

Gold prices cool near record peak as dollar holds footing

GOLD PRICES cooled near a record-peak hit in the previous session on Tuesday as the dollar held ground, but stayed afloat at the \$2,400 level on support from safe-haven interest and prospects of US interest rates easing this year.

Spot gold fell 0.2% to \$2,420.49 per ounce by 1756 GMT, as the US dollar index edged up, making bullion more expensive for other currency holders.

US gold futures settled 0.5% lower to \$2,425.90.

As gold scaled a record high of \$2,449.89 on Monday, “the general picture has not really changed (since March)... which is just the backdrop of very attractive global macroeconomic and geopolitical environment for gold,” said Nikos Kavalis, managing director at Metals Focus.

Concerns about the rapidly rising US government debt as the US Federal Reserve tries to make for a soft landing are drivers for some investors.

Recent data suggested that US inflation resumed its downward trend, however several Fed policy makers remained cautious on cutting rates too soon but ruled out the need for a hike.

Elsewhere in China, where efforts are being made to stabilize its crisis-hit property sector, investors are inclined to invest in safe-haven gold.

China itself, officially, has loaded up bullion in the first quarter of 2024.

“Gold’s key role is to offset risk, whether financial, geopolitical or volatility. That is not new, but sentiment has now realized,” StoneX analyst Rhona O’Connell said.

Global gold physically-backed gold exchange-traded funds saw net inflows of \$1 billion last week — the largest weekly inflow since October 2023, according to the World Gold Council. — **Reuters**

SPOT PRICES

TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2024

METAL

PALLADIUM free \$/troy oz	1,032.50
PALLADIUM JMI base, \$/troy oz	1,039.00
PLATINUM free \$/troy oz	1,056.05
PLATINUM JMI base \$/troy oz	1,061.00
KRUGGERAND, fob \$/troy oz	2,428.00
IRIDIUM, whs rot, \$/troy oz	4,790.00
RHODIUM, whs rot, \$/troy oz	4,715.00

GRAINS (May 16, 2024)

(FOB Bangkok basis at every Thursday)	
FRAGRANT (100%) 1st Class, \$/ton	940.00
FRAGRANT (100%) 2nd Class, \$/ton	912.00
RICE (5%) White Thai- \$/ton	649.00
RICE (10%) White Thai- \$/ton	647.00
RICE (15%) White Thai- \$/ton	629.00
RICE (25%) White Thai- \$/ton (Super)	629.00
BROKER RICE A-1 Super \$/ton	480.00

FOOD

COCOA ICCO Dty (SDR/mt)	5,239.87
COCOA ICCO \$/mt	6,944.92
COFFEE ICA comp 2001 cts/lb	204.04
SUGAR ISA FOB Daily Price, Carib. port cts/lb	18.81
SUGAR ISA 15-day ave.	19.20

LIFFE COFFEE

New Robusta 10 MT - \$/ton

	High	Low	Sett	Psett
July	3,745	3,494	3,734	3,499
Sept.	3,684	3,430	3,673	3,436
Jan.	3,503	3,264	3,495	3,271
Mar.	3,416	3,237	3,405	3,189

LIFFE COCOA

(Ldn)-10 MT-\$/ton

	High	Low	Sett	Psett
July	6,183	5,730	6,111	5,988
Sept.	5,845	5,422	5,772	5,653
Mar.	4,692	4,387	4,597	4,565
May	4,479	4,200	4,390	4,353

COCONUT

MANILA COPRA (based on 6% moisture)	
Peso/100kg	Buyer/Seller
Lag/Qzn/Luc 24	3,550.00/3,600.00
Philippine Coconut Oil - Crude	
CIF NY/NOLA	69.50
FOB RAIL/NOLA	74.50
COCONUT OIL (PHIL/IDN), \$ per ton	
CIF Europe	
May/June'24	0.00/1,195.00
June/July'24	0.00/1,195.00

LONDON METAL EXCHANGE

LME FINAL CLOSING PRICES, US\$/MT

3 MOS.

ALUMINUM H.G.	2,725.50
ALUMINUM Alloy	1,820.00
COPPER	10,859.00
LEAD	2,336.50
NICKEL	21,304.00
TIN	34,324.00
ZINC	3,139.50

Oil falls 1% on sticky US inflation, dampened geopolitical risk

HOUSTON — Oil prices settled 1% lower on Tuesday as lingering US inflation looked likely to keep interest rates higher for longer, weighing on fuel demand.

Brent crude futures settled down 83 cents or 1% to \$82.88 a barrel. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures for June, which expired on Tuesday, slipped by 54 cents or 0.7% to \$79.26.

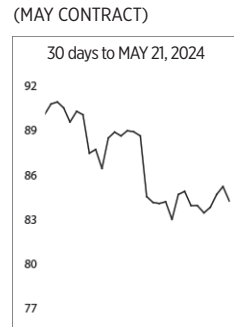
The more active July contract settled down 64 cents at \$78.66.

Higher borrowing costs can slow economic growth and pressure oil demand.

“The market is very focused on gasoline demand in the US because there are signs that consumers are cutting back because of inflation. Unless that turns around, the market is suggesting things could be a little bleak,” said Phil Flynn, an analyst at Price Futures Group.

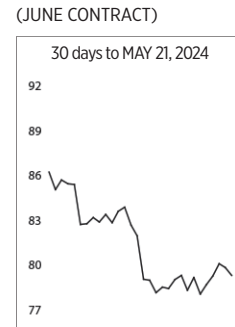
Ahead of this weekend’s Memorial Day holiday, which kicks off the US peak summer driving season, retail gasoline prices fell for the fourth consecutive week to \$3.58 per gallon on Monday, the Energy Information Administration (EIA) said in its gasoline and diesel fuel update.

ASIA-DUBAI (MAY CONTRACT)



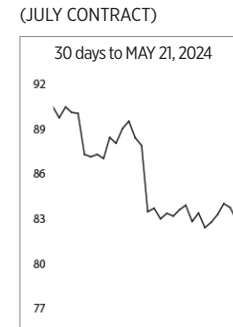
Day	15	16	17	20	21
\$/bbl	83.40	83.78	84.65	85.19	84.20
Average (May 1-21)	\$84.16				
Average (April 1-30)	\$89.17				

NEW YORK-WTI (JUNE CONTRACT)



Day	15	16	17	20	21
\$/bbl	78.63	79.23	80.06	79.80	79.26
Average (May 1-21)	\$78.90				
Average (April 1-30)	\$84.39				

LONDON-BRENT (JULY CONTRACT)



Day	15	16	17	20	21
\$/bbl	82.75	83.27	83.98	83.71	82.88
Average (May 1-21)	\$83.28				
Average (April 1-30)	\$89.00				

Source: REUTERS

The US will sell the nearly one million barrels of gasoline in a reserve in northeastern states, with bids due on May 28, the Department of Energy said on Tuesday.

US diesel prices have also slipped, according to the EIA, down 5.9 cents on the week on Monday, at \$3.89 per gallon. Diesel is a key refined product for both the industrial sector and transport.

Investors are awaiting minutes from the Fed’s last policy meeting due on Wednesday, as well as weekly US oil inventory data from the EIA, also due on Wednesday.

“There is nothing in the market right now that is pushing prices higher. If we see a little bit of a stock draw tomorrow that may help push prices back up into the \$78.50-\$80 per barrel range,” said Tim Snyder, economist at Matador Economics.

US crude oil and gasoline inventories rose last week, while distillates fell, according to market sources citing American Petroleum Institute (API) figures on Tuesday.

The API figures showed crude stocks were up by 2.48 million barrels in the week ended May 17, the sources said on condition of

Stocks end slightly higher after Fed comments

NEWYORK — US stocks closed with slight gains on Tuesday, sending the S&P 500 and Nasdaq to record levels, as investors assessed the latest comments from US Federal Reserve officials for clues on the timing of a rate cut while quarterly earnings from Nvidia drew closer.

Nvidia, Wall Street’s third-largest firm by market capitalization, will report results after the closing bell on Wednesday in what is likely to be a significant market catalyst and will test whether the outsized rally in AI-related stocks can be sustained.

Nvidia’s options are primed for an 8.7% swing, or \$200 billion in market cap, in either

direction by Friday, according to data from options analytics firm Trade Alert. The chipmaker’s shares were up 0.64% on Tuesday and are up about 93% on the year, after surging nearly 240% in 2023.

Investors also looked toward minutes from the Fed’s most recent policy meeting, due on Wednesday, after multiple Fed officials on Tuesday reinforced the stance that it would be best for the central bank to exercise patience before starting to cut interest rates.

“Investors are sort of just sitting on their hands for today because there are two important things that will be coming out tomorrow,

Fed minutes combined with Nvidia earnings, so I don’t think people want to make any big bets ahead of that,” said Sam Stovall, chief investment strategist of CFRA Research in New York.

He said the Fed was “still very much data-dependent and as a result, they’re going to do what the data tells them to do and that’s pretty much it, but Wall Street is going to continue to forecast, ourselves included, that the Fed will start to cut rates in September.”

Markets are currently pricing in a 64.8% chance for a cut of at least 25 basis points at the central bank’s September meeting, according to CME’s FedWatch Tool. — **Reuters**

Argentina’s Milei lays out blueprint towards dollarizing economy

PRESIDENT JAVIER MILEI reaffirmed his campaign promise to dollarize Argentina in the clearest articulation yet of his government’s economic blueprint.

Mr. Milei said that after clearing the central bank’s balance sheet by paying down its local liabilities and reforming the financial system, Argentina would move toward a free competition of currencies, which means the peso and the US dollar would both become legal tender. The peso, at that point, would be set at a “flexible” exchange rate.

The central bank would then stop printing pesos, allowing the dollar — which he expects will become the dominant currency — to replace it. The monetary authority holds a tight grip on the peso, only allowing

it to devalue 2% a month despite monthly inflation four times that level — a crawling peg the government said it intends to hold.

“The peso will become like a museum piece and when it becomes very rare, what do you think we will do?” Mr. Milei said in a keynote speech at a business event in Buenos Aires Tuesday evening. “We will dollarize and that way the peso will disappear.”

Since taking office Dec. 10 on the promise to crush triple-digit annual inflation and dollarize the economy, Mr. Milei has moved swiftly to shrink the central bank’s liabilities with the end goal of shuttering the monetary authority. He cut borrowing rates six times already, down to 40% last week from 133% at the start of his term.

Mr. Milei’s economic team, led by Minister Luis Caputo, has moved to make treasury notes more attractive than central bank debt to clear away the monetary authority’s ballooning obligations. With the successive rate cuts, one-third of the debt held in one-day notes known as “pases” in the central bank migrated toward the treasury, Mr. Milei said Tuesday. Once all the debt is cleared, capital controls will be removed and the currencies will compete.

Mr. Milei said he could not put a date on the lifting of capital controls because that would be determined by the market. In a speech at the same conference before Mr. Milei spoke, Mr. Caputo said it was “inappropriate” to lift controls now. — **Bloomberg**

China may raise tariffs on some US and EU cars, lobby group says

CHINA may consider raising temporary tariffs on imported cars with large engines to a maximum of 25%, a Chinese trade lobby group said.

The China Chamber of Commerce to the European Union (EU) said the potential move carries implications for European and US carmakers, and comes after the Biden administration raised tariffs on Chinese electric cars to 100% and as the EU investigates alleged unfair advantages provided to Chinese automakers by government subsidies, according to a statement posted on X.

The commerce chamber referred to an interview published by Chinese state newspaper *Global Times* on Tuesday, in which Liu Bin, the chief expert at the China Automotive Technology & Research Center, called for increasing the temporary tariff rate on imported cars with engines larger than 2.5 liters.

World Trade Organization rules would allow setting a tariff on imported vehicles up to a maximum of 25%, the report cited Liu as saying.

Chinese electric vehicles (EVs) are under the spotlight in the EU and US, as China controls a majority of the battery supply chain and produces more EVs than anywhere else in the world. With a price war and slowing economy at home, Chinese automakers are expanding overseas, sparking allegations the country is exporting excess auto capacity and cybersecurity concerns over the tech-laden vehicles.

China imported 250,000 cars with engines larger than 2.5 liters in 2023, accounting for about 32% of all imported vehicles. In comparison, China exported 1.55 million EVs last year, with about 638,000 going to Europe and 52,200 to North America, customs data showed. — **Bloomberg**

Formula 1 seeks more money from Monaco on eve of grand prix

LIBERTY MEDIA CORP., owner of the Formula 1 racing business, is seeking additional funds from the principality of Monaco as part of advanced talks for a new contract to extend the historic car race beyond 2025.

Monaco pays about \$20 million a year to host the event, the lowest total on the 24-race calendar, and representatives of Liberty Media are seeking an increase, according to people familiar with the discussions. The parties agreed to the current three-year deal in September 2022.

This year, the action begins on May 24.

Like all major tourist attractions, the Monaco Grand Prix delivers a big economic boost to the region, filling hotel rooms with spenders big and small. Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, two other race hosts, fork over more than \$50 mil-

lion a year, according to some estimates. The fees provide Formula 1 with funds it uses to pay out prize money at the end of each season.

A spokesperson for Formula 1 declined to comment on the current talks, but said the company is not considering pulling out of Monaco. The Automobile Club de Monaco, which organizes the race, didn’t respond to a request for comment.

Under Chief Executive Officer Greg Maffei, Liberty Media has grown annual Formula 1 revenue by more than 50% since 2019 to \$3.22 billion last year. The company has been focused on expanding Formula 1 to countries beyond Europe, where the sport originated.

The US now hosts three races — in Miami, Austin, and Las Vegas — and there have been persistent rumors of a race coming to another US city. — **Bloomberg**

Australia to ban copycats of Ozempic weight loss medication

AUSTRALIA will ban pharmacies from creating replicas of popular weight loss drugs like Ozempic, following reports of dangerous side effects including one patient’s hospitalization for a “serious adverse incident.”

Pharmacies will be restricted from making GLP-1 receptor agonist products — a class of drugs that help manage blood sugar levels — for individual patients, Health Minister Mark Butler said in a statement Wednesday.

That loophole had previously allowed the creation of Ozempic-like products that hadn’t been approved by Australian regulators.

More than 20,000 Australian patients have been using imitation drugs, largely to try to lose weight, according to Mr. Butler.

“While I understand that this action may concern some people, the risk of not acting is far greater,” he said in the statement. “You only have to look to the recent reports of individuals impacted by large-scale compounding to realize the dangers posed.”

Booming demand for weight loss drugs including Novo Nordisk A/S’s Ozempic has led to shortages of the medications around the world, even as some users report side effects including nausea. A May poll of US consumers found that one in eight had tried some variation of the new class of drugs.

A spokesperson for Novo Nordisk said the drug giant has always maintained that compounded semaglutide products shouldn’t be prescribed to patients, as they represent a “potential significant safety risk.”

“We do not, and will not, support any type of non-indicated (off-label) use of a Novo Nordisk product at any time,” the spokesperson said in a statement.

The Australian government’s move is supported by the country’s Therapeutic Goods Administration, while internationally, the US Food and Drug Administration has warned about the dangers of injecting some compounded products after adverse incidents in America. — **Bloomberg**

JOB VACANCY

Job Title: Technical Drilling Supervisor

Minimum Job Qualifications/Description:

- At least 10 years’ international experience in drilling operations with proven supervisory experience.
- Bachelor Degree in Mining Engineering, Geology or a related discipline.
- Fluency in English and French (both spoken and written).
- Strong technical knowledge of drilling equipment, techniques and procedures.
- Familiarities with relevant safety regulations and international industry standards.
- Excellent leadership and communication skills, with strong problem-solving and decision making abilities.
- The ability to work effectively in a fast-paced, dynamic environment.
- A Valid driver’s license and willingness to travel to various project sites as needed.

Company Name: MDGI Philippines Inc.
Address: Block 10, Lot 1, Golden Mile Avenue, Golden Mile Business Park, Barangay Mduya, Carmona, 4116, Cavite.
Contact: Ms. Doris Paglinawan-Bandola, HR & Administration Head, E-Mail: doris.paglinawan-Bandola@majordrilling.com

JOB VACANCY

Job Title: Project Director

Minimum Job Qualifications/Description:

- At least 15 years’ international experience in project management with knowledge of adaptation of European engineering standard and effectively worked with different nationalities and business cultures.
- Bachelor Degree in Business Administration or a related discipline.
- Fluency in English and French (both spoken and written).
- Duties include, among others: Ensure the proper administrative management of contracts with client, agreement with partners and contracts with subcontractors.
- Implement Project Management Plan as per contract requirements and internal company guidelines.
- Ensure the clarity of the client’s priorities and the process of validation of our deliverables.
- Control the level of risks incurred by the Company, by promoting the company’s activity in its areas of expertise.
- Carry out the complete closure of the project at the end, by means of the end-of-phase reports and the end-of-project report.

Company Name: Egis Rail Philippines Inc.
Address: Unit 708, Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Boulevard, 1603 Pasig City, Metro Manila
Contact: Ms. Joy Perez, Human Resources Department, E-Mail: joy.perez@egis-group.com