

News in brief

◆ **Damage from riots**

sparked by the police killing of a teenager in France has resulted in a \$715 million insurance bill, an industry body said Tuesday. The government battled days of unrest after a police officer shot dead 17-year-old Nahel M. during a traffic stop in a Paris suburb on June 27. Nahel had Algerian roots, and the killing rekindled long-standing accusations of systemic racism in France. There have been 11,300 claims linked to the riots, said the head of the France Assureurs federation Florence Lustman -- who put the bill at 650 million euros. Last week, Lustman gave a figure of at least 280 million euros, stressing that many claims had yet to be made. Around a third of the damage being claimed for took place on local authority property, France Assureurs said. Earlier this month, Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire urged insurers to extend the deadline for claims.



France riot damage racks up \$700 mn insurance bill: industry body

◆ **More than 3 million people** have now fled their homes in Sudan due to the nearly three-month-old conflict between rival armed forces, the United Nations said yesterday.

Figures from the UN's International Organization for Migration (IOM) showed that more than 2.4 million people were now displaced within Sudan, while nearly 724,000 have escaped across the country's borders. The fighting in Sudan broke out on April 15. The army, led by Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, has been battling the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces commanded by his former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, after the two fell out in a power struggle. "We have surpassed the 3 million figure of people displaced due to the conflict in Sudan," IOM spokeswoman Safa Msehli told AFP.

◆ **Companies and individuals** polluting Britain's rivers and other ecosystems will be liable for unlimited fines, the UK government announced yesterday.

with the nation's water firms in particular under fire. Environment Secretary Therese Coffey in April announced plans to allow unlimited fines for polluting water companies but the policy has since been expanded to include other parties such as energy and waste operators. The current maximum fine stands at £250,000 (\$325,000), while the change allows environmental regulators to avoid lengthy criminal prosecutions. "Polluters must always pay," Conservative party MP Coffey said in a statement. "It builds on action being taken right across government to stand up for our environment -- tackling pollution, protecting delicate ecosystems and enhancing nature," she added. The move comes amid a long-running scandal over privatised water firms pumping raw sewage into waterways.

Polluting firms to face unlimited fines: UK govt



CURIOSER & CURIOSER

France to pay bonus for shoe, clothes repairs to cut waste



Representative picture

AFP | Paris

From October, France will pay a bonus to encourage people to have their clothes and shoes repaired rather than throwing them away, the government said.

The move aims to cut down on the 700,000 tonnes of clothes thrown away by French people each year, two-thirds of which ends up in landfills.

"From October, consumers will be able to be supported in the repair of their clothes and shoes," secretary of state for ecology Berangere Couillard said Tuesday during a visit to the Paris premises of La Caserne, a hub for responsible fashion.

She invited "all sewing workshops and shoemakers to join the system", to be labelled by eco- organisation Refashion.

Under the scheme, customers will be able to claim seven euros (\$7.7) for mending a heel

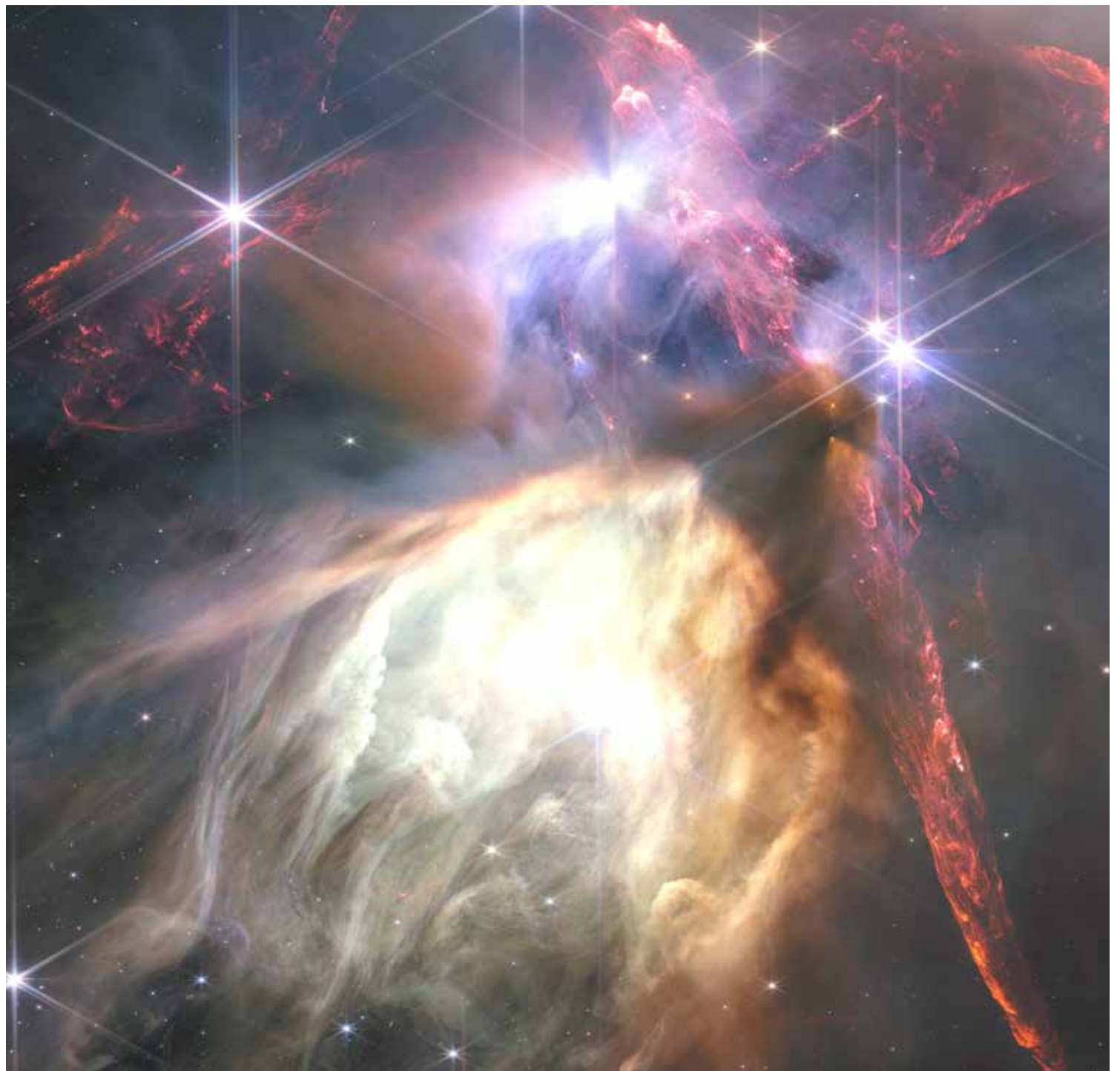
and 10-25 euros for clothing repairs from a 154 million euro fund set up to cover 2023-2028.

In France, 3.3 billion pieces of clothing, shoes and household linen were put on the market in 2022, according to Refashion, which has been instructed by the government to support a more sustainable industry.

"The goal is to support those who do the repairs," Couillard said, referring to sewing workshops but also those brands which offer repair services.

Modelled after the household appliance repair bonus, the aid is part of a vast reform of the textile sector, one of the most polluting industries on the planet, initiated by the French government since the end of 2022. Its objectives include forcing brands to have more traceability and to financially support organisations specialising in reusing and recycling clothing.

NASA celebrates Webb telescope anniversary with stellar birth



A small star-forming region in the Rho Ophiuchi cloud complex, the closest star-forming region to Earth.

● **The picture is of the Rho Ophiuchi cloud complex**

● **Webb's image shows around 50 young stars, of similar mass to our Sun or smaller**

AFP | Washington

Jets of red gas bursting into the cosmos, and a glowing cave of dust: NASA marked a year of discovery by the James Webb Space Telescope Wednesday with a spectacular new image of Sun-like stars being born.

The picture is of the Rho Ophiuchi cloud complex, the nearest stellar nursery to Earth, whose proximity at 390 light-years allows for a crisp close-up by the most powerful orbital observatory ever built. "In just one year,

the James Webb Space Telescope has transformed humanity's view of the cosmos, peering into dust clouds and seeing light from far-away corners of the universe for the very first time," said NASA Administrator Bill Nelson.

"Every new image is a new discovery, empowering scientists around the globe to ask and answer questions they once could never dream of."

Webb's image shows around 50 young stars, of similar mass to our Sun or smaller. Some have the signature shadows of circumstellar disks -- a sign that planets may eventually form around them.

Huge jets of hydrogen appear horizontally in the upper third of the image, and vertically on the right. "These occur when a star first bursts through its natal envelope of cosmic dust, shooting out a pair of opposing jets into space like a newborn first stretching her arms out into the world," the us space agency said in a statement. "At the bottom of the image,

you can see a young star that's energetic enough that it's blowing a bubble in the cloud of dust and gas from which it was born," Christine Chen, an astronomer at the Space Telescope Science Institute, which operates Webb, told AFP.

It does so through a combination of its light and a stellar wind linked to it, she added.



Webb was launched in December 2021 from French Guiana, on a 1.5 million kilometer (nearly one million mile) voyage to a region called the second Lagrange point.

Interstellar space is filled with gas and dust, which in turn serves as the raw material for new stars and planets.

"Webb's image of Rho Ophiuchi allows us to witness a very brief period in the stellar life cycle with new clarity. Our own Sun experienced a phase like this, long ago, and now we have the technology to see the beginning of another star's story," said Webb project scientist Klaus Pontoppidan. Webb boasts a primary mirror measuring more than 21 feet (6.5 meters) that is made up of 18 hexagonal, gold-coated segments, as well as a five-layer sunshield the size of a tennis court. Unlike its predecessor Hubble, it operates primarily in the infrared spectrum, allowing it to look back nearer towards the start of time, and to better penetrate dust clouds where stars and planetary systems are being formed today. Webb has enough fuel for a 20-year mission, promising a new era of astronomy.

Iran summons Russian envoy over

AFP | Tehran

Iran yesterday summoned the Russian ambassador in Tehran to protest a recent statement by Gulf countries and Moscow on three islands controlled by Iran but claimed by the United Arab Emirates.

On Monday, foreign ministers from



An aerial view of Abu Musa island

the Gulf Cooperation Council and Russia held talks and called for "a peaceful solution" to the issue of the Greater and Lesser Tunb islands and Abu Musa.

They urged a resolution through "bilateral negotiations or the International Court of Justice, in accordance with the rules of international law and the United Nations Charter".

The three straits in the Gulf near Strait of Horm fifth of world oil for years been a between tl

On Wednesday industry said it sun