third base. A sacrifice fly by Henry Bolte made it 5-0.

Clark has lowest opening round at US Open

Associated Press

SOUTHAMPTON, N.Y. — Wyndham Clark had two good looks at history Friday morning and settled for the lowest opening round in a U.S. Open at Shinnecock Hills, a 6-under 64 that gave him a two-shot lead in a first round that took some 26 hours to complete.

Dustin Johnson, in the final year of his U.S. Open exemption from winning at Oakmont in 2016, atoned for a double bogey late Thursday with birdies on two of his last three holes and a superb par save for a 66, keeping him in touch with Clark.

Gary Woodland — playing alongside Clark and Johnson — and Matt Fitzpatrick were at 67. Among those another shot back was Jon Rahm, who missed two good chances Friday morning but still managed a 68 without a bogey on his card.

The scores were surprisingly low for Shinnecock Hills, where only three players in the previous four U.S. Opens here have finished under par in the last 40 years. But the real surprise was fog at the start of the championship, which led to a two-hour delay.

That meant Clark and Johnson had the advantage of playing Thursday evening in far less wind. The USGA made sure Shinnecock was kind and gentle to account for gusts that consistently topped 30 mph. Without that wind late in the day, players could take advantage.

And they did.

Clark had a birdie-birdie-eagle stretch Thursday that put him at 6 under. Johnson ran off four straight birdies until his blunder on No. 6, when he three-putted from 6 feet for double bogey.

They returned early Friday, along with 48 other players, to complete the first round. Clark faced Nos. 8 and 9, both with a favorable wind. Clark narrowly missed an 18-foot birdie putt on the eighth, and one from about 30 feet on the ninth.

The Shinnecock record is 63, set by Tommy Fleetwood in the final round of 2018 after the USGA soaked the course to make up for a third round that dried out and got out of control. The U.S. Open record is 62 by Xander Schauffele and Rickie Fowler at Los Angeles Country Club in 2023.

Clark was more than pleased with a 64. The lowest opening round at Shinnecock had been 66, by three players in 2004 and one player in 1995.

Rory McIlroy faced the worst of the wind on Thursday and thought he did well to post a 69,

Scottie Scheffler was in the same wave and had to rely heavily on his short game to salvage a 72.

Sam Stevens had the low round from those who faced the toughest wind at 68. He was joined later by Rahm and a group that included Ryder Cowan, who just finished his junior year at Oklahoma. Another Sooner alum, Max McGreevy, also was at 68.

Clark and Johnson had enough time to hit a few shots on the driving range before heading right back out for the second round.

At stake Friday was the 36-hole cut for the top 60 and ties. Scheffler was narrowly inside, but still looking toward trying to stay in range of the lead as he chases the one major keeping him from the career Grand Slam.

MLB owners propose banning high school signings

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Baseball owners proposed banning high school players from signing with major league teams, raising the age for international amateurs and slashing the money spent on signing bonuses in negotiations Thursday for a new collective bargaining agreement.

The amateur draft for players residing in the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico would be cut from 20 rounds to 12 beginning in 2027 under the proposal Major League Baseball made during a bargaining session with the players' association. An identical 12-round draft would be started for international prospects, a proposal the union has rejected in the past.

Starting in 2028, a prospect for the amateur draft would have to be at least 20 years old by the Sept. 1 of his signing year and two years removed from the graduating year of his high

school class — a restriction that also would eliminate players who completed their first year of junior college.

Since the amateur draft started in 1965, high schoolers have been eligible along with college players who are in or have just finished their junior years.

Raising signing ages would likely lead to players being older when they become eligible for free agency, which currently requires six years of major league service.

MLB cited increased revenue in college baseball as reasoning. In addition, MLB said 75% of high schoolers signed from 2012-19 did not reach the major leagues.

“Expanded scholarships, NIL opportunities, revenue sharing and significant investments in facilities and player development have made college baseball an increasingly important pathway that is producing major league-ready talent at an ac-

celerated rate,” MLB said in a statement. “By creating a draft system centered around college-aged players and making most college players eligible one year earlier, more players will benefit from both a college education and an elite development environment while reaching professional baseball — and ultimately the major leagues — more quickly.”

The players' association claimed the plan would decrease compensation by \$1 billion over five years, including \$400 million from this year to 2027.

“MLB made another set of proposals that are flat-out bad for baseball, ones that would cripple the next generation of players and damage the future of our game,” the union said in a statement.

ACC commissioner Jim Phillips supported keeping more prospects in college longer. He said in a statement that im-

provements in facilities, technology and scholarships “are creating more opportunities for student-athletes and providing additional pathways to develop at the collegiate level before taking the next step to the professional ranks.”

MLB said it will not seek to reduce the 120 minor league teams in the top four levels when it negotiates new professional development licenses in 2030 to replace expiring 10-year deals. It would cap bonuses for undrafted players at \$10,000 — Middle Tennessee two-way player Trace Phillips was bypassed in the draft last July and signed with Tampa Bay for \$629,200.

For international amateurs, the age to sign would be raised to 18 on the Sept. 1 of their signing year, up from 17.

Each separate draft would have \$200 million in signing pools in 2027. There would be hard caps for each draft.