

# Friday Times

ISSUE NO: 17599

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## Local

## The invasion



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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The seven months of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990 until the liberation of the state on February 26, 1991 are engraved forever into the history of Kuwait.

Aug 2 is a day that is hard to forget. It will remain a sad memory full of pain, especially for those who lost a father, son or daughter. Every year, this particular day brings back memories of the Iraqi invasion and the period of killing, looting and torture; to death, fear, joy and the return of the homeland. So it is not surprising that many people have bitter memories and it is difficult to believe for a moment that Kuwaitis who suffered the horrors of the Iraqi invasion will forget those days.

Yes, it was seven months between Aug 2 and Feb 26, during which Kuwait was the axis of the world, which rallied under the umbrella of international legitimacy along with Kuwait against the invasion. Hours after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the UN Security Council passed resolution no. 660, which denounced the invasion and demanded the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait. Under the military operation Desert Shield, US forces began flowing into Saudi Arabia on Aug 7, 1990 until the liberation process was complete.

On Jan 23, 1991 Iraq began dumping nearly one million tons of crude oil into the waters of the Arabian Gulf, causing an environment disaster, and on Feb 26, 1991, the Iraqi army began to withdraw after setting fire to Kuwaiti oilfields. US President George H W Bush announced the liberation of Kuwait 100 hours after the ground campaign with the famous words saying that Kuwait has become liberated and that the Iraqi army has been defeated. The world, especially the countries that sided with Kuwait, was overwhelmed with happiness.

Today we mention the invasion as a memory, but there are lessons that we should benefit from, including that we are part of the Gulf. We know with the invasion experience that the Gulf countries are our strategic depth, and that our relationship with them is necessary for the continued existence of our country. The Gulf is the foundation and nothing else, because on the first day of the invasion, when many Kuwaitis left Kuwait, they were received by their brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other GCC countries. It is regrettable today to see some people criticize Saudi Arabia or other GCC states and do not realize that the Gulf is our strategic depth forever.

The most important lesson is the need to focus on Kuwaiti citizens and their needs, because this is the line of defense, so when I worry about fraud in Kuwaiti nationality and the internal security of the country, this is normal in order to preserve the country. The invasion by Iraq was a big lesson and I was hoping like others to emerge out of it safely. Despite all the bad things that we see and talk about in Kuwait, Kuwait remains safe and a homeland for many people - citizens and expats.

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



KUWAIT: Al Shamlan mosque, located in the roundabout on Abdullah Al Mubarak street in Mirqab. — Photo by Thomas Joseph

## Consumer protection: Credit cards and shop fees



IN MY VIEW

By Nawara Fattahova

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It's not very common in Kuwait that a store will ask for an additional fee if an invoice is paid by credit card. According to the ministry of commerce, this is illegal and the store will be penalized if the customer files a complaint. Recently, the consumer protection department of the ministry of commerce urged customers not to agree to pay any additional fee for using credit cards for payment.

Many consumers have fallen victim to this illegal act, as they don't know the seller is violating the law. These cases are most common at travel agencies, vehicle spare parts shops, schools and some small businesses. Customers almost never have issues with big companies or popular brands.

Small businesses demand fees for using a credit card because they have to pay for each transaction to the bank. So in this way, they want the customer to pay this fee, although the customer is already paying an annual fee to the bank that issued the credit card, in addition to interest if the billing is spread in installments instead of a full payment. This makes it unjustified for the consumer to pay twice.

Ali from the consumer protection department's call center noted that the customer can protect himself in two ways. "He can refuse to pay the additional fee and file a complaint at our department. Our inspectors will then go to the violating store and issue a fine," he told Kuwait Times. If the consumer has already paid the illegal fee when using the credit card, he can still file a complaint. "The affected consumer should visit the consumer protection department in the same governorate where the store is located. In Shuwaikh for instance, it is near the Friday Market and nurseries. In Hawally governorate, there is one in Jabriya and another in Salmiya, and so on," said Ali.

"The consumer should bring the receipt of payment, which usually doesn't show the additional fee, and the bank receipt that comes from the machine when paying - this will show the difference in the amount paid. Our inspector will accompany the customer to that store and force the seller to return the additional fee to the customer. In addition, the inspector will issue a fine to this seller for violating the law," he explained.

There are cases when the seller refuses to accept a payment with a credit card, or claims that he does not provide for this kind of payment. "It may be true that he doesn't have the proper machine which can accept the credit card and only has one for debit cards (K-Net). But some sellers may not be telling the truth. In this case, if our inspectors find out he is lying, then he will get a fine as well," Ali explained.

Many consumers have also complained of double swiping of their debit cards - before and after paying. Some reports warn details of the customer may be stolen due to this or his personal data may be illegally used for commercial and advertising purposes. The Central Bank of Kuwait recently issued a circular to the Kuwait Banking Association asking banks to prevent stores from swiping debit or credit cards twice.

According to a source at the Central Bank, double swiping does not seriously threaten the security of the customer's accounts, but the procedure is against the payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS), according to which local banks and K-Net operate. "Payment through point of sale (POS) machines at the stores to the electronic system at the bank should be made according to these standards," the source said.

Ali noted that the consumer protection department hasn't received any instructions from the ministry to curb this activity or issue fines to stores that double swipe cards. "By swiping the card, the seller only gets access to the data of the cardholder, which the store usually uses for accounting or marketing purposes. They can't make any false transactions or purchases with the card unless they know the pass-code. Also, our department hasn't received any complaints of theft from bank accounts due to swiping credit or debit cards," he concluded.

# Money exchange ... An historic profession in Kuwait



Old Kuwaiti banknote. — Photos by KUNA



Collections of old banknotes displayed in exchange shops in Kuwait.

Currency exchange is one of the oldest professions in Kuwait, associated with travelling and trade. The trade movement in old Kuwait required the existence of places to exchange and replace currencies from the Arabian Peninsula and Iraq and Asia.

In this context, Kuwaiti heritage researcher Mohammad Abdulhadi Jamal said in his book "Crafts, Professions And Old Business Activities In Kuwait" that until before the end of the 19th century, Kuwait had a number of money exchange shops, and it was an important meeting place for shoppers and merchants.

Jamal said that the currencies traded at that time were only metal coins, before the entry of the banknotes to the market in the late 1920s, adding that the most important of which were the Saudi riyal, Austrian riyal, Iraqi dinar and the Iranian riyal, as well as trading in sterling and the US dollar in a limited amount due to lack of need for

those currencies.

He said that the money exchanger was buying the different currencies from merchants who came to Kuwait from neighboring countries to buy their needs, noting that the exchange business was increasing in the winter, and greatly reduced during the summer. He pointed out that the Bedouins were the most important customers of the money exchanger, where they exchanged amounts of Saudi and Austrian riyals, which were trading in the Gulf countries at the beginning of the last century.

The Kuwaiti researcher said that the number of money exchange shops increased to about 10 shops in the mid-1940s, especially after the end of the Second World War, where the currency exchange activity expanded significantly due to daily requests from Baghdad and Basra merchants to buy and sell various currencies. — KUNA



Old Indian Rupee. Rupees were the official currency in Kuwait before the creation of the Kuwaiti dinar.



PHOTO ESSAY

# FOR SAWABER, THE WRITING'S ON THE WALL

Photos and text by Shakir Reshamwala

Once an urbane symbol of modernity and refined city living, the Al-Sawaber Complex in Kuwait City is today a blot on the urban landscape. Slated to be torn down years ago, the complex has been mired in legal cases filed by flat owners who have resisted being evicted. While most residents left after being offered money or alternate homes, these holdouts are staying put, clinging on in the hope of higher com-

penensation, even when power supplies were cut.

With urban decay, can vandals be far behind? In the rubbish-strewn parking areas of the once-futuristic buildings, multiple graffiti artists have left their mark. The scrawlings in distinctive lettering stand out as gaudy splashes of color defacing the drab grey concrete walls. Not of the cheerful variety, though - a bit creepy even. Some are highly intricate, some basic, some profane.





Built in 1981 based on designs by renowned Canadian architect and urban planner Arthur Erickson, Sawabir represents a distinct architectural, economic and cultural period in Kuwaiti history. One of the first high-density complexes in the country, it is located on approximately 245,000 sq m of prime real estate in the heart of Kuwait's financial district. The complex includes 33 buildings and more than 520 residential apartments.

Many of the buildings are now empty shells, ravaged by a string of fires and blighted by neglect. The government stopped providing utility services years ago. So there is little likelihood of the graffiti - some very recently sprayed - being hosed off anytime soon. The drawings will remain until the demolition crews arrive, shattering into colorful dust as a failed experiment of confining citizens into high-rises comes to an ignominious end.



## Local

# Most low-skilled expats in Kuwait don't have their passports

By Ben Garcia

A majority of low skilled expat workers in Kuwait, mostly Asians, say they are not in possession of their passports. Kuwait Times randomly surveyed around 200 workers holding article 18 and article 20 visas, many of whose passports are held by their employers. Sixty-three percent of private sector employees and almost 70 percent of domestic helpers said their passports are retained by their sponsors. The domestic workers are mostly from the Philippines, Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka, many of them maids, drivers, gardeners and cooks.

"I get two days off a month, and for me this is more important than my passport," said Emma Peregrino Espiritu, a Filipina housemaid who participated in the survey. "At least I can enjoy a day off, so I am okay with it. But if it is given to me by my employer, I will keep it," she said. Espiritu is a holder of an article 20 visa and has been working with her sponsor for the past eight years.

Indika C, a Sri Lankan man whose family is also in Kuwait, said all their passports are with him. "I work in a taxi company, and have my passport and that of my family with me. The company doesn't really care," he said.

Mamin K, a Bangladeshi family driver holding an article 20 visa, said his passport was with his sponsor. "I don't have my passport with me - it's with my sponsor. When I go home, I will ask him for my passport," he said.

It is illegal for employers to hold the passports of employees, and this is clearly stated in ministry resolution number 143/A/2010 in Article 1: "It is prohibited for private sector employers and oil sector employers to hold travel documents of their employees." Sponsors of domestic workers may keep the passport, but only with the worker's consent.



In May, the Philippines and Kuwait signed a memorandum of agreement allowing domestic helpers' passports to be deposited at the Philippine Embassy, but many employers are yet to do so. "My boss asked if I wanted my passport. I said yes, so she gave it, and it's with me now since June," said Genskie Morales, a domestic helper from the Philippines. "I am happy that I am holding my own passport, so any time I want to leave, I can leave freely," she said.

Many white collar and office workers will be allowed to keep their passports - but not in all professions. Accountants or employees with access to safes, money and other banking info may have their passports kept by employers. Managers of small businesses or companies where owners travel frequently may also keep the passports of their employees as a safeguard against absconding.

Lower skilled workers of some large corporations in Kuwait may also have their passports confiscated as standard company policy, despite the labor law.

"I work in a huge fast-food company, and all our passports are in a vault in their passport department. No one is allowed to keep their passports. We are told to surrender the passport immediately if we ever take it. We can request to get the passport at any time, especially during vacations or renewals, but after this it has to be returned to the HR department. Probably they don't trust us or maybe they think we will transfer to another company if we have the passport," said an employee who has been working for the company for the last five years.

Jomie Calising Tayer and Daniel Casiban, working in Kuwait on article 18 visas, said if the company says so, they cannot do anything. "It's company policy, so we cannot do

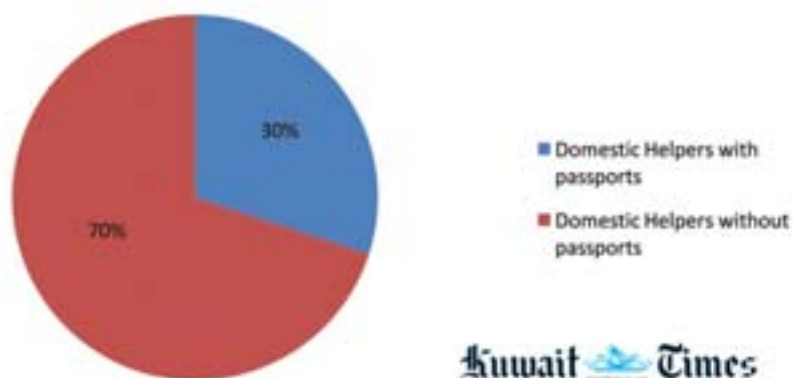
anything about it. Since I transferred to this company, I don't have my passport. We are mere workers. If we need it, we can always borrow our passports," they said. Liezl Garcia Sogillo said even their civil IDs are not in their possession, let alone the passport. "We can borrow the civil ID if we want, but we have to return it after using it," she said.

Mae Ortiz, a Filipina married to a Kuwaiti, said that all passports of her housemaids are in their maids' possession. "I do not want to get into trouble - if the law says it has to be with the workers, I follow it. I give them a day off too. The original civil IDs are also with them - they can leave the house and I am ready to transfer them to another employer if they wish too. We have to follow the rules," she said.

Mercy Martinez has been working in a private company in Kuwait since 1992, and has never had her passport with her. "The company always keeps the passports of their employees. They don't trust you with the passport, because if you do something wrong, you cannot leave the country easily. Even if your relatives die, you cannot fly out of the country immediately. If an emergency takes place during holidays, you have to wait until the HR people report to work - that is if they allow you to leave. They say they don't give the passport because many workers take loans from the bank or buy electronic gadgets and don't come back, so they should clear their liabilities first. They said they have their own set of rules and follow them, and not the laws of the land. It's very sad, but this is the case," she said resignedly.

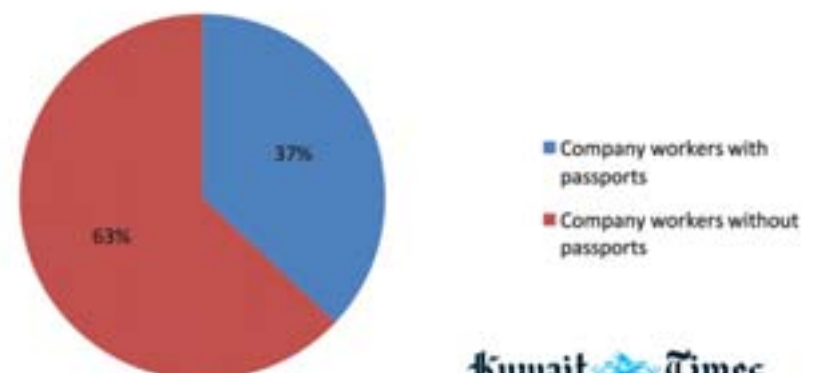
Among Kuwait's 3.4 million+ expatriates there are tens of thousands who likely do not regularly have access to or control over their passports. This can include not only low skilled labor but also office workers, teachers, accountants, managers and others.

### Passport Possession for Article 20



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### Passport Possession for Article 18



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# 1st



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## Local

# Amir sends appreciation cables to GCC, Int'l Alliance leaders



**KUWAIT:** Ambassadors visited the Kuwait House of National Works Memorial Museum yesterday in a trip organized on the 28th anniversary of the Iraqi Invasion which began on August 2, 1990.

— Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent cables of appreciation yesterday to leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed

Al Nahyan, King of Bahrain Sheikh Hamad Bin Essa Al Khalifa, Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed of Oman, Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and to the leaders of brotherly and friendly countries participating in the International Alliance for the Liberation of Kuwait on

the 28th anniversary of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990. His Highness the Amir thanked the leaders for their honorable positions in standing with the right of Kuwait and their countries' participation in the international coalition forces to liberate Kuwait, in implementation

of the resolutions of the Security Council agreed by the international community. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables. — KUNA

## Acting PM receives Spanish envoy's credentials



**KUWAIT:** Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives the credentials of the new Spanish Ambassador to Kuwait Alvaro Rodriguez Alvarez. — KUNA

**KUWAIT:** Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday received the credentials of the new Spanish Ambassador to Kuwait Alvaro Rodriguez Alvarez. During the meeting, Sheikh

Sabah Al-Khaled wished the Ambassador the best of luck during his stay in Kuwait. Ambassador Dhari Al-Ajran, Ambassador Saleh Al-Logani and other ministry officials attended meeting. —KUNA

## CMA launches next bidding phase for Boursa equity stake

**KUWAIT:** The Capital Markets Authority (CMA) on June 28, 2018 issued an announcement regarding the bidding for an equity stake in Boursa Kuwait. Following consultation sessions with Local Investors, the CMA had

agreed to accommodate their feedback, and extended the transaction timeline until the end of the calendar year 2018. As a result, qualified Local Investors and International Operators were given additional time to express interest in the opportunity.

August 1, 2018 marked a key milestone in the overall process, whereby investors were asked to express interest in exploring the opportunity further. The initial phase has been successful with significant interest demonstrated by both International Operators and Local Investors. Interested investors are now able to evaluate the opportunity in more detail through a Virtual Data Room. CMA remains committed to collaborating with all stakeholders, to ensure the success of the transaction and the best outcome for the State of Kuwait.

## Health ministry launches blood donation campaign

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Health launched a blood donation campaign titled 'Together Forever... Kuwait's Wall' in the Blood Bank and its branches yesterday. Donating blood is one of the most important things we can do to save patients' lives, the ministry's assistant undersecretary for planning affairs Mohammad Al-Khashti said in speech on the sidelines of the campaign. These campaigns bring awareness towards the benefits of donating blood both for the patient in need of blood transfer, as well as the health benefit for the donor, he noted. The bank currently has enough amounts of blood, however, it

always seeks to increase donated blood to face any case, Khashti said. — KUNA





## Local

# Kuwait eyes new labor recruitment agreements with four Asian countries after Eid break

## Govt keen on providing decent jobs, pay for citizens: Minister

**KUWAIT:** The government will sign new agreements with Bangladesh, India, Philippines and Sri Lanka for the recruitment of domestic labor, Minister of Social Affairs and State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh has said. "It is expected to recruit domestic helpers from India, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Bangladesh," she told Al-Anbaa Arabic newspaper. Specific details were not available.

Sabeeh disclosed that a new on-line system is being developed based on an application allowing the employer to select the housemaid based on preferred nationality and age requirements. Fees will also be paid via the application. "This way, we will be able to eliminate any corruption and guarantee rights of all sides," she said. "Work is also being done to handle illegal recruitment offices that do not meet regulations."

Last month, head of the Kuwaiti Union of Domestic Labor Office Khaled Al-Dakhnan said that an earlier pact on domestic labor between the Gulf country and the Philippines is in peril after Manila has demanded Kuwaiti recruitment offices to deposit an insurance fee of \$10,000 in

banks to pay Filipinos in case of terminating their contracts or withholding their salaries.

In May, both countries signed the agreement regulating the employment of domestic workers in Kuwait after their ties deteriorated over a row on treating Filipino employees and Kuwait's expulsion of the Philippine ambassador.

Earlier this year, the Philippines banned its nationals from working in Kuwait over alleged abuses after a Filipina was found dead, stuffed in a freezer inside an apartment in Kuwait. The ban was later lifted amid a thaw in ties between the two countries. The minister said that relevant agreements will be signed with authorities of the four countries after the holiday of Eid Al-Adha, due later this month. "This will ensure smooth recruitment of the labour and related regulations," she said.

### Decent jobs

Separately, Minister of Electricity and Water Bakheet Al-Rasheedi said Wednesday that the government was keen on providing decent jobs and pay for citizens to encourage them work in private sector.

Rasheedi was commenting on newspaper advertisements in which a contracting company offered jobs for Kuwaiti citizens to work in data entry, drivers, and readers of electricity and water meters. Rasheedi, also Minister of Oil, rejected the job advertisement by the contracting company. He said that he instructed the Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) executives to review process of tenders and contracts, specially the hiring of Kuwaiti nationals and nature of jobs. Rasheedi also asked the executives to specify number of Kuwaitis working in the ministry.

The government had embarked on a plan since the beginning of the year to replace expatriates working in state departments with national manpower, as part of efforts to fully 'Kuwaitize' public sector jobs within two years and in a bid to fight unemployment. The number of unemployed Kuwaitis reportedly reached 13,523 during the first quarter of 2018, including 3,540 males (26.18 percent) and 9,983 females (73.82 percent). Statistics from the Civil Service Commission and published by recently Al-Anbaa showed that



Hind Al-Sabeeh



Bakheet Al-Rasheedi

the percentage of those who were unemployed for 12 and more months is 45.66 percent, while those unemployed for six months and less than 12 months is 13.75 percent, and those unemployed for less than six months make up 40.58 percent. The statistics showed the number of unemployed people is dropping compared to 2013, when the number of jobless people reached the highest level at 19,218 individuals. The numbers then fluctuated, and dropped significantly

this year. Statistics showed the majority of unemployed people are women, and married women among them make up a great majority. Jobless people with a low education level - elementary and intermediate education only or without any qualification - make up 61.95 percent. Meanwhile, around 55.71 percent of the unemployed do not have enough professional qualifications to work, with a lack of training courses that qualify them to get job opportunities.

## Degrees' check delays ministry reshuffle

By A Saleh and Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** The Health Ministry postponed a planned reshuffle of its officials and directors until October, until an examination of their degrees and make sure they are not fake is finished. The degrees' revision committee headed by Ministry Undersecretary Dr Mustafa Redha checked the files of employees, particularly those who received degrees while working and not on scholarship, sources said. Meanwhile, Acting Health Ministry Undersecretary Dr Mohammad Al-Khashti ordered sending employees to work in Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Jaber Al-Ahmad hospital starting August 5th. On a different topic, Environment Public Authority said that algae that appeared in a muddy area and shown in video footage posted recently online does not constitute any hazard to the marine environment or beach goers.

### House ownership

The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) finished preparing a legislative amendment to its law which allows Kuwaiti widows of martyrs to

obtain a house ownership document signed with her name only, Minister of Housing and Minister of Services Affairs Dr Jenan Boushehri said.

### Female officers

The Education Ministry asked the Civil Service Commission to study a proposal to list the hiring of female Kuwaiti officers under the ministry's budget, instead of hiring them through contracted companies. This process would help save time and protect employees' payments, the ministry explained.

### Slander

The Information and Data Prosecution Department at the Interior Ministry is investigating a complaint against an individual responsible for an app, as a female citizen filed a complaint in which she said that her name was mentioned on the app along with indecent expressions. The prosecution department said that the individual will be questioned over charges of slander and encroaching on the victim's privacy by placing her phone number in the app without her consent.

## Harbor rescuers honored

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Director General of Kuwait Fire Service Directorate Lt Gen Khalid Al-Mikrad recently honored Al-Shamlan harbor rescuers who pulled a burning boat out of the harbor, which helped prevent flames from spreading to 240 boats that were docked there at the time.

### Minor accidents

The implementation of the decision to settle minor traffic accidents at police stations had positive results

on the traffic situation, and made procedures easy for involved parties, Director of Investigations Department at the Interior Ministry said. The settlement order began in the Capital Governorate on June 3, 2018 and achieved notable success, before it became effective in all governorates on July 1st, he added. The law fines the driver who causes the accident KD 20, he said, adding that the settlement document is sent to the insurance company, allowing the beneficiary to receive the compensation without the need to go to court in a process that takes a shorter period of time.



**KUWAIT:** Director General of Kuwait Fire Service Directorate Lt Gen Khalid Al-Mikrad poses with Al-Shamlan harbor rescuers after their honoring.



Zimbabwe army clears streets; election panel begs for 'patience'

## Trump tells attorney general to end Russia probe



ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (center) and members of the Supreme Military Council visit Anitkabir, the mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of modern Turkey, before their meeting yesterday. — AFP

# Turkey vows to retaliate against US

## Diplomatic crisis intensifies over detained American pastor

**ISTANBUL:** Turkey was yesterday drawing up retaliatory measures after Washington slapped sanctions on two Turkish ministers in the one of the biggest crises between the two NATO allies in recent years. Tensions have soared over Turkey's detention on terror charges of American pastor Andrew Brunson, who was first held in October 2016 and was moved to house arrest last week. The sanctions targeting Justice Minister Abdulhamit Gul and Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu freeze any property or assets on US soil held by the two ministers, and bar US citizens from doing business with them.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders told journalists both ministers had "played leading roles in the arrest and detention of Pastor Brunson", who led a Protestant church in the Aegean city of Izmir. The US Treasury implemented the sanctions under the 2016 Global Magnitsky Act named after Russian lawyer Sergei Magnitsky, who died in a Moscow jail, and which allows the US to sanction foreign officials implicated in rights abuses.

The Turkish foreign ministry warned that the move "will greatly damage constructive efforts" to solve outstanding issues and told Washington

it would retaliate. "Without delay, there will be a response to this aggressive attitude that will not serve any purpose," it said. Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, who is set to meet US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in the next few days, also warned that the move "will not go without response". Hours before the sanctions were announced, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accused Washington of showing an "evangelist, Zionist mentality".

### 'Historic rupture'

The standoff appears to be one of the most serious crises between Turkey and the United States in modern history, along with the rows over the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus and the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq. "A scandalous decision from Washington," said the headline in the pro-government *Hurriyet* daily. "A historic rupture," added the opposition *Cumhuriyet*. In a rare show of unity by Turkey's parliament, two opposition parties joined Erdogan's ruling party and its main ally by agreeing a joint statement opposing the sanctions.

The row over Brunson escalated last week when US Vice President Mike Pence, like the

pastor an evangelical Christian, said Turkey would face "significant sanctions" if this "innocent man of faith" was not freed. His language was immediately echoed by President Donald Trump, who had enjoyed a relatively warm relationship with Erdogan and was even reported to have "fist-bumped" the Turkish president at a NATO summit last month.

US media reported there had been a deal with Turkey to free Brunson after Washington's ally Israel released a Turkish woman held on terror charges. But Turkish officials have rubbished the claims. The senior US general in Europe, Curtis Scaparrotti, was on Thursday holding talks with Turkish military officials in Ankara but there was no indication the Brunson case would be raised. The court trying Brunson has repeatedly refused to allow him to go free. The next hearing is Oct 12 with the pastor facing 35 years in jail if convicted.

He is accused of acting on behalf of two groups deemed by Turkey to be terrorist organizations - the movement led by US-based Muslim preacher Fethullah Gulen who Ankara says was behind the 2016 coup bid and the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

### 'We will get it'

The row over Brunson is just one of a number of disputes which have buried any hope of a warming of ties under the Trump presidency. Ankara and Washington are at odds over American support for a Kurdish militia in Syria and the United States is extremely wary over Turkey's growing cooperation with Russia and its deal to buy Russian air defense systems. Two Turkish employees of US consulates in Turkey are also currently in jail on terror charges and another is under house arrest, while several Americans have been caught up in the crackdown that followed the failed coup. Turkey is meanwhile furious the United States has failed to extradite Gulen, who lives in rural Pennsylvania, to face trial over the coup bid. Soylu tweeted that the only thing Turkey wanted in the United States was Gulen's group, vowing "we won't leave that there, we will get it!" Gul dismissed the sanctions, saying: "I have neither a tree planted nor one penny in the US or any other country outside of Turkey." The sanctions rattled financial markets with the Turkish lira hitting five to the dollar for the first time in history. The currency has lost four percent against the dollar in the last week alone. — AFP

International

# Israel reimposes blockade of fuel deliveries to Gaza

## Ban imposed in response to firebombs, border tension

**JERUSALEM:** Israel reimposed a blockade on fuel deliveries to Gaza yesterday citing a resurgence in kites carrying firebombs over the border and signaling a brief pause in tensions may be ending. After two deadly military flare-ups in the Gaza Strip and a ceasefire brokered by Egypt and UN officials last month, the number of firebombs being launched over the border to burn Israeli farmland had diminished.

But Wednesday saw seven fires started by the incendiaries, and Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman later announced Israel's Kerem Shalom goods crossing with Gaza would be closed for fuel deliveries "until further notice." "The decision was made in light of the continued terror with Molotov cocktails and the friction on the fence," Lieberman's office said, referring to months of clashes along the Gaza border between the army and Palestinian protesters.

A previous ban on fuel deliveries last month had resulted in warnings from UN officials that emergency fuel supplies were running low and the shortage was beginning to affect hospitals and water sanitation. The coastal enclave, run by Islamist movement Hamas, suffers from a severe lack of electricity and relies on fuel-powered generators during outages that last hours at a time.

Israel closed the crossing to most deliveries on July 9 in response to the firebombs and border tension before tightening the blockade to cover fuel on July 17. It lifted the fuel ban a week later.

Deliveries of food and medicines have continued throughout.

### Two military flare-ups

Months of tension on the Gaza border resulted in two separate military flare-ups in July. The first, on July 14, saw dozens of Israeli air strikes that killed two Palestinians, while some 200 rockets and mortar rounds were fired from the enclave at Israel in response. It was the most serious exchange of fire between Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza since a 2014 war. On July 20, Israel unleashed a wave of strikes across the territory after a soldier was shot dead on the border. Three Hamas militants were killed in the strikes.

UN officials and Egypt brokered a ceasefire after the July 20 violence that resulted in a drop in tensions. However, protests and clashes have continued along the border and the kite-borne firebombs have not been stopped completely as Israel demands. The persistent use of the firebombs has put political pressure on Israel's leaders to act strongly, though military commanders have been reluctant to start a war over the devices.

Israel says the firebombs have sparked hundreds of fires since April and caused hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of damage. Palestinians see the kites and balloons as legitimate resistance against Israel's decade-long blockade of the territory. Israel controls all access to and from the Gaza Strip apart from a single crossing with



**KHAN YUNIS, Palestinian Territories:** A Palestinian woman uses a gas lamp during a power cut in an impoverished area of the Khan Yunis refugee camp, southern Gaza Strip.—AFP

Egypt. That crossing, known as Rafah, had been kept largely closed in recent years, but Cairo opened it in mid-May and it has remained open most of the time since then. Israel has fought three wars with Palestinian militants in Gaza since 2008 and says the blockade is necessary to keep them from obtaining weapons or materials that could be used for military purposes. UN officials have called

repeatedly for the blockade to be lifted, citing deteriorating humanitarian conditions in the territory, where some 80 percent of the two million population depend on aid. Mass protests for the return of Palestinian refugees to their former homes inside Israel erupted along the border on March 30. Israeli fire has since killed at least 157 Palestinians. One Israeli soldier has also died.—AFP

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## International

# Kosovo rape survivors battling 'code of silence' for recognition

## Sworn secrecy has helped shield perpetrators from the law

**PRISTINA:** Raped during Kosovo's war for independence, Zana and thousands of other women are now eligible for financial aid from the government - a victory hard-won through years of lobbying. But the battle is not over yet: a culture of shame keeps many victims from coming forward in a society where rape is viewed as a stain on the family's honor. Now 41, Zana, who asked to use a pseudonym to avoid being identified, wrings her hands as she painfully recalls a memory she says "feels like it was today".

A 22-year-old student at the time, Zana and her teenage sister were kidnapped by Serbian forces in May 1999, one month before the end of a brutal conflict that claimed around 13,000 lives, mostly ethnic Albanians. The sisters were brought to an ethnic Serb village and raped repeatedly in a warehouse, Zana told AFP. "They drank, sang and played before turning to us. I don't know how many of them raped me as I fainted during the first rape," she recalled, with a trembling voice. Zana woke up next to her sister, who was crying quietly. The men were gone.

While the precise number of women raped by Serbian forces in the 1998-1999 Kosovo war remains unknown, rights groups estimate the figure could be as high as 20,000. But since the monthly 230-euro (around \$270) allowance for wartime rape survivors became available in February, only 600 people have signed up. Around 115 applications, including Zana's, have been accepted. "It was the first official recognition that I am a victim of the war," Zana said, when asked why she decided to break a nearly 20-year silence imposed by her relatives. "Also, it was the first opportunity to share my burden with someone else outside of my family."

Although the identities of those who apply for the allowance are kept confidential, a deep-seated stigma is still keeping many victims in the

shadows. Many women have kept their trauma a secret for years, even from their closest relatives. "Those who are raped are considered as persona non grata in their families and consequently in society," explained Selvije Izeti-Carkaxhiu, a psychologist who counsels victims. This culture of shame "prevents victims from talking openly about their trauma or seeking justice," added Behxhet Shala, the head of Kosovo's Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms. "This could be called the silence taboo," he told AFP, saying the pressure to stay quiet is as powerful as the "omerta", the notorious code of silence invoked by Italian mafia.

### Silence 'helps rapists'

As well as adding to the victims' distress, the sworn secrecy has helped shield perpetrators from the law. An international tribunal in The Hague convicted three senior Serbian officials for employing "sexual assaults" during their campaign of violence in Kosovo. But inside Kosovo itself, courts have yet to convict a single rapist since the conflict, according to the Humanitarian Law Center, an NGO that monitors war crime trials. Kosovo's judiciary has only carried out three prosecutions for wartime rape, all of which have ended in acquittal, according to Amnesty International. "Isolation and silence have not helped anybody more than the rapists," said Feride Rushiti, who runs the Kosova Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (KRCT), which offers assistance to war victims. Kosovo's government admits that wartime rape remains one of the most inadequately addressed crimes of the conflict. Deputy Prime Minister Behgjet Pacolli has described it as "one of the biggest wounds which continue to weigh on a considerable part of Kosovar society". However, civil society



PRISTINA: A woman looks at the monument entitled "Heroines" honoring the contribution and sacrifice of every ethnic Albanian woman during the 1998-1999 war in Kosovo. — AFP

groups say the government has done little to help rape survivors access healthcare, employment and other forms of support. In 2014, hope was lifted when parliament finally approved a law that recognized survivors of sexual violence as war victims and made them eligible for the monthly aid. However, registration for the payments did not open until 2018, and only a sixth of applications have been approved. Rights groups have also criticized the policy for applying only to women raped before the end of the war, excluding therefore those assaulted in the months following June 1999, including Kosovo Serbs targeted in revenge attacks by ethnic Albanians.

For Minire Begaj, who leads the government commission that processes applications, "the most important thing is that we launched this process". "It is not about the money... but about establishing a new approach to the victims of war sexual violence that will relieve their pain," she told AFP. Zana is still waiting for her first cheque to arrive, but says her real dream is the day when society will no longer "blame and make us (feel) guilty like the perpetrators". "I will get peace of mind only when I will feel free to cry out publicly that I was the one who was raped and that they should not treat me as if I'm guilty as a rapist, but as someone they should say sorry to," she said. —AFP

## Where is Merkel? Hunts for chancellor after holiday no-show

**BERLIN:** Where is Angela Merkel? That question is preoccupying German media after the chancellor's husband was spotted on holiday in northern Italy without his wife. In past years paparazzi have got pictures of Merkel and Joachim Sauer hiking in the Alps but so far this summer they have had to settle for him along with his son from a previous marriage. The mass-selling daily Bild trotted out speculation ranging from a family visit in eastern Germany to some kind of cloak-and-dagger work.

"Where is the chancellor hiding?" ran its headline. "At a summer residence or with her 90-year-old mother in Uckermark? Marital crisis? Clinic? Secret mission?" Asked about her holiday plans, Merkel told reporters last month she was looking forward to a rest but that the details were private. A spokesman for the chancellor, who is 64, declined comment on her whereabouts yes-

terday. The couple, who have been married for 20 years, were last seen in public together on July 25 for their traditional appearance at the Bayreuth Festival in Bavaria, a must for fans of composer Richard Wagner.

While Sauer rarely appears in public with the world's most powerful woman, the professor of theoretical chemistry usually accompanies her each summer to the Italian region of South Tyrol (Alto Adige). There is little political activity in Germany during the summer break from July into August, and Merkel's office has no events listed on her official schedule. Her Christian Democrat party holds its next leadership meeting on Aug. 20, an event Merkel usually attends.

Merkel, who has led Germany since 2005, has had a punishing year. She narrowly averted the collapse of her coalition government in a row with Bavarian conservatives over immigration and faces a challenge from the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). Der Spiegel magazine joked that Merkel might be making a point to AfD supporters that she is indispensable. "Is she trying to show those who say 'Merkel must go!' what Germany is like when 'Merkel must go' becomes 'Merkel is gone'?" it asked. With German politics nearly dormant, media have otherwise focused on a heatwave and the fallout from football star Mesut Ozil's decision to quit the national team, citing "racism" because of his Turkish roots. — Reuter

## France outlaws lewd catcalls

**PARIS:** France voted to outlaw sexual harassment on the streets, leaving catcallers and aggressively lecherous individuals facing potential on-the-spot fines of up to 750 euros as part of tougher legislation to fight sexual violence. Lawmakers approved the law in a second reading late on Wednesday, days after outrage erupted in France after a man attacked a young woman, Marie Laguerre, when she responded to lewd noises he made at her outside a Paris cafe.

"Harassment in the street has previously not been punished. From now on, it will be," Marlene Schiappa, gender equality minister and architect of the new legislation, told Europe 1 radio yesterday. An early draft of the bill had said that minors under 15 would be assumed not to have given consent to sex with an older person. —Reuters

## International

# Zimbabwe army clears streets as election panel begs for 'patience'

## Troops open fire on demonstrations against alleged electoral fraud

**HARARE:** Soldiers and police cleared the streets of central Harare yesterday a day after a deadly crackdown on protestors as the Zimbabwean authorities begged for patience over the release of the results from landmark presidential elections. The vote—the first since autocrat Robert Mugabe was ousted last year—turned bloody on Wednesday when troops opened fire on demonstrations against alleged electoral fraud, leaving three dead and prompting an international outcry.

The Zimbabwe Election Commission (ZEC) pleaded with the public to give it time to collate the results, vowing to release them before Saturday. “ZEC implores the public to be patient as we collate the final results,” said ZEC commissioner Qhubani Moyo. “Let me not give a specific time whether today or tomorrow, but there is significant progress that is happening.” The government accused the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) opposition party of inciting the unrest and vowed to enforce a security clampdown.

But President Emmerson Mnangagwa said he wanted an independent investigation into the killings, and that he sought to settle differences “peacefully”. Yesterday, soldiers were on guard outside the headquarters of the ruling ZANU-PF party, while armored personnel carriers, water cannon trucks and police anti-riot vans took position outside the MDC headquarters. Soldiers brandishing assault rifles and police shouted at pedestrians and traders to leave cen-

tral Harare, AFP witnessed. “I wasn’t sure whether it’s safe to come to work. We had to consult among ourselves,” said one worker who declined to give his name. In a late-night press conference on Wednesday, Home Affairs Minister Obert Mpofu warned further protests would not be tolerated. “The opposition... are testing our resolve and I think they are making a big mistake,” he said. The MDC said the army had opened fire “for no apparent reason,” killing unarmed civilians. The presidential election race has pitted 75-year-old Mnangagwa, Mugabe’s former ally in ZANU-PF, against the MDC’s leader, Nelson Chamisa, 35 years his junior.

### A rigged count?

In official results from the parliamentary election, also held on Monday, ZANU-PF won easily—suggesting Mnangagwa would be on course to retain the presidency. But the MDC has said it won the elections outright and accused the government and ZEC of rigging the count. The elections had been meant to turn the page on years of violence-marred elections and brutal repression of dissent after Mugabe’s 37-year rule was ended by a brief military takeover in November.

The mood spiraled into anger as MDC supporters rallied in the city on Wednesday, chanting against the government and burning tires in the streets. “It’s disappointing—the government’s reaction only made things worse. It was heavy-handed,” trader Timie Manuwere, 37, said. “But



**HARARE:** Trucks with police officers and a water cannon patrol in downtown Bulawayo yesterday a day after a deadly crackdown on protestors over the release of the results from landmark presidential elections in Harare. — AFP

I didn’t expect things to really change much with the elections. It was highly unlikely these guys would just give up power after eight months.” Mnangagwa had promised a free and fair vote after the military ushered him to power when Mugabe was forced to resign.

A credible and peaceful vote was meant to end Zimbabwe’s international isolation and at-

tract foreign investment to revive the shattered economy. Election observers from the Commonwealth issued a statement Thursday to “denounce the excessive use of force against unarmed civilians.” Before the violence, European Union observers declared they found an “un-level playing field and lack of trust” in the election process. —AFP

## Kenya rounds up graft suspects

**NAIROBI:** Dozens of top executives and government officials have been charged, lifestyle audits have been ordered and even lie detector tests suggested in recent weeks, as Kenya launches a new crusade against corruption. There are few topics as discussed in the country as the endemic graft rotting every sector of society, with reams of newspaper columns, hashtags, political speeches and presidential promises devoted to the topic.

But with a history littered with unsolved cases and millions of lost dollars, Kenyans are hesitant to believe the latest flurry of prosecutions really means change is on the horizon. “It is a joke. The president is just trying to give a legacy. We are used to it, those people just play their games,” said a worker for a security company in Nairobi’s Kilimani neighbourhood, who asked not to be named. “In Kenya we have this mentality of bribes. We see it with the police every day. It starts from grassroots to the top, it’s rampant,” he said.

### Air contracts

In the latest scandal to engulf the country, dozens of top executives at national power giant KPLC as well as contractors have been charged this month with squandering public money. The probe at the power company centres on a \$4 million (3.4 million euro) deal to procure electrical transformers that were found to be defective and unusable—raising questions about the legality of the purchase. The arrests came just weeks after 54 suspects were charged over the alleged theft of \$68 million from the National Youth Service (NYS) through dodgy contracts. In one example of the corruption, Kenyan media have reported how the NYS paid \$10 million for beef in one year—meaning each recruit would have



**NAIROBI:** In this file photo Kenyan activists take part in a protest against corruption in the Kenyan capital Nairobi.—AFP

had to consume 66 kilos (145 pounds) of beef a day. Like these, many graft scandals in Kenya are so-called “air contracts” where suppliers agree deals with the public sector but never actually deliver any goods or services—but still get paid and grease official palms in the process. An audit of the public finances for the financial year 2015-2016 highlighted suspect, unjustified expenditure amounting to more than \$400 million.

In 2017 Kenya was ranked the 143rd worst out of 180 countries in Transparency International’s corruption index. “We shall recover all the stolen money. There will be no mercy for the thieves. Their days are numbered. They will be prosecuted and jailed,” President Uhuru Kenyatta said in May. His comments echo those of previous leaders, who have all declared war on corruption to no avail, meaning most Kenyans see the scourge as an unavoidable fact of life. — AFP

## Growing wealth brings rise in deadly conflict in N Ghana

**ACCRA:** Agricultural development in northern Ghana is lifting people out of poverty, but researchers say progress has come at a deadly cost, worsening an age-old conflict between farmers and herders. Rising prosperity in Ghana’s semi-arid north, the poorest part of the West African country, has led to more people buying cows, drawing in more semi-nomadic herders who are hired to look after them.

But as agriculture expands and grazing for cattle becomes scarcer, enmity between farmers and herders has intensified, with cows straying into crop-growing areas, leading to more frequent clashes – and record high deaths. “In large swaths of northern Ghana, there is a real danger that successful agricultural programming triggers conflict,” said Sebastiaan Soeters, who co-authored a report for the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and charities.

“A key message from me to donors is that you may tick all your boxes in terms of success, but if you zoom out and look at how that affects relationships around natural resource use, you may have done harm,” he said. Last year, the Ghana National Association of Cattle Farmers (GNACF) recorded 104 deaths from farmer-herder clashes, the highest yet followed by 73 deaths in 2015, said chairman Hanafi Sonde. The real number is likely much higher, he added. —Reuters

## International

# Nicaraguans turn saint's holiday into peace march

## Police unusually absent from procession

**MANAGUA:** Thousands of Nicaraguans marched, prayed and danced in their capital Wednesday as they turned festivities for a Catholic holiday into a procession calling for peace in their country, gripped by deadly political unrest since April. This year's Aug 1 celebration of Saint Dominic, a 12th century Spaniard who founded the Dominican Order and is the patron saint of Managua, came as protesters demanding the ouster of President Daniel Ortega clashed with the government's brutal security forces. More than 300 people have died in the past three and a half months, according to rights groups. Ortega puts the toll at 195.

"We want the Lord to grant us peace," said one woman, Jeanneth Sanchez, 55, as she followed the procession behind a tiny portrait of Saint Dominic. "We have a lot to ask of the saint for Nicaragua. We have suffered a lot from so many things that have happened," said another taking part, Evilina Reyes. A young man who gave his name as Heriberto said he was hoping for a "miracle" for his country. Police, unusually, were absent from the march. In previous years they monitored it.

### Clinging to power

Protesters - students and youths particularly - say they are determined to keep up demonstrations to force Ortega's resignation, or at least to hold early elections. The United States, the Organization of American States and the Vatican all support those demands. Ortega, though, has dismissed any suggestion he leave power before the end of his mandate in early 2022, saying that

to do so would invite "anarchy". Last month he ordered police, backed by armed and masked paramilitaries, to violently crush protest hubs in Managua and the nearby city of Masaya.

The measure imposed a degree of calm in the streets, but deepened resentment against his rule. On Tuesday, the president said he had taken the country back from "terrorists". In a series of interviews with foreign television networks since last week Ortega insists that "the turmoil is over" and things were getting back to "normal".

### Persecution

Some 1,900 people have been arrested in the protests, of whom around a quarter remain locked up. At least 98 people have been convicted of terrorism and other serious crimes carrying penalties of up to 20 years in prison, according to the Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights. Dozens of medical staff have been fired from state-run hospitals for treating wounded protesters. And prosecutors said this week they were investigating 10 opposition figures, including student leaders, on suspicion of supporting the protests. Some of them took part in Church-mediated dialogue with the government that has stalled since mid-June. Ortega has accused the bishops taking part of collaborating with "coup-mongers" seeking to topple his government.

### Fleeing Nicaragua

The UN refugee agency is appealing for neighboring countries to take in Nicaraguans who are fleeing the persecution and instability. Nearly 23,000 Nicaraguans have sought asylum



**MANAGUA:** Catholic faithful smeared in burnt oil take part in the opening of the 10-day celebration of the Santo Domingo de Guzman festival on Wednesday. — AFP

in Costa Rica since April, UNHCR said, explaining that the southern neighbor was "overwhelmed". Panama, Mexico and the United States have also seen an increase in Nicaraguan arrivals, UNHCR said. Ortega, 72, headed a left-wing Sandinista government during the Cold War, and returned to power in 2007.

The United States has stepped up criticism

of the repression in Nicaragua, with the White House on Tuesday saying Ortega and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo, "are ultimately responsible for the pro-government parapolic that have brutalized their own people". Ortega has alleged that the United States is fomenting the violence in his country by financing opposition militias. — AFP

## New Zealand PM back to work after maternity leave

**WELLINGTON:** New Zealand Prime Minister and new mum Jacinda Ardern, only the second world leader to give birth while in office, ended her maternity leave yesterday and immediately announced baby Neve will accompany her to the United Nations next month. After six weeks bonding with her daughter, the 38-year-old said she was looking forward to getting back to work. "Absolutely," she told TVNZ as she marked her first day back with a round of media interviews. "I feel like I've been gifted by the New Zealand public, by my team and with the help of the acting prime minister this time to be with Neve, which has been wonderful. "But of course, this is a unique circumstance and I'm really very keen to get back to work."

Ardern has opted to work from home in Auckland until the weekend when she will relocate to the capital Wellington. She said that while she and partner Clarke Gayford want to protect the baby's privacy "at the same time we want to be a family and I do a very public job". Gayford, a television fishing show host, plans to be a stay-at-home dad and the main caregiver for their daughter. Ardern told stuff.co.nz they would travel as a family to the United Nations in New York, where she is due to speak. "Perhaps fittingly the program for (the UN meeting) is focused on things



**AUCKLAND:** New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and partner Clarke Gayford pose with their baby daughter on Wednesday. — AFP

like women, children, and climate change - very strong themes in those areas," she said.

Rather than be concerned with affairs of state while on maternity leave, Ardern was "worrying about feeding, sleeping, and nappies and there's this overlay of (public) interest in what is actually something that is mundane". "Something that every parent has gone through and yet I absolutely accept this layer of interest because it's not our normal yet. But one day it will be."

The birth capped an eventful year for Ardern, who became prime minister in October just three months after taking charge of the Labour Party as it languished in the polls.—AFP

## News in brief

### 'Inhumane' treatment suit filed

**LOS ANGELES:** A lawsuit filed yesterday accuses US President Donald Trump and senior administration officials of subjecting more than 1,000 undocumented immigrants to "inhumane" conditions at a federal prison in California. Since June 8 the group of detainees have been imprisoned "in violation of their constitutional rights", according to the complaint. "They are locked in prison cells for much of the day and all night. No healthcare provider has assessed them," it says. The suit was filed a day after lawmakers assailed the Trump administration for its controversial border policy, which in another widely condemned case has led to the separation of more than 2,500 undocumented migrant children from their parents or guardians. —AFP

### Australian senators face off

**SYDNEY:** An Australian senator has sued a male counterpart for defamation for making sexually offensive remarks, in a landmark case that brings the spirit of the #MeToo movement to the heart of Australia's democracy. During a debate a month ago in parliament over a ban on the use of pepper spray, Senator David Leyonhjelm had heckled Greens Senator Sarah Hanson-Young with a vulgar colloquial term for sexual intercourse. Comments made in the chamber are subject to legal protections. But Leyonhjelm repeated the remark, using the same term, in subsequent media appearances.—Reuters

## International

# Trump tells attorney general Sessions to end Russia probe

## Aides insist president not issuing an order

**WASHINGTON:** Donald Trump yesterday told his attorney general to end the high-profile investigation into Russian election meddling that has ensnared key members of his presidential campaign and cast a long shadow over his White House. In a series of tweets that quickly sparked accusations that Trump was publicly trying to pervert justice, the president decried the investigation led by special counsel Robert Mueller as “a disgrace”. “This is a terrible situation and Attorney General Jeff Sessions should stop this Rigged Witch Hunt right now, before it continues to stain our country any further,” Trump said.

Aides rushed to limit the damage, insisting he was not issuing an order as Sessions’ boss. “It’s not an order, it’s the president’s opinion,” White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders told reporters, adding that Trump wants the probe to “come to an end.” His lawyer Rudy Giuliani added: “He used a medium he uses for opinions, Twitter. One of the good things about using that, he’s established a clear sort of practice now that he expresses his opinions on Twitter. He used the word ‘should,’ he didn’t use the word ‘must.’”

The president - along with allies in conservative media - has launched a long PR campaign against the Mueller probe, which he claims is biased and pursuing erroneous claims of collusion between his campaign team and Moscow. “Russian Collusion with the Trump Campaign, one of the most successful in history, is a TOTAL HOAX,” the president said Wednesday. Mueller - a respected former FBI director - is investigating whether the Trump campaign aided or abetted an attempt by Russia to sway the 2016 presidential election, or tried to cover up the conspiracy.

He has so far lodged dozens of indictments, including those of suspected Russian hackers, and secured guilty pleas from at least three Trump aides charged with conspiracy and lying to investigators. This was Trump’s most direct demand yet that Sessions,

who infuriated the president by recusing himself from the investigation, intervene to end the probe. “The President of the United States just called on his Attorney General to put an end to an investigation in which the President, his family and campaign may be implicated,” said Democratic congressman Adam Schiff. “This is an attempt to obstruct justice hiding in plain sight. America must never accept it.”

Even Trump’s allies questioned the demand. “I’ve said all along I see no evidence of collusion. But if anyone helped Russia to hack/steal they deserve justice,” said Republican operative Ari Fleischer. “Let Mueller finish his job. Neither POTUS nor Sessions should interfere. After all, nothing will help Trump more than Mueller concluding there is no crime.” Amid the criticism from both sides of the political aisle, Trump’s personal attorneys also sought to walk back the comment, insisting the president was not ordering Sessions to do anything. “The president has issued no order or direction to the Department of Justice on this,” lawyer Jay Sekulow told The Washington Post.

Giuliani added the president may be within his legal rights to obstruct justice if he wishes. “Under our conclusion if the president is acting within his capacity as president and he fires someone, that can’t be questioned,” he said. Giuliani also told reporters the president’s legal team was in the middle of ongoing negotiations with Mueller, as a report in The Washington Post said the special counsel had offered to reduce the number of questions in exchange for a sit-down interview.

### In the courtroom

Trump’s latest Twitter tirade came on the second day of the trial of former campaign chairman Paul Manafort on bank and tax fraud charges, which stemmed from the probe but were not directly related to his time on the campaign. Trump tweeted on



**WASHINGTON:** US President Donald Trump responds to Dr Alveda King, niece of Dr Martin Luther King Jr, during a meeting with inner-city pastors at the White House on Wednesday. — AFP

Wednesday that Manafort “worked for me for a very short period of time” but sought to defend his former aide’s bona fides. “Paul Manafort worked for Ronald Reagan, Bob Dole and many other highly prominent and respected political leaders,” he said.

Manafort served as Trump’s campaign chief from May to Aug 2016 and the president asked Wednesday: “why didn’t government tell me that he was under investigation.” “These old charges have nothing to do with Collusion - a Hoax!” he said. Manafort’s trial opened Tuesday with prosecutors accusing him of hiding from US tax authorities millions of dollars from past lobbying work for the pro-Russia president of Ukraine, and failing to report his foreign bank accounts. — AFP

## US ‘crypto-anarchist’ sees 3D-printed guns as fundamental right

**AUSTIN:** The US “crypto-anarchist” who caused panic this week by publishing online blueprints for 3D-printed firearms said Wednesday that whatever the outcome of a legal battle, he has already succeeded in his political goal of spreading the designs far and wide. A federal court judge blocked Texan Cody Wilson’s website on Tuesday by issuing a temporary injunction. Eight states had sued, arguing the blueprints could allow anyone - from a teen to a “lone wolf” gunman - to make untraceable, undetectable plastic weapons.

Wilson complied with the judge’s order and shut down his Defcad website, which he wanted to turn into the “WikiLeaks of guns”. But by then, the blueprints he had posted - after President Donald Trump’s administration granted him permission to publish in a settlement to end a five-year legal battle - had been downloaded thousands of times. “No matter how badly I win or lose, you can download a gun from the Internet,” Wilson told AFP at the headquarters of Defense Distributed, the company he runs out of a modest factory in Texas capital Austin. “This attempt by these authorities to go into court and stifle this information drove more people to the website to download it and spread it deeper into the internet.”

Sporting a pair of gray jeans and a dark blue t-shirt, the 30-year-old with a close-cropped beard wouldn’t appear out of place as a tech executive in Silicon Valley. The ideology he says he is driven by is a defense of the US constitution’s first and second amendments - the rights to free speech and to bear arms. Wilson



**AUSTIN:** Cody Wilson, owner of Defense Distributed company, holds a 3D printed gun called the “Liberator” in his factory on Wednesday. — AFP

believes the intense media attention he generated cemented one of his principle goals: to use technology and the spread of gun-making information as a permanent bulwark against any future attempts at gun control in the US.

“We believe that the firearm itself, this implement of violence, is an essential component of force, of sovereignty,” he says. He concedes that what he has done, and still wants to do, “offends the conscience” of some people, but he says “it’s never been illegal in this country to make a firearm-and the way that you make it shouldn’t affect that law.”

Wilson ascribes to an anarchist philosophy that the free exchange of ideas on the Internet - in its absolute form - is a check on government. “It’s a politics that predicted WikiLeaks, predicted Bitcoin, predicted anonymous mail and anonymous communications online,” he says. — AFP

## US Senate passes huge defense bill, sends it to Trump

**WASHINGTON:** The US Senate easily passed a \$716.3 billion defense authorization bill Wednesday that ramps up military spending and bolsters America’s posture against Russia, while avoiding policy changes that would have antagonized President Donald Trump. The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) passed 87 to 10 in the Senate a week after clearing the House of Representatives, and now heads to the White House for Trump’s signature.

The bill provides \$69 billion in war funding known as overseas contingency operations, authorizes a 2.6 percent pay raise for members of the armed forces, and invests tens of billions in modernizing the Pentagon’s air and sea fleets and missile defenses. It notably prohibits delivery of F-35 Joint Strike Fighter aircraft to Turkey, a NATO ally with increasingly fraught relations with Washington, until Ankara can confirm it will not buy Russia’s S-400 anti-aircraft missile system.

And while China and Russia are classified as “strategic competitors” to the United States, the legislation negotiated between the House and Senate left out a proposal by senators that would have blocked a deal Trump reached with Chinese telecommunications giant ZTE that eases tough financial penalties on the firm for helping Iran and North Korea evade American sanctions. The capitulation smoothed things over with the White House, but it angered Republican Senator Marco Rubio, who voted against the bill. — AFP

## International

# Myanmar endures worst of Mekong monsoon floods

## Laos, Vietnam also affected by heavy rain

**BAGO, Myanmar:** Monsoon rains have pummeled the Mekong region in recent days with Myanmar bearing the brunt of flooding that has forced 150,000 to flee and threatens to destroy levees shielding thousands of homes. The swirling inundations have started to recede in some areas in the low-lying southeast but the country is only just entering peak monsoon season and more downpours are expected in the coming weeks. Thousands were either unable or have refused to leave their half-submerged homes, peering out from upper floor windows as they waited for relief boats bringing food and supplies.

Some waded out through the waist-deep water to collect the donations while others balanced precariously on rafts made from bamboo poles or jerry cans as they paddled through the waters. Evacuation orders are still in place across Bago, Karen, Mon and Taninthari provinces with dozens of dams and reservoirs overflowing. In Madauk town in Bago region, warnings that key levees are at breaking point sparked fear among residents. "We are worried about the embankment. We are really afraid," 43-year-old Ma Wai told AFP yesterday. "When the authorities warned us over the microphone, we didn't know where to run. Children and eld-

erly people were crying."

State media reported that nearly 150,000 people have been forced to seek refuge in 327 camps while nearly 28,000 are clinging on in their flooded homes. At least a dozen people have been killed. Tin Tun, 50, said he and his family decided they had no choice but to escape what he described as the worst flooding they had ever experienced. "We had to flee, taking people and our animals by boat. The water was up to our waists in our house when we left," he said.

The particularly heavy monsoon is also lashing Myanmar's neighbors. Laos is still searching for scores of people missing after a dam collapsed last month, wiping out entire villages and killing at least 11 - though earlier official tolls initially put the number as high as 27. Thai, South Korean and Chinese specialists have joined the effort to find the missing. Floodwaters from the disaster seeped into Cambodia and forced thousands from their homes.

Thailand said yesterday that seven of its northeastern provinces have been hit by flooding, affecting at least 30,000 people. Heavy flooding has also submerged swathes of farmland near Vietnam's capital Hanoi this week, with water reaching the roofs of some homes causing



HPA-AN, Myanmar: Villagers from near Karen state travel across floodwaters on small boats to a waiting relief boat (not pictured) to pick up food and other emergency supplies on Wednesday. —AFP

4,000 residents to scramble to dry ground. "We had to move our property, rice, our cattle and poultry," Phung Thi Luan told AFP from a makeshift shelter in a community center. "There's no road for us to get around

and...there's no electricity." So far this year in Vietnam, 112 people have gone missing in natural disasters, with more than 900 homes completely destroyed and tens of thousands of hectares of farmland damaged. —AFP

### News in brief

#### 3 foreigners killed

**KABUL:** Afghan police in Kabul yesterday recovered the bodies of three foreign nationals who they said had been abducted and killed, in the latest incident targeting foreigners in the war-torn capital. The killings come as the city has been rocked by an increasing number of attacks in recent months as Islamic State (IS) and Taliban insurgents target security forces and government installations. The victims, all working for a logistics company in Kabul, were from India, Macedonia and Malaysia, a spokesman for the interior ministry said. The incident happened after the group left their office with a car and driver Thursday. Just over an hour later their bodies were found in what appeared to be a different car by authorities in the rural outskirts of Kabul. "They had been shot inside the car," said Bahar Mehr with the interior ministry. Another spokesman with the ministry said the car's driver was being questioned by police and treated as a possible suspect. He added that all three had been handcuffed and shot, with two of the bodies later placed in the trunk of the car. —AFP

#### Grey is the new black

**ASHGABAT, Turkmenistan:** The ruler of ex-Soviet Turkmenistan has ditched his signature black hair dye - a move that will be closely analyzed in a nation famed for its leadership personality cults. A photograph of Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov on the front of state mouthpiece Neutral Turkmenistan yesterday showed his thick, dark mane flecked with grey for the first time since he came to power in 2006. Television footage showing the 61-year-old leader meeting neighboring Kazakhstan's new ambassador to the gas-rich nation confirmed the change. Berdimukhamedov's new look marks a break from his late predecessor Saparmurat Niyazov, who made waves in 1999 when he appeared in public with auburn hair after previously sporting a whitish do. —AFP

## Fifth day of protests in Bangladesh

**DHAKA:** Bangladesh shut down high schools across the country yesterday as tens of thousands of students protested for a fifth straight day after two teenagers were killed by a speeding bus. Bangladesh's transport sector is widely seen as corrupt, unregulated, and dangerous, and as news of the teenagers' deaths spread rapidly on social media, they became a catalyst for a massive outpouring of anger. Authorities have pleaded with students to call off the protests that have near-paralyzed Dhaka and spread beyond the capital, with vehicles vandalized and clashes with police in some parts.

The demonstrators, mostly students in their mid-teens, chanted "we want justice" yesterday as they defied pouring rain to march in Dhaka for another day, bringing traffic to a standstill. The education ministry shut down high schools yesterday in an effort to quell unrest, promising students their demands for reforms to road safety would be considered. But anger has not subdued since a bus racing for passengers killed a boy and a girl on the roadside on Sunday, igniting the protests. Protesters are blaming the government for failing to enforce traffic laws, and an insensitive comment by Shajahan Khan, a government minister with ties to powerful transport unions, triggered fresh outrage.

Khan questioned why there was such an uproar over the two Dhaka children but no reaction when 33 people were killed in an Indian bus crash the day before. There have been widespread social media demands for his resignation even though the minister later apologized. Authorities say more than 300 vehicles have been vandalized



DHAKA: Bangladeshi students block a road during a protest yesterday following the deaths of two college students in a road accident. —AFP

since the protests started.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan on Wednesday promised that the government would launch a public transport safety campaign and urged the protesters to go home. "People are suffering and we don't want this," he said. According to the National Committee to Protect Shipping, Roads and Railways, a private research group, more than 4,200 pedestrians were killed in road accidents last year, a 25 percent increase from 2016. —AFP



## International

# US Korean War dead heading home at last

## Caskets carrying 55 remains were draped in UN flag

**PEARL HARBOR:** Sixty-five years after the Korean War ended, the remains of dozens of American soldiers killed during the brutal conflict are finally coming home. Wednesday's repatriation marks an important step after US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un held a summit, during which Kim agreed to send home the war dead. Trump, who has faced criticism over the pace of progress since the June meeting, praised Kim for "keeping his word," and Vice President Mike Pence met families when the remains arrived back in the US at a ceremony in Hawaii.

Caskets carrying the 55 sets of remains were draped in the blue-and-white flag of the United Nations. Many nations fought in the Korean War, but most of the cases are thought to contain US troops. More than 35,000 Americans were killed on the Korean peninsula during the 1950-1953 war, with 7,700 of these US troops still listed as missing in action—most of them in North Korea. "Some have called the Korean War the forgotten war. But today, we prove these heroes were never forgotten. Today our boys are coming home," an emotional Pence said.

"My dad, lieutenant Ed Pence fought in combat in the Korean War. He came back with a medal on his chest. But my dad, gone now 30 years, always told us the real heroes...were the ones that didn't get to come home," the US vice president said. It could take scientists and historians years to make final identifications. John Byrd, director of scientific analysis at the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), which has a large laboratory in

Pearl Harbor, said preliminary findings suggest the remains are likely American.

They "are consistent with remains we have recovered in North Korea... in the past," Byrd told reporters at Osan US Air Base in South Korea. The cases had been kept there since Friday, awaiting their repatriation to Hawaii for further forensic analysis. "There's no reason at this point to doubt that they do relate to Korean War losses," Byrd added.

### Solemn reminder

Around 500 officials from the United Nations Command (UNC), the United States and South Korea attended a formal repatriation ceremony at Osan earlier Wednesday. "This is a solemn reminder that our work is not complete until all have been accounted for, no matter how long it takes to do so," said General Vincent Brooks, commander of the UNC and United States Forces Korea. After the ceremony, uniformed soldiers carefully loaded each case into two C-17 cargo planes, which later took off for Hawaii.

### DNA, bones, dental records

Byrd told reporters that "there was a single dog tag (US soldier's identity tag) provided with the remains." "The family of that individual has been notified," he said, though he cautioned that the tag is not necessarily associated with the remains in the box. The returned material also included military hardware and uniforms, including helmets, water bottles and boots.



**PEARL HARBOR:** Military pallbearers carry the believed to be remains of US service members collected in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea during Repatriation ceremony after arriving to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Honolulu, Hawaii.—AFP

Former DPAA official Jeong Yang-seung, who previously worked on identifying US remains from the North, said it was unusual to locate dog tags during the search and recovery process. "It's once in a blue moon that dog tags are recovered," Jeong, now professor of forensic anthropology at the Middle Tennessee State University, said. "I don't think North Korea is refusing to give dog tags when it has more but it probably doesn't have dog tags lying around," he said.

"So when... only one dog tag was provided, it's

probably not to tease the US but rather that it was sent because it could offer clues to the remains." DNA analysis, skeletal studies of bones, dental records and details of where the remains were found play a key role in such investigations. "If it's identified quickly, it would be around five to six months, but if not, it could take decades," he said. Between 1990 and 2005, North Korea allowed 229 sets of remains to be repatriated, but those operations were suspended when ties worsened over Pyongyang's banned nuclear weapons program.—AFP

## Cambodia PM slams 'failed' election boycott campaign

**PHNOM PENH:** Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen said opposition calls to boycott elections failed as he celebrated his "crystal clear" victory in the uncontested vote in a speech to thousands of garment workers yesterday. Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party (CPP) is poised to win all 125 parliamentary seats after the flawed poll that will see the strongman leader extend his 33-year rule, cementing the country's status as a one-party state.

Opposition figures had called for a boycott of the vote with a so-called "sleep at home" or "clean finger" campaign after the most viable election contender, the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), was dissolved last year and barred from running. "The sleep-at-home campaign has already failed. More than 82 percent of Cambodians nationwide went to vote, it shows our Cambodians support the democratic process," he told a crowd of 14,000 workers in his first speech since the ballot. "It is crystal clear that the future Prime Minister of the new government... is Hun Sen again," he said to applause. He told the crowd that Cambodia's new parliament would convene on September 19 and the government would be formed a day later. Some 6.9 million votes were cast in Sunday's election—but nearly 600,000 ballots were spoiled, in a sign of unhappy voters.



**PHNOM PENH:** Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen speaks during a visit to a garment factory in Phnom Penh.—AFP

### Terrible setback

The United States and the European Union declined to send election observers to the poll because they said it lacked credibility with no viable opposition on the ticket. Instead it was monitored by members of far-right and populist parties from Britain, Italy, Belarus and India. The vote immediately drew condemnation from the EU and the US, while the self-exiled co-founder of the now disbanded CNRP Sam Rainsy told AFP this week it was a "terrible setback". Rainsy, who lives in France to avoid a litany of charges he faces in Cambodia, also urged the international community to reject the results. The CNRP, whose leader Kem Sokha is in jail on charges of treason, took 44 percent of the vote in the last elections in 2013, the most credible challenge to Hun Sen's grip on power in decades. Hun Sen vowed on Thursday to double down on efforts to eliminate any remaining opposition in the country.—AFP

## Tokyo med school altered test scores to keep women out

**TOKYO:** A Tokyo medical school for years altered the admission test results of female applicants to keep the number of women in the student body low, a Japanese newspaper reported yesterday. The Yomiuri Shimbun daily said the manipulation came to light while prosecutors were investigating a separate scandal in which the Tokyo Medical University is accused of illicitly admitting the son of an education ministry bureaucrat.

"Following the report this morning, we asked a law firm to launch an internal investigation into the reported issue," Fumio Azuma, a spokesman for the university said, adding that it hopes to announce the result of the probe later this month. The law firm that will investigate the report already has an advisory contract with the university but its usual consulting lawyer will not be part of the investigating team, Azuma said.

The Yomiuri, citing unnamed sources, said the university began lowering the admission test scores of female applicants to its medical school in 2011, after the 2010 results showed an increas-

ing number of women were winning places. In 2010, around 40 percent of successful applicants were women, double the previous year. After that, the university began trying to keep the percentage of women admitted each year to around 30 percent of the incoming class.

"Women often quit after graduating and becoming a doctor, when they get married and have a child," one source told the Yomiuri, in justifying the blanket alterations of admission scores. "There is a consensus inside the university that male doctors support the university hospital," which often requires emergency duties and long shifts, the source told the daily. The newspaper said the test scores of female applicants had been lowered across the board by administrators who applied a fixed coefficient to women's results.

In 2018, the ratio of women accepted after the first round of tests was 14.5 percent, compared with 18.9 percent for men. In the second and final test stage, just 2.9 percent of female applicants were admitted, compared with 8.8 percent of male applicants. The newspaper did not give figures for the current gender breakdown of the school's student body. The university was reportedly already under investigation by the Tokyo District Prosecutor's Office over claims the privately-run school wrongly admitted the son of an education ministry official.—AFP

## International

# China wants military drills with ASEAN in disputed sea

## Beijing insists on excluding US to diminish influence

**SINGAPORE:** China wants military exercises and energy exploration with Southeast Asian nations in disputed waters, according to a draft document, but insists on outside countries being excluded in what analysts say is a bid to diminish US influence. Beijing's suggestions are part of efforts to expand its influence in the South China Sea, which it claims almost entirely, and push back at Washington which has backed countries with overlapping claims to the waters.

A code of conduct between Beijing and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to govern behavior in the strategic sea has been years in the making. The draft document, seen by AFP, outlines different countries' bargaining positions as they work towards an agreement, and analysts said it represented some initial progress. In the text, Vietnam offers the strongest opposition to Beijing's activities—calling for countries to stop building artificial islands and establishing military installations.

But there was little sign of serious resistance from other countries, signaling how opposition to China's aggressive expansion in the resource-rich waters has ebbed in recent years in Southeast Asia. At a meeting of foreign ministers in Singapore yesterday, Beijing and ASEAN announced they had agreed on the negotiating text for the code. Singapore's Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan, who is chairing the meeting, called the draft a "major achievement". "The code of conduct is meant to... ensure that peace, stability, confidence is built up

so that we can continue to make collective progress between ASEAN and China while we take time to resolve the territorial disputes," he said yesterday.

However, it was too early to say when negotiations would be complete, he added. Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam have rival claims to China's in the sea. Tensions have escalated in recent years due to Beijing building artificial islands that can host military bases. Meanwhile the US—traditionally the dominant military power in the area—has more frequently carried out patrols aimed at ensuring freedom of navigation.

### Long-running tensions

In the draft text, Beijing suggests that China and the 10 ASEAN states should carry out joint military exercises regularly. However, the drills should not involve countries outside the region "unless the parties concerned are notified beforehand and express no objection". The suggestion to exclude outside countries "is obviously targeted at the US which has been dominating the waters of the Western Pacific and the South China Sea in particular", Hoang Thi Ha, from the ASEAN Studies Centre, ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore, said.

By proposing joint military exercises, China is trying to send a "subtle message to the world that ASEAN and China could work together and things are progressing well, hence there is no need for external involvement in the South



**SINGAPORE:** Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, center, poses for a group photograph with ASEAN foreign ministers and representatives during the bilateral meeting at the 51st Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Ministerial Meeting in Singapore.—AFP

China Sea issue", said Ha. Beijing also suggested that China and ASEAN could carry out joint oil and gas exploration in the waters but again proposed that firms from countries outside the region be excluded from such activities, the document showed.

"We believe that without any disturbances

from the outside, code of conduct consultations will accelerate," Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told reporters. "We have made leapfrog progress in advancing ASEAN-China relations from quantity to quality," he added, saying the first joint maritime exercises would be held in October. —AFP

## Seoul deploys warship to Libya

**SEOUL:** Seoul said yesterday it had deployed a warship to Libya in an apparent show of force to secure the release of a South Korean national kidnapped along with three Filipinos in the North African country. The 4,000-tonne vessel, Munmu the Great, which takes part in anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, was now on its way to Libya, officials said. In addition to "carrying out its duty of protecting commercial vessels, (the warship) is also preparing for all possibilities including the need for military support", a defense ministry spokesman said, without elaborating further.

The three Filipino engineers and a South Korean were abducted in an attack on a water project site in western Libya on July 6. Their governments confirmed they were featured in a video shared on social media this week. The video, also posted by the SITE Intelligence group,

shows the four men addressing the camera in English. An armed guard is pictured squatting behind them in the sand, but their captors are not identified and the attack has not been claimed by any group. It was not clear when the video was shot.

"The Philippine embassy in Tripoli has confirmed that the three men in the video are the three Filipino technicians who (were) taken by armed men in Libya last month," Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs spokesman Elmer Cato said. A spokesman for Seoul's presidential office said the government was doing "its utmost with all the resources the country has". "His country and his president have never once forgotten him," spokesman Kim Eui-kyeom said in a statement.

"The government has been maintaining a close cooperation system with the government of Libya and other allies, such as the Philippines and the United States, since the day of the incident for his safety and release," Kim said. Since former Libyan dictator Moamer Kadhafi was ousted from power and killed in 2011, foreign workers and diplomatic missions have frequently been targeted by militias or jihadists such as the Islamic State group. — AFP

## Heatwave causes heavy crop damage in N Korea

**SEOUL:** North Korea yesterday warned that an "unprecedented" heatwave has caused heavy damage to crops as it urged citizens to "join the struggle" to prevent drought-like conditions from worsening and hampering food production in the impoverished country. The Korean peninsula has been gripped by a scorching heatwave in recent weeks, with dozens of deaths in the South blamed on soaring temperatures that have hit all-time highs.

The temperature in North Korea's capital Pyongyang climbed to a record high of 37.8 degrees Celsius on Wednesday, with state TV warning that it was "taking a toll on the economy". It did not elaborate on the scale of the damage. But the rising temperatures have already inflicted heavy losses on the richer South, which has reported more than three million deaths of livestock and a fivefold increase in deaths from heat-related illnesses, while vegetable prices have doubled due to supplies being affected.

The North's state-run Rodong newspaper yesterday said that curbing further damage to the agriculture sector was an "extremely important and urgent task". "Rural areas across the

country... are reporting damages to crops including rice and corn due to extremely high temperatures and drought," it said in an editorial. "Today's reality is calling for every single individual across the country to join the struggle to contain the damages stemming from high temperature and drought," it said, urging citizens to "display their patriotic zeal" and "save every single dollop of water".

"This year's high temperature is an unprecedented natural disaster but it is not an insurmountable difficulty," it added. The North has a fragile economy and has been frequently condemned by the international community for decades of prioritizing its military and banned nuclear weapons program over adequately providing for its people. It has also been slapped with UN sanctions over its nuclear and missile tests, with the restrictions remaining in place despite an ongoing diplomatic rapprochement that has seen the North's leader Kim Jong Un hold a landmark summit with US President Donald Trump.

The country has periodically been hit by famine, and hundreds of thousands of people died—estimates range into millions—in the mid-1990s. The food situation has improved in recent years however, partly due to reforms in agriculture and increasing trade at state-sanctioned private markets that have cropped up nationwide. But the nation remains vulnerable to natural disasters including flood and drought due to chronic lack of infrastructure, deforestation and decades of state mismanagement. — AFP

# Lifestyle

Friday Times

FRIDAY, AUGUST 3, 2018

[www.kuwaittimes.net](http://www.kuwaittimes.net)

Bollywood actress Kareena Kapoor Khan presents a creation by Indian designer Falguni & Shane Peacock during the India Couture Week 2018 in New Delhi. — AFP

*Diaper bags get a stylish update*

See Page 25

## 2 teen street singers take the stage with Cyndi Lauper



File photo shows Cyndi Lauper arrives at the 60th annual Grammy Awards in New York. — AP

Two North Carolina teens went overnight from singing on a street corner to sharing a stage with Grammy Award-winning singer Cyndi Lauper. Mya Worley, 14, was singing on a city street last Friday with her 13-year-old brother Ronald on the keyboard, as they have done all summer under their father's guidance, *The Charlotte Observer* reported. Two women stopped to listen and one suggested they had to get the teens "to play tomorrow."

With Lauper standing nearby, manager Lisa Barbaris approached Ronald Worley Sr and asked if his kids would sing Lauper's 1983 hit "Girls Just Want To Have Fun" with the pop icon at a concert. Less than 24 hours later, the siblings were at the 20,000-seat Spectrum Center. Mya Rowling sang the first verse and chorus of the song, which was rearranged by Lauper and Rowling to be an almost-gospel-hymn-like number. The only musical accompaniment for her portion was Ronald Jr on a keyboard.

The crowd roared as Mya held the last note, then gave way to Lauper and the upbeat version known to nearly everyone. As thrilled as Mya and Ronald Jr were by the experience, it was their father who may have gotten the biggest thrill. "I'm an '80s child," Ronald Sr said. "I grew up listening to her music. I always loved Cyndi Lauper. ... So this was just incredible. I tell you, it was so incredible. ... Cyndi wrote some things down on paper for us, so I have a piece of paper with her handwriting on it that we'll never, ever, ever, ever, ever-lose." — AP

Stormtrooper helmets from *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* (left) (estimate £30-50,000) and *Star Wars: A New Hope* (right) (estimate £40-60,000) on display in the Prop Store head office near Rickmansworth, Enlgnad, Monday ahead of the Entertainment Memorabilia Live Auction on September 20. — AP photos



A Prop Store employee holds a Wonka Bar from the film *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (estimate £8-10,000) on display.



A Prop Store employee James Chapman adjusts Han Solo's jacket, as worn by Harrison Ford in *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* (estimate £500,000 - £1,000,000) on display.

## Star Wars jacket expected to fetch \$1.3 million at auction

The jacket worn by actor Harrison Ford in the "Star Wars" film "The Empire Strikes Back" is expected to fetch up to 1 million pounds (\$1.3 million) in an auction of rare movie memorabilia in Britain next month. The blue-grey cotton jacket, worn in the 1980 film by Ford's character, Han Solo, is one of more than 600 costumes, original scripts and props up for auction Sept. 20 at London's BFI Imax.

The auction is organized by the Prop Store, a UK-based film and television memorabilia company. Other items include a light saber from "Star Wars Episode III: Revenge Of the Sith," actor Johnny Depp's costume from the 1990 film "Edward Scissorhands," and a hat worn by Tom Hanks in *Forrest Gump*. — AP



Costumes from *rogue One: A Star Wars Story* including Felicity Jones' character's costume, center, (estimate £15-25,000) on display.

## Patrick Dempsey warns of online scam soliciting money

Actor Patrick Dempsey says someone is impersonating him online and asking his fans to give money to either him or his Maine-based nonprofit. Dempsey tweeted on his verified account Monday that "people have been impersonating me and asking my fans for money (through social media)." Nancy Audet, spokeswoman for the Dempsey Centers in Lewiston and Portland, tells the *Sun Journal* that Dempsey is not

asking anyone for money.

Audet says the scam has been going on for a while, saying people set up fake accounts and send messages pretending they are seeking money for the Dempsey Centers or the actor himself. Dempsey was born in Maine and is best known for his role as Dr Derek "McDreamy" Shepherd in "Grey's Anatomy." His Maine nonprofit seeks to help those affected by cancer. — AP



In this file photo, Patrick Dempsey appears at the Vanity Fair Oscar Party in Beverly Hills, Calif. — AP

In this file photo Swedish singer Robyn performs on the main stage at the O2 Wireless Festival in Hyde Park, in London. — AFP



## DARK SYNTH-POP HEROINE ROBYN BACK AFTER EIGHT YEARS

Robyn, the Swedish singer whose dark yet danceable synth-pop has won her an avid fan base, returned Wednesday with a song off her first album in eight years. "Missing U" is driven by a quick-paced and airy electronic keyboard with a tinge of melancholy over a retro synthesized bass, true to Robyn's signature style of sad but energetic love songs. The usually reclusive singer accompanied the track with a short documentary film in which she shows up at a long-running twice-a-year party in Brooklyn devoted to her music.

Robyn emerged in the early 1990s in Sweden as a child star and soon developed a niche cultural status rare to such seemingly mainstream pop singers, with her hits such as "Dancing On My Own" and "Show Me Love" in steady rotation at gay clubs and the singer preferring to work with underground DJs rather than major producers. Robyn, who goes only by her first name, said that she spent much of the time since her last album, 2010's "Body Talk," traveling, going to a therapist and, in line with her song, dancing by herself.

Speaking to BBC Radio 1, Robyn said that she had finished recording her latest album and expected it to be released in 2018. "I feel like what's different about it, maybe, is that there is this sensuality and a softness to it that maybe wasn't there before in the same way," she said. "And I think it came also from just shutting down for a while and hearing myself... going inside instead of outside," she said. Robyn, 39, has still performed periodically since her last album and wrote a song last year for the final season of the HBO series "Girls."—AFP

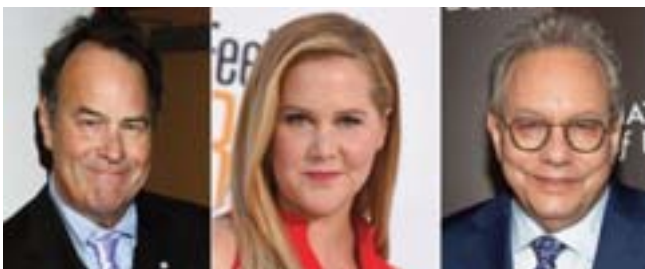


Photo shows comedians, from left, Dan Aykroyd, Amy Shumer and Lewis Black, who are scheduled to appear during this week's grand opening celebration for The National Comedy Center.

## National Comedy Center opens in 'I Love Lucy' star's town

The National Comedy Center is open for laughs in 'I Love Lucy' comedian Lucille Ball's hometown. The \$50 million cultural institution is in the western New York city of Jamestown and tells the story of comedy from its origins to the present with a mix of interactive exhibits, a hologram theater and comedy artifacts such as the late George Carlin's archives.

Gov Andrew Cuomo (KWOH'-moh) on Wednesday helped cut the ribbon on the nonprofit center, which received \$9 million in state funding. Amy Shumer, Lewis Black and Dan Aykroyd are among comedians set to appear during this week's grand opening celebration. The center was inspired by Ball, who starred as accident-prone Lucy Ricardo on the 1950s sitcom. Jamestown has a museum dedicated to Ball, who said she wanted to see all comedy celebrated as an art form. —AP

# Kidman, Theron to star in film on harassment at Fox News



In this file photo Cast member Nicole Kidman participates during the Warner Bros theatrical Panel for 'Aquaman' at Comic Con in San Diego.



In this file photo Actress Charlize Theron attends Amazon Studios' world premiere of 'Gringo' in Los Angeles, California. —AFP photos

Nicole Kidman and Charlize Theron are to lead an all-star cast in a new movie about former Fox News hosts Gretchen Carlson and Megyn Kelly, who spoke up about sexual harassment at the network before the #MeToo movement kicked off. Kidman is to play Carlson, the Stanford and Oxford-educated former Miss America and prominent Fox News anchor who accused the late media mogul Roger Ailes of sexual harassment, the entertainment press reported.

"I hope the true story is depicted. The most important thing is that so many more women are now believed and have been given a voice," Carlson tweeted Wednesday, linking to a Variety story that revealed Kidman's role. Variety said Theron would play Kelly, who shot to fame for clashing

with Donald Trump during the 2016 presidential election campaign, and who now fronts a morning magazine show on rival network NBC. Rising Australian star Margot Robbie is also in talks to join the cast, The Hollywood Reporter said. A spokeswoman for the production house confirmed that the film was about the women of Fox News and currently untitled. Charles Randolph, who won an Oscar for 2015 "The Big Short" about the housing bubble that led to the 2008 financial crash, is also on board, reports said. Ailes, who co-founded Fox News and helped redraw conservative American politics, was forced to resign in July 2016 in a blaze of sexual harassment allegations and lawsuit from Carlson.

He denied all the allegations and died less than a year later, in May 2017. Under

Ailes' leadership, Fox became America's most watched cable news channel, home to key conservative political commentators. He also advised Republican presidents from Richard Nixon to Ronald Reagan, and was close to Trump. Carlson claimed she was sacked for refusing his advances.

The lawsuit opened the gates to a flood of allegations from women, including Kelly, who accused him of groping them or making unwanted advances—and sought to expose what they called a culture of misogyny at the network. Ailes' downfall pre-dated the #MeToo reckoning against sexual harassment that was sparked by sexual misconduct allegations against Hollywood titan Harvey Weinstein and seen a litany of powerful men lose their jobs. —AFP

## MINAJ HUNTING FOR CHAPMAN AS ALBUM WAITS

Rapper Nicki Minaj said Wednesday that she is pushing back her new album as she desperately seeks to reach Tracy Chapman to clear a sample. Chapman, the deep-voiced and intensely private folk singer behind socially conscious songs such as the 1988 classic "Fast Car," has pulled off the increasingly rare feat of being nowhere to be found online as Minaj pleaded via her 20 million followers each on Instagram and Twitter. In a tweet this week that she later deleted, Minaj wrote that a song on her upcoming album, "Queen," features one of "the greatest rappers of all time" but that she had "no clue it sampled the legend #TracyChapman."

Minaj, whose album will be her first in four years, proceeded to poll her followers to ask whether she should delete the track or delay the album. The latter option apparently won. Writing on her Apple Music account yesterday, Minaj said the album would come out August 17. She earlier had announced it for June and then pushed it back to August 10.

Minaj also posted a text conversation

conducted through a fan in which Chapman is offered \$2 million to grant permission in time for an August 10 release. Chapman, 54, has said that she has no desire to spend time on social media. A number of fans voiced offense at Minaj's full-court push. "I can't believe that this is the kind of disrespect that Tracy Chapman is getting for merely not replying!!" tweeted one user with the handle @nasque.

Minaj did not specify the rapper behind the supposedly obscure Chapman sample but her praiseworthy tone led fans to think she was referring to Eminem. The two rappers have suggested in flirtatious public remarks that they may be romantically involved. Chris Brown, the singer and rapper controversial over his history of domestic violence, sampled "Fast Car" in his song "Run Away." Minaj, one of the top women in hip-hop, has already released three songs from "Queen" including "Bed," a tropically infused, sexually charged duet with pop singer Ariana Grande, and "Chun-Li," a nod to Asian martial arts and video-game culture. —AFP



In this file photo singer Tracy Chapman attends the Beverly Hills Bar Association's Entertainment Lawyer of the Year Dinner at Beverly Hills Hotel in Beverly Hills, California. — AFP

# Frozen in time, Havana looks to put a modern stamp on its 500-year history



A tour bus passes in front of an old building in Havana.

Havana could be compared to the colorful 1950s classic American cars that fill its roads: an object of desire for historians and tourists alike. To walk through its streets is to take a step back in time. Run-down homes show signs of salt erosion as waves from the Caribbean Sea batter away at the city's seawall, while at the day's end the setting sun paints the sky orange. Despite the visual signs of deterioration, Havana is spiritually alive. The Cuban capital will celebrate 500 years in 2019, with an urban restoration plan aiming to give space to modernity while maintaining respect for its vin-

tage character.

"Havana remains frozen in time. The revolution's aims were to look after the country," city historian Eusebio Leal, who's in charge of restoring the historic center, told AFP. "Undeniably there's been a cost. When you go around you can see the city's damaged and covered by a veil of decadence." "There have been no new bridges or wide avenues built in the city, there are no traffic problems and there have been no wide-scale demolitions like in other Latin American cities." But Leal insists the city has much greater depth than simple aesthetic beauty.

"Havana is not just a romantic ruin, nor a city of classic American cars, or a city of dancers and palm trees. It's a city of intense culture," he said. "What's surprising is that there isn't enough time to sample the cultural life that extends from ballet festivals to book festivals, from historic cities to jazz. "And its plastic arts are amongst the most desired in the world by collectors."

#### Changing landscape

The neo-baroque Great Theatre of Havana Alicia Alonso, home to the National Ballet and guarded by marble statues, and the majestic

Capitolio building with its impressive cupola really stand out, as does the music that greets visitors on every street corner. But the landscape has started to change, not least since the country eased open its doors to foreign investment, with luxury stores and "capitalist" brands, restaurants and hotels slipping into historic buildings and sharing public space with damp, old rooftop terraces and colonial-style balconies.

"Over the last decade, Havana has seen an injection of large private initiatives... which has given rise to an architectural renaissance and creation of jobs," said Leal.



Old American cars drive along Havana's Malecon. — AFP photos



Men fish as the sun sets at the Malecon in Havana.



Tourists surround Cuban musicians at the Malecon in Havana.

The admittance of private enterprise has had a dramatic effect, with 13 percent of the labor force now employed in the private sector. Private hospitals and restaurants cater to tourist demands. One of the oldest cities in the Americas, Havana was a modern metropolis at the start of the 20th century but also a haven for mafia organizations.

Following the 1959 socialist revolution, a spiritual cleansing saw the proliferation of brothels

and casinos consigned to history, but physically the city was neglected. Its streets are poorly maintained and badly lit, but Havana is a much safer city than many other Latin American metropolises. In 2017, it attracted 4.5 million tourists.

**'Cultural riches'**

"Havana is a joyous and fun city and its people are welcoming and caring. It's a place where



View of Havana at dusk.

I feel safe wandering its streets," Brazilian tourist Debora Naves, 41, told AFP. "However, I think it needs foreign investment to truly show off its cultural riches."

Leal says it is that "vision of a lively but calm city, a peaceful country without major crime that makes it attractive." Another of its major attractions is the fleet of classic cars such as a 1956 Chevrolet Bel Air or a 1952 Dodge Coronet Sierra, lovingly and painstakingly upgraded with

modern parts hidden by the retro exterior.

But to do so "costs a lot," said Yoisel Fernandez, who drives a convertible 1960 Hillman. After six decades of United States sanctions, the world has been opening up slowly to Cuba, Leal said, adding that there is still much more to come. What the city needs, he added, is for citizens of the future to drive Havana "into a new economic and social age in which its beauty is preserved without limiting modernization." — AFP



Men fish at the Malecon in Havana.



A horse-drawn cart rides in a street of Havana.

## Eiffel Tower shuts down as employees strike over ticket plan

Eiffel Tower workers have gone on strike over the Paris monument's new visitor access policy, which they say is responsible for inordinately long queues. The website of the French landmark confirmed the strike Wednesday afternoon, but didn't specify how long it would last. Since last month, the Eiffel Tower has been allowing half of its tickets to be booked in advance for scheduled entry times. Previously, pre-booked tickets accounted for around one-fifth of the entries.

Unions that represent the tower's some 300 employees have complained that the different ticketholders are being allocated separate elevators, saying this has created "monstrous" waiting times. The Eiffel Tower had over six million visitors last year but has been beset by multiple strikes and security issues in recent years. —AP

People cool off as they walk along the fountain of Warsaw near Eiffel Tower in Paris, France, Wednesday. — AP



## Lifestyle | Feature



McMillan Memorial Library, a colonial-era building in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, established in 1931 and named after US-born philanthropist, Sir William Northrup McMillan. — AFP photos



A collection of hard-covered, 1980's book sets sit in shelves, in a hall adorned with a victorian statuette inside the colonial-era McMillan Memorial Library.



An ageing stuffed lion's head sits on a pile of literature and newspapers, some of which are antique, strewn on the floor at the colonial-era McMillan Memorial Library.

# KENYAN WOMEN LEAD BOLD REVIVAL OF LIBRARIES' FADED GLORY



This undated handout photograph shows Kenyan publisher Angela Wachuka (right) and author Wanjiru Koinange as they pose in Nairobi.



A man peruses a newspaper at the book check-out counter underneath giant elephant ivory tusks at the colonial-era McMillan Memorial Library.

Despite its dilapidated state, a handful of Kenyans still seek out the 1930s neoclassical grandeur of Nairobi's McMillan library, complete with granite columns on its imposing facade. They are drawn more by the tranquil refuge offered from Nairobi's urban hubbub than for the meagre and chaotic array of books on its shelves. Soon though, if publisher Angela Wachuka and author Wanjiru Koinange have their way, the faded glory of the past will give way to modern amenities and a renovated space. The pair are working to restore three Nairobi libraries that have been neglected for decades. "I refuse to live in a city where children can actually grow up having never entered a library, which is the case of the Nairobi we are living in," Koinange, 32, who grew up in the Kenyan capital, told AFP.

In 2017, the young women launched the "Book Bunk" scheme to modernize the McMillan Memorial Library, situated in Nairobi's buzzing business quarter, as well as the libraries at Makadara and Kaloleni in residential areas of the city. "The approach for all three libraries is the same—it is just that the different libraries will target different demographics," said Koinange.

McMillan, the largest, will be general interest while Kaloleni will specialise in children's literature and Makadara will focus on offerings for teenagers. Despite the rundown state of the Makadara library, located in a 1970s building, it still pulls in 180 young readers a day, which, Koinange said, highlights the demand for literary services. In a vibrant, built-up city, people also crave the rare peace and quiet. "I have come to study and the library is calm, there is no noise," said 20-year-old student Caren Mumbua Musembi, as she visited for the first time.

### 'Hard to get the exact books'

Bernard Ouma Ogotu, an accountancy student at Nairobi's Kenyatta University, whiles away his days in the library. "It might be hard to get the exact books that you want but... there is sufficient internet that you are able to do your stuff," he said. There is currently no index of the books or the impressive archive of Kenyan newspapers, and a comprehensive cataloguing exercise is badly needed. "Access for us, it is not just about people coming in through the doors, it is also about democratizing the collection that is here," said Wachuka, 36, who has organized literary events under the Book Bunk brand.

She added that was why it was so important to her to offer a wide range of books. Two imposing elephant tusks greet visitors to the McMillan, opened in 1931 to commemorate US explorer William Northrup McMillan.

“I refuse to live in a city where children can actually grow up having never entered a library,”

The building mostly contains books from the beginning of the 20th century, well before Kenya's independence in 1963. Readers can find works on the British aristocracy alongside volumes about the London black cab trade—but few works by Kenyan authors.

### 'Libraries are where stories live'

"It is very important to us that we have African authors represented here," said Wachuka, who wants to rejuvenate the collection rather than removing references to white colonialism. "Book Bunk want to keep that history because it is important—the building wouldn't be here if it was not for McMillan—but also mix it with our history," added Koinange, surrounded by piles of books gathering dust in an archive room. The two Nairobians also want to integrate new forms of media like multimedia collections and podcasts. The ambitious pair have already secured financial assistance from Nairobi's city council for their Book Bunk project.

"We got an agreement with the government that will allow us to fundraise, manage and restore this building and two more in the eastern part of Nairobi," said the author Koinange. They also hope to launch an independent fundraising campaign in September to raise an additional 100 million shillings (\$1 million, 850,000 euros) for the project, to which they have dedicated five years of their lives. Wachuka and Koinange's goal is to allow Nairobi's residents to tell and share their own stories. "The goal is to increase the circulation of stories in the city," said Koinange. "Libraries are where stories live." — AFP





This undated photo provided by Pottery Barn Kids shows one of their designer diaper bags with herringbone. — AP photos



This undated photo provided by Pottery Barn Kids shows one of their designer diaper bags with houndstooth.



This undated photo provided by Pottery Barn Kids shows one of their designer diaper bags.



This undated photo provided by Petunia Pickle Bottom shows their Boxy Backpack.

## Right at home: Diaper bags get a stylish update

In generations past, the array of baby paraphernalia needed by new parents was carried in cumbersome totes of heavy plastic, often emblazoned with prints and patterns that spoke more to infants than to adults. But the style stork has delivered some smart-looking new options for moms and dads, with clever features to match. The diaper bag - what some have termed “the mobile nursery” - typically has a bunch of compartments that are good if you’re super-organized but can be frustrating if you’re in a hurry to find the wipes, teething gel or pacifier.

Many new designs have fewer pockets, or consist of several separate mini bags. The best designs still have clever places to stow damp and messy things, and your phone and keys. Spill-proof pockets, a changing pad and a few easy-to-access compartments make any outing less rigorous, so here are a few bags to consider: KF Baby’s Bohemian diaper bag solves the sore-shoulder issue by supplying both cross-body and shoulder straps. Besides a capacious main bag, there’s an insulated bottle holder and changing pad, all printed with a neutral-hued boho pattern that give it style chops beyond babyhood.

Soho Designs offers multi-piece matching sets, available at Walmart, that include a padded changing pad, various accessory and bottle cases, and even a small purse. Pottery Barn Kids’ col-

lection includes bags with houndstooth, linen and herringbone patterns, leather trim and a monogramming option. Here too are designer options from Justina Blakeney and Monique Lhullier, as well as baby-gear lifestyle brand Skip Hop.

Designer DeNai Jones of Ventura, California, says that founding her brand, Petunia Pickle Bottom, before she had kids made the company her first baby. The line includes bags with global, floral and color-block prints as well as solids. With an integrated changing pad, magnetic closures, and materials like glazed canvas or vegan leather, these are trendy yet practical.

### Magnetic closures

Diaper bags from JuJuBe, based in Costa Mesa, California, come in an array of fashion-forward versions including anime patterns; saucy, black and gray florals; cool coastal motifs; and an artsy Cheerios print. The machine-washable bags have two insulated pockets so you can keep your own beverage cool while baby’s bottle is in the other. Pockets are lined in light-colored, antimicrobial material so you can find things easily. Tiny bottom pocket holes allow crumbs to drain out. Quiet magnetic closures (instead of Velcro) won’t wake baby. There are also bags designed for fathers. These are a little more macho than a carrier with dancing Disney characters or gamboling lambs.

Some dads like the backpack style, which avoids sore shoulders and makes it easier to lug the baby or other items up front. Plus you can ask your walking partner to retrieve something from it without having to stop and drop. Quiksilver’s utilitarian black Daddy Daybag has an insulated front pocket for water or kidlet’s bottle, a tablet pocket and a fleece-lined hanging pocket.

Another no-nonsense option: Seattle-based Kinbuilt’s clean-lined diaper bag. With quiet-close zippers, no extraneous buckles or flaps, a waterproof bottom, a clever stay-open design structure, and handy cards to list contact, medicine and allergy info, this bag also fits tidily under airplane seats.

If you’re up for something really designed for tough baby-tending battles, check out Tactical Baby Gear, founded by Bev Brodie in Bluffton, South Carolina. His military-styled Deuce 2.0 bag made of rugged nylon can be customized with patches, as well as pouches that attach with military-grade MOLLE webbing. Bags are available in black, gray, coyote brown and camo. Other witty items in the line: a changing mat printed with “drop zone” and a target, and a compact, washable “dump pouch” for dirty diapers. — AP



## Chile begins to restrict tourism to protect Easter Island

Chile’s government on Wednesday began restricting tourism to Easter Island, which is known for its stunning gigantic stone heads known as Moais. The statues have attracted an ever-increasing flow of tourists to the fragile island in the middle of the South Pacific, stressing its limited resources. Chilean officials have started limiting the number of visits from tourists and non-locals from 90 days to 30 days.

Tourism Minister Monica Zalaquett said the measure is being taken now to protect the island. President Sebastian Pinera has fast-tracked a bill that seeks to change Easter Island’s name to Rapa Nui - as residents call the island. Chile annexed the island in 1888. It is about 2,200 miles (3,500 kilometers) west of Chile. — AP

## Lifestyle | Movies

## Film review

## The journey of Fanny Khan



By Abigail Mathias

He was one of the silliest guys in college, walking around with a red bandana singing Kishore Kumar songs. At least that's how I remember my friend, Atul Manjrekar. Cut to 20 years later. And now Atul is the director of a major Bollywood film, a musical drama, called 'Fanny Khan'. The film stars leading actors Anil Kapoor, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and Rajkumar Rao. Thankfully Atul is still the pun cracker I remember, except he is clearly in another league.

Atul's first feature film will release in a few days and I can't help but beam with pride. The film has already crossed many millions in trailer views on YouTube. Fanny Khan is played by the ever-youthful Anil Kapoor, who's struggling to fulfill the dreams of his daughter, Lata who wishes to be a singer. The film releases in India on August 3.

It's taken me three days to get 10 minutes to talk to the busy director. "Aren't you excited that your first big film is releasing soon?" I ask, when we finally connect. He gushes, "Well the whole excitement hasn't come through yet. I'm still busy editing the final parts of the film."

Fanny Khan is based on the Belgian film, 'Everybody's Famous' made in 2009 by Dominique Deruddere. Director Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra who has directed films such as Rang De Basanti and Bhaag Milka Bhaag, bought the rights to the film. Atul has been collaborating and working with the award-winning senior director for over 20 years. "One day, Rakeysh Mehra asked if I would be interested in making this film. I was a little nervous at the start." Atul had only worked on advertising films till now. He is the director of Anonymous Films Private Limited.

## Universal story

"It's pointless just to make a film just for the heck of it so I first watched the original film. I believe the story is very universal and that's the reason I took it up. We decided that we should make our own film, keeping the soul of the original intact. Actually, it was all in Mehra Sir and his wife's hands. They are the ones who provided this opportunity."

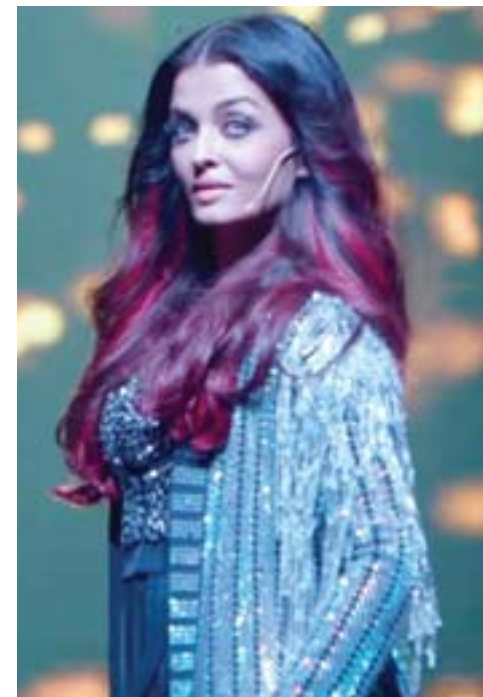
My mind flips back to college days over two decades ago. Watching the latest films at Bombay's Metro, Sterling and Liberty cinemas, wondering if some shots could have been directed differently. Back then I too was studying film and we would discuss and dissect films over tea till the wee hours of the morning. When it comes to casting, every director has a wish-list. "When you are writing, you subconsciously keep one person in mind. If you get that same character to play the



part, its brilliant. The role of Prashant was written keeping legendary actor Anil Kapoor in mind." The script is written by Hussain Dalal.

"This is a small film," insists the first-time director. "It looks big now. We didn't have a lot of money when we began. As one of the producers, Anil Kapoor became a big support system for the film." The other producer, Bhushan Kumar has also supported the film tremendously.

"Aishwarya Rai Bachchan also believed in the character," says Atul. We joke about how he's on a first name basis with all the former Miss World. "When I first narrated the story, I was very nervous about her accepting the part. As we discussed the script, she loved it. I wanted to highlight the whole-body shaming aspect and she really liked that. She saw an opportunity to speak about it through the film," he says.



Atul's wife, Smitha Baliga is the co-producer of the film. We laugh that this film is like a home production. "I've been extremely lucky. Everything has worked out. From the actors to the technicians, to costume stylists - the entire team has been amazing." Besides the director, another actress will be making a debut in the film. 20-year-old Pihu Sand is playing one of the lead roles along with actress Divya Dutta.

## Dream team

There are six main characters that make up the ensemble. "Actor Rajkumar Rao was always my first choice. When we were planning to schedule the film, he was busy. We looked for other actors. Fortunately, as time went on, we said let's check with him and he said he was free," explains Atul. Finally, the film's dream team came together.

As with most Hindi films, music plays a pivotal role. "Amit Trivedi worked on the sound while Irshad Kamil worked on the lyrics which took nearly a year. It was important to make it blend with the film." There was one song which had to stand out. "We wanted a song that would be a top-10 hit. Something that will work in clubs. Our production company, T-Series got this song made with another artist. Each of the six songs form a vital part of the narrative," explains the director.

I ask what he hopes people will get from the film? "Umm, I think the film will help children understand their parents better. There is a lot of conflict in every parent-child relationship. I've tried to understand my own parents better. Most often one carries a grudge with one parent. Though they want the best for you. I hope people get that. There are other layers about auditioning for shows and things like that which we have highlighted."

Atul tells me that the Belgian director is expected to attend the premiere. There is so much expectation and excitement as we countdown to the film's release. "I'm so happy for you Atul, I can't help but blurt out. "Yes, I am so happy for me, too," he laughs in an all too familiar way. 'Pagal,' is what I end our call with. Despite the years it is good to know that some things are constant. - Abigail Mathias is a freelance writer in the UAE



# MISSION IMPOSSIBLE: FALLOUT

By Aakash Bakaya

A decade ago, if you had put a 6 at the end of a movie title it would either be a sign of a desperate studio milking every last drop from a once popular franchise or at best - a straight to DVD movie. That has slowly changed over the years but franchises or “cinematic universes” are changing both the filmmaking approach and the audience expectations for film sequels. Whether that is due to the immense popularity of Netflix and TV shows in general or just the fact that online audience reception today can absolutely tank a film’s box-office - if it gives us movies like ‘Mission Impossible: Fallout’ then I am totally on board with it.

‘Fallout’, the sixth film in the ‘Mission Impossible’ franchise does a lot of things right and builds upon its predecessors by giving fans exactly what they want. More massive action set-pieces, an additional set of interesting characters along with a familiar returning crew and of course Tom Cruise showcasing a breath-taking catalogue of insane stunts. Seriously, how many actors can say they flew out of plane at low altitude, piloted a helicopter, drove a motorbike on the wrong side of the road in Paris and broke their ankle jumping from one building to another all in one film? Seeing him do all these things with the camera rolling is almost worth the price of admission alone. Thankfully, unlike other action movie franchises (like one that starts with F), it knows that it can’t simply rest on its set-pieces no matter how flashy they are.

## Self-aware escapism

The ‘Mission Impossible’ movie are not much more than just high quality popcorn entertainment. But it is that self-aware escapism that has really elevated the franchise. The last three films have especially paid heed to a more continuity driven which has created its own mini trilogy. ‘Fallout’ book-ends this trilogy well and even ties up many of the plot threads from ‘Rogue Nation’ in a somewhat emotional manner.

The main plot is quite predictable but it also dials back the focus on Ethan Hunt and gives an insight to what really drives him to do the seemingly impossible things he does. Some might feel these additions bog down the action which gets so intense so regularly but I greatly appreciated director and screenwriter Christopher McQuarrie taking the time to finally humanize Hunt a bit more. ‘Rogue Nation’ was a tremendously fun film but Hunt did come off as a bit of superhero with seemingly no weaknesses whatsoever.

Everything feels much more grounded this time around. The stakes are much higher as the threat of nuclear war looms over our protagonists and the action reflexes this with more brutal, crunching punches and louder, more menacing gun fights. It’s like McQuarrie looked at his previous film and said “how can we improve pretty much every aspect of these scenes?” The viscerality of the action creates a more naturally gripping sequence and you can feel the energy coursing through the cinema hall because of it. The fight scene in the toilet is a great example of this approach.



It’s hard-hitting and confusing at times but like every great fight scene, it emulates a dance of sorts. Different stages pushing different strings, rarely giving the audience a chance to breathe but just enough time to react. It reminded me of the one in David Cronenberg’s ‘Eastern Promises’ only with suits instead of towels.

## Old crew, new tricks

Cruise as you would expect carries the film but the returning cast of Simon Pegg, Ving Rhames and Alec Baldwin are better written than they were ever before. Pegg’s ‘Benji’ would be sidelined and disposed into the “comedy-relief” bin in similar action films but here he once again finely tunes his performance between levity and seriousness to create a character you genuinely care for. Rhames as well, returning as ‘Luther’ for the sixth time in a row, finally gets a proper chance to shine and display his acting chops. His character surprisingly becomes one of the emotional cores of a third act. Without him, those last few scenes would have easily gone from over-the-top to just plain dumb.

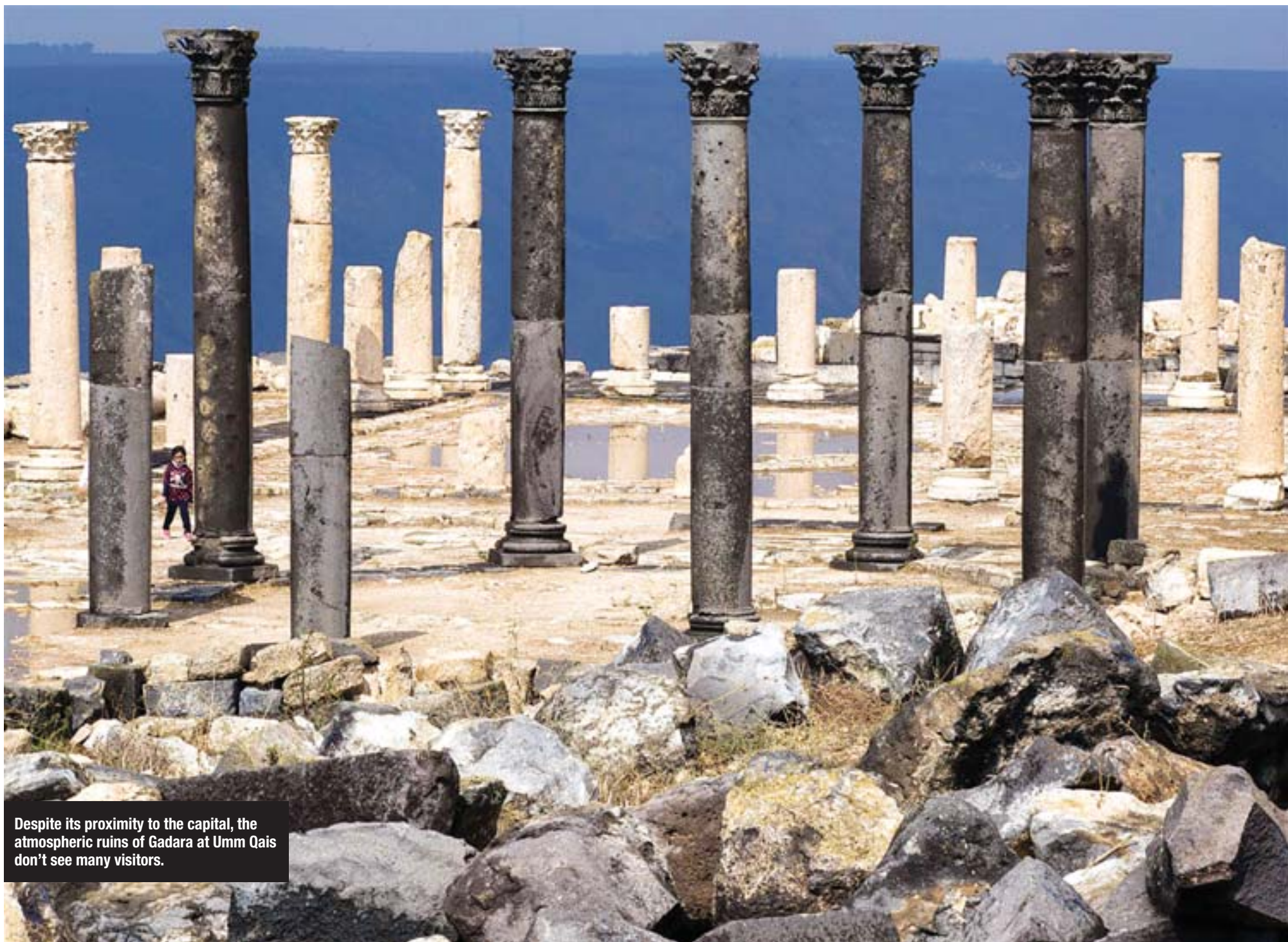
Henry Cavill is the new spy on the block and for all the hype he brought before hand to the film, he turned out to be a slight let-down. He plays ‘Walker’, the CIA’s secret weapon and one man clean-up crew and even though he starts off menacing and secretly - it doesn’t take long for his story to become predictably and messy. His moustache (the infamous one that destroyed DC’s ‘Justice League’) might have been the most interesting aspect of his character really. Also I’m pretty sure it’s just me but his voice modulation sounded so much like ‘Superman’ (which he was filming alongside this) it became a minor distraction for me.

‘Walker’ and the returning ‘Solomon Lane’ play well into the

story that manages to deliver a thrilling romp even though a few individual elements of it felt a bit clumsy in its execution. The third act in particular is all over the place tonally. The grit that pulsed through the action is replaced with our characters almost goofing around with a nuke slowly ticking down in front of them while the Hunt and Walker helicopter chase was one vehicle chase too many. The chase is bonkers in the very best sense of the word and it was beautifully shot. But the loose threads of credibility the plot was hanging on by that time was slowly giving way around it.

‘Fallout’ was an exemplary example of the cinema experience. Gorgeous visuals, ultra-octane action and a spy-thriller story combine to make the recent Bond films look third-rate in comparison. People have a range of reasons to why they go to the cinema but if the word ‘entertainment’ is any of yours, then you owe it to yourself to check out this film because ‘Fallout’ is a cinematic joy-ride you won’t soon forget.





Despite its proximity to the capital, the atmospheric ruins of Gadara at Umm Qais don't see many visitors.

## Off the beaten track in northern and *eastern Jordan*

Once you've hiked the desert dunes of Wadi Rum, done your best Indiana Jones impression in the ruins of Petra and wandered the bazaars of Amman, head into Jordan's less-explored north and east for windswept temple ruins, castles crumbling back into the deserts from which they arose and small glimpses of the history that defines the borders of the modern Middle East. These regions might be off today's tourist track, but they lie along caravan routes that have brought visitors here for centuries.

## Lifestyle | Travel

**Umm Qais Castle**

In the far north of Jordan overlooking the Golan Heights, Syria, and Israel, the city of Umm Qais was founded as the Greek city of Gadara and was later conquered by the Romans. In the empire's decline, it became an Ottoman settlement. Of the ruins that remain, easily the most iconic is the Basilica Terrace, the standing columns of a former Byzantine church at the heart of the settlement. Despite Umm Qais' distance from Amman, it sees few visitors, so you'll likely find yourself wandering through the ruins or the attached archaeological museum without any other tourists in view. Beyond archaeological significance, Umm Qais has a claim to religious fame as well. Biblical scholars believe it was here that Jesus cast demons out of two crazed men and into a herd of pigs, as described in Matthew 8:28-34.

**Ruins of Jerash**

The only one of northern Jordan's tourist sites that draws any serious visitor numbers, the ruins of the ancient Greco-Roman city of Gerasa impress from first sight atop a broad hill that stands above the modern town of Jerash. The most prosperous period of the ancient city's history and the origin of most of the ruins that still exist today date back to the 1st century AD. Unlike many of the world's great Roman ruins, visitors are encouraged to scale the steps of the Hippodrome, tramp past the columns of the central Cardo Maximus and cross the threshold of Hadrian's Arch just as the eponymous emperor surely did on his visit to the city in 129 AD. The long-abandoned Temple of Artemis and Temple of Zeus, the ruined Cathedral and many other tumbledown stone-block buildings bring the city to life in an interactive manner that few ruins manage.



Climb to the top of Ajloun Castle for commanding views over the city.

**Ruined city of Pella**

Though rivalling the town of Gerasa in age and former glory, the ruins of Pella have more of the air of a forgotten outpost than a major city. Yet, belied by the columns of the last remaining temple to stand on this windswept hillside, a vast ruined city still lies buried beneath the dirt of the Jordan Valley. Less than 30km south of the Sea of Galilee on the historic trade route to Jerash, this once-prosperous Greco-Roman city is now an atmospheric if lonesome ruin along an otherwise quiet stretch of motorway between the Jordan Valley and Ajloun. As you clamber over the remains of a small amphitheatre, a Bronze-Age temple and handful of excavated shops and homes, it's tough to imagine Pella as a member of the Decapolis, a 10-member group of Roman cities that were instrumental in maintaining the empire's control of the Levant region.

**Ajloun Castle and Jordan's Christian Quarter**

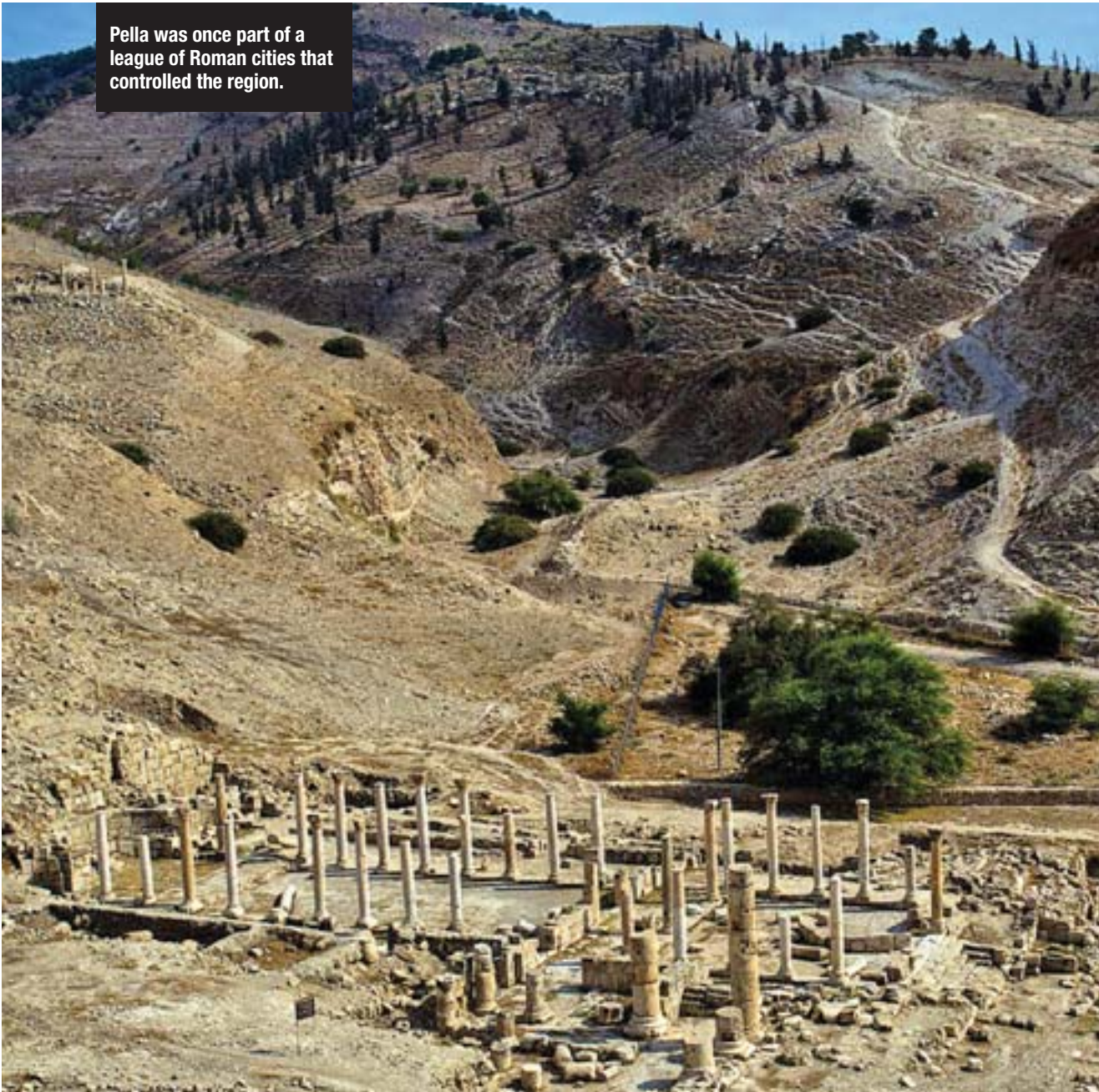
On a forested hilltop overlooking the city of the same name, Ajloun Castle has stood guard over the valleys of northern Jordan since at least the time of the conqueror Saladin and remained an active military site into the Ottoman period. Today it stands as a lonely tourist attraction above the quiet settlement of Ajloun, a museum to the region's past and testament to the historic importance the area played in the empires that moved through Jordan and the Levant. The area is notable as one of the largest centres of Christian Jordanians in a majority Muslim country; in addition to several small hiking trails that wind through the nearby Ajloun Forest Reserve, nearby religious sites such as Mar Elias (thought to be the birthplace of the prophet Elijah) bring the occasional pilgrims and religious tourists to the area.



Go behind the scenes at Gerasa, where you can climb to the top of the Hippodrome

## Lifestyle | Travel

Pella was once part of a league of Roman cities that controlled the region.



Qusayr Amra is an anomaly among Jordan's desert castles.

### Umm Al Jimal

Meaning 'mother of camels' in Arabic, Umm Al Jimal was already an important caravan stopping point during the era of the Nabataeans (the tribe famously responsible for the construction of Petra), though most of the ruins that remain here date to the times of the Romans and Byzantines when it was an important military garrison that kept order in the area. Built primarily of basalt stone, the site today is a tumbledown collection of ruins stretching across a wide swathe of the Houran desert. In various states of dilapidation - from nearly intact to architects' schematics - the remains of Christian cathedrals; Nabataean temples; hundreds of houses once occupied by Byzantine merchants, Roman generals, and Druze settlers; and Roman-era military barracks give visitors some understanding of the former importance of the settlement, but for most it's the very tangible feeling of ruin that leaves the strongest impression.

### Qasr Al Azraq

Constructed by the Romans as early as 300 AD at the largest freshwater site between Baghdad and Amman, most modern visitors to Azraq Castle come seeking traces of a much more recent occupant: the legendary Lawrence of Arabia. Occupying the fortress with his men over the winter of 1917, TE Lawrence took the fortifications that had been used as a military outpost by Ottoman armies for 400 years and transformed them into a major staging point of the Great Arab Revolt and the launch point from which Lawrence's forces eventually captured Damascus. Though no artefacts remain to call to mind Lawrence's band of warriors, the castle's largely intact walls and architecture (of which the soldier made notes in his *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*) help visitors with a strong picture of the many campfires around which the group gathered during their long winter nights here.

### Qusayr Amra

A bit of an oddity among the desert castles, Qusayr Amra was built primarily for pleasure rather than war. Once the site of a hunting lodge complex built by the Umayyad ruler Walid I, all that remains of the 8th-century structure is a bathhouse, now world-renowned for the impressive murals that cover its inside walls. Unusual for a society that was transitioning to Islam, these frescoes depict human form and faces, contemporary rulers, bathing women and a particularly celebrated rendition of the zodiac on a domed ceiling. Also look out for a seated bear playing a guitar-like instrument.

### Getting There

While the main towns in Jordan's north and east are served by public transportation, ruins that are off the beaten track are not. You'll need to either hire a car to drive yourself or hire a car and driver from Amman. Count on a minimum of two days for each region, more if you want to take time to explore some of the area's smaller attractions.

— (www.lonelyplanet.com)



The tumble-down ruins at Umm Al Jimal were an important stop on caravan routes.

## Comic

### WORD SEARCH

#### What's the Point?

Find and circle all of the things with points that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.

ETSEGDABSF F I R E H S T H E  
L N P I N E N E E D L E R I C I C L E  
P E E A R G U M E N T E P B O D I K N  
A D A T E K N N E T G O F A E T R E Q  
T I R O S H C F R N T I S C P O P U U  
S R Z O O N I I O E R I K F L I Z E  
C T S T N N I F T K H M I G L L L R L  
I I C H K O E L A S A T K A L I H S D  
S C R P A S L T E L R O B M N I T T E  
S E A I R R S A O V O E P M N G H A E  
O P Y C A N K P T H A R T O O U L R N  
R I O K E S Y T H D P J C N M V I E G  
S C N D N R U S O E R E C B I D E K N  
A K O B A L I L N O R I T O D O N I I  
E O E M C F I C Y O T A B A M R P P W  
W A I N L J I A S T C H O R N P O S E  
K D R Y U L A H N K S B L D D T A W S  
E D I R V V O E L E P L A C S A L S S  
T E K C O R R A N T E N N A S I R E S  
E N O C N W W E R C S K R O C O N T R

- |                  |           |                 |              |
|------------------|-----------|-----------------|--------------|
| ANTENNA          | DART      | FINE NEEDLE     | SPIKE        |
| ANTLER           | DECIMAL   | POINTER STICK   | STAPLE       |
| ARGUMENT         | FINGER    | PYRAMID         | STAR         |
| ARROW            | FISH HOOK | QUILL           | STYLUS       |
| BACKGAMMON BOARD | FORK      | RHINOCERUS HORN | SWORD        |
| BALLPEN          | ICE PICK  | ROCKET          | THORN        |
| BEAK             | SCOLE     | SCALPEL         | THUMBSTACK   |
| BERD TALON       | JAVELIN   | SCISSORS        | TOOTHPICK    |
| COMPASS          | KNIFE     | SEWING NEEDLE   | TRIANGLE     |
| CONE             | NAIL      | SHARK TOOTH     | TRIDENT      |
| CORKSCREW        | NOSE      | SHERIFF'S BADGE | VULCAN EAR   |
| CRAYON           | PENCIL    | SPEAR           | WOODEN STAKE |

### CROSSWORD 1976



#### ACROSS

- A small constellation near the South Pole between Tucana and Ara.
- (British) Somewhat hungry.
- A fatal disease of cattle that affects the central nervous system.
- Any of various strong liquors distilled from the fermented sap of toddy palms or from fermented molasses.
- Turkish sea power was destroyed in 1571 by a league of Christian nations organized by the Pope.
- A unit of absorbed ionizing radiation equal to 100 ergs per gram of irradiated material.
- West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
- (Greek mythology) A Titan who was forced by Zeus to bear the sky on his shoulders.
- How long something has existed.
- A defensive missile designed to shoot down incoming intercontinental ballistic missiles.
- The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
- Lily with small dull purple flowers of northwestern Europe and northwestern Asia.
- A period of time containing 365 (or 366) days.
- Relating to or bordering the Atlantic Ocean.
- Being nine more than ninety.
- Make improvements or corrections to.
- Any of various perennial South American plants of the genus *Loasa* having stinging hairs and showy white or yellow or reddish-orange flowers.
- A thick black tar intermediate between petroleum and asphalt.

- A member of the working class (not necessarily employed).
- Surrealist Spanish painter (1904-1989).
- (Old Testament) Adam's wife in Judeo-Christian mythology.
- Pompous or pretentious talk or writing.
- The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
- Remaining after all deductions.
- Give a description of.
- The quality of being secluded from the presence or view of others.
- Issue or terminate (in a specified way, state, etc.).
- (Greek mythology) Goddess of the earth and mother of Cronus and the Titans in ancient mythology.
- A hard gray lustrous metallic element that is highly corrosion-resistant.
- The use of bacteria or viruses of toxins to destroy men and animals or food.
- Large tropical butterfly with degenerate forelegs and an unpleasant taste.
- A small cake leavened with yeast.
- Bottle that has a narrow neck.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
- A bachelor's degree in theology.
- Having or using only one filament.
- A barrier constructed to contain the flow or water or to keep out the sea.
- Grass mowed and cured for use as fodder.
- Sound with resonance.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

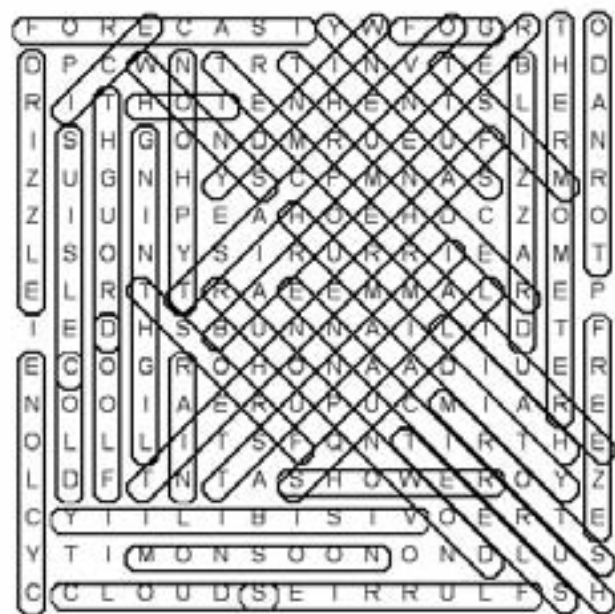
#### DOWN

- Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
- An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- The French defeated the Austrian and Prussian troops in 1792 (with a famous cannonade from the French artillery).
- A Turkish unit of weight equal to about 2.75 pounds.
- A defeat of the Persian army by the Greeks in 479 BC.
- The branch of engineering science that studies the uses of electricity and the equipment for power generation and distribution and the control of machines and communication.
- An accountant certified by the state.
- The capital and largest city of Nepal.
- Situated away from an area's coast or border.
- The beginning of anything.
- Characterized by enmity or ill will.
- (informal) Exceptionally good.
- Powdery starch from certain sago palms.
- Any place of complete bliss and delight and peace.
- A light strong brittle gray toxic bivalent metallic element.
- A unit of pressure.
- (archaic) Of persons.
- A unit of weight used in some Moslem countries near the Mediterranean.
- A chronic inflammatory collagen disease affecting connective tissue (skin or joints).
- Made for formed by carving ('carven' is archaic or literary).
- A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
- Of superior grade.
- One of 7 to 12 sons of Aditi.

- A fine-grained unstratified accumulation of clay and silt deposited by the wind.
- Of or relating to or characteristic of the Hebrews.
- United States writer (born in Lebanon) (1883-1931).
- Tag the base runner to get him out.
- The dialect of Albanian spoken in northern Albania and Yugoslavia.
- Greek mythology.
- Being one more than fifty.
- Being one more than one hundred.
- A communist state in the Caribbean on the island of Cuba.
- A garment that covers the head and face.
- A tricyclic antidepressant (trade names Adapin and Sinequan) with numerous side effects (dry mouth and sedation and gastrointestinal disturbances).
- Type genus of the Canidae.
- Lighted up by or as by fire or flame.
- (Irish) Chief god of the Tuatha De Danann.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- Being or befitting or characteristic of an infant.
- Something causes misery or death.
- A port in western Israel on the Mediterranean.
- Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- God of love and erotic desire.
- A group of Niger-Congo languages spoken primarily in southeastern Mali and northern Ghana.
- A flat wing-shaped process or wing-like part of an organism.
- Tastelessness by virtue of being cheap and vulgar.

### Yesterday's Solution

#### Weather



- |            |           |           |             |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| BAROMETER  | FLOOD     | ICE       | STORM       |
| BLIZZARD   | FLURRIES  | LIGHTNING | SUNNY       |
| CELSIUS    | FOG       | MIST      | TEMPERATURE |
| CLOUDS     | FORECAST  | MONSOON   | THERMOMETER |
| COLD       | FREEZE    | OVERCAST  | THUNDER     |
| CYCLONE    | FROST     | RAIN      | TORNADO     |
| DOWNPOUR   | HAIL      | SHOWER    | TSUNAMI     |
| DRIZZLE    | HOT       | SLEET     | TYPHOON     |
| DROUGHT    | HUMIDITY  | SNOW      | VISIBILITY  |
| FAHRENHEIT | HURRICANE | SQUALL    | WINDY       |

The hidden word is: PRECIPITATION

### Yesterday's Solution



### Daily SuDoku

		5		2	4		
9			8	3			
	1	4					3
		2	3		9		8
	5						4
	3		4		8	9	
	2					7	5
				1	5		2
		6	2			1	

### Yesterday's Solution

8	5	7	1	6	9	2	4	3
6	3	2	8	4	5	9	1	7
4	9	1	2	7	3	5	8	6
3	2	4	5	1	8	7	6	9
9	1	6	3	2	7	8	5	4
5	7	8	6	9	4	3	2	1
7	8	3	4	5	6	1	9	2
1	6	9	7	8	2	4	3	5
2	4	5	9	3	1	6	7	8

## TV Listings



00:40 Bus 657  
02:25 Return Of Xander Cage  
04:30 Lost & Found  
06:15 Kung Fu Yoga  
08:15 American Ninja  
10:00 Return Of Xander Cage  
12:00 Hidalgo  
14:25 Fantastic Four  
16:20 Railroad Tigers  
18:30 Delta Force II: The Colombian Connection  
20:25 Transporter 2  
22:00 The Running Man  
23:45 Crossing Point



00:45 North Woods Law  
01:40 Swimming With Monsters: Steve Backshall  
02:35 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet  
03:25 Lone Star Law  
04:15 North Woods Law  
05:02 Wildest Latin America  
05:49 Pit Bulls & Parolees  
06:36 Escape To Chimp Eden  
07:00 Escape To Chimp Eden  
07:25 Rugged Justice  
08:15 Untamed & Uncut  
09:10 Lone Star Law  
10:05 North Woods Law  
11:00 Wildest Latin America  
11:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees  
12:50 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet  
13:45 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet  
14:40 North Woods Law  
15:35 Swimming With Monsters: Steve Backshall  
16:30 Rugged Justice  
17:25 Untamed & Uncut  
18:20 Crocodile Hunter  
19:15 The Bronx Zoo  
20:10 From Cubs To Kings  
21:05 Wildest Latin America  
22:00 Swimming With Monsters: Steve Backshall  
22:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees  
23:50 The Bronx Zoo



00:15 Death In Paradise  
01:10 Holby City  
02:05 Father Brown  
02:50 Dickensian  
03:35 Dickensian  
04:25 Agatha Raisin  
05:10 The Durrells  
06:00 EastEnders  
06:30 EastEnders  
07:00 Holby City  
08:00 Casualty  
08:50 Father Brown  
09:40 Death In Paradise  
10:40 Casualty  
11:35 Casualty  
12:30 Holby City  
13:25 Father Brown  
14:15 Death In Paradise  
15:15 Casualty  
16:10 Casualty  
17:05 Holby City  
18:00 Holby City  
19:00 Death In Paradise  
20:00 Silent Witness  
20:55 Ordeal By Innocence  
21:50 Poldark  
22:55 Holby City  
23:50 Father Brown



00:30 Real Husbands Of Hollywood  
00:55 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
01:20 South Park  
01:45 Tosh.0  
02:10 Inside Amy Schumer  
02:35 Real Husbands Of Hollywood  
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
03:25 Real Husbands Of Hollywood

03:50 Real Husbands Of Hollywood  
04:15 The Dude Perfect Show  
04:40 The Dude Perfect Show  
05:05 I Used To Be Fat  
05:55 Disaster Date  
07:15 Coaching Bad  
08:05 I Used To Be Fat  
08:55 Bondi Ink.  
09:45 House Of Food  
10:35 Impractical Jokers  
10:57 Impractical Jokers  
11:20 Impractical Jokers  
12:45 Impractical Jokers III Jokers Wild  
13:55 Idiotsitter  
15:10 The It Crowd  
17:20 Friends  
19:50 Detroiters  
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
21:30 Another Period  
21:55 Another Period  
22:20 Nick Kroll: Thank You Very Cool  
23:05 Comedy Central Roast Of Charlie Sheen



00:30 Destroyed In Seconds  
00:55 Destroyed In Seconds  
01:20 How It's Made  
01:45 How It's Made  
02:10 My Cat From Hell  
03:00 Tanked  
03:50 Ultimate Survival  
04:40 Weather Gone Viral  
05:30 Secret Space Escapes  
06:20 How It's Made  
06:40 How It's Made  
07:00 Destroyed In Seconds  
07:25 Destroyed In Seconds  
07:50 My Cat From Hell  
08:40 How It's Made  
09:05 How It's Made  
09:30 Tanked  
10:20 Ultimate Survival  
11:10 Destroyed In Seconds  
11:35 Destroyed In Seconds  
12:00 How It's Made  
12:25 How It's Made  
12:50 Weather Gone Viral  
13:40 Secret Space Escapes  
14:30 How It's Made  
14:55 How It's Made  
15:20 My Cat From Hell  
16:10 Ultimate Survival  
17:00 My Cat From Hell  
17:50 Tanked  
18:40 Destroyed In Seconds  
19:05 Destroyed In Seconds  
19:30 Penn & Teller Tell A Lie  
20:20 The Carbonaro Effect  
20:45 The Carbonaro Effect  
21:10 How It's Made  
21:35 How It's Made  
22:00 Ultimate Survival  
22:50 Penn & Teller Tell A Lie  
23:40 The Carbonaro Effect



00:45 Diabolical: Deadly Love  
01:40 Extreme Measures  
02:35 Forbidden: Dying For Love  
03:30 Who Killed Jane Doe?  
04:25 Swamp Murders  
05:20 I Almost Got Away With It  
06:10 Murder By Numbers  
07:00 California Investigator  
07:25 Murder Comes To Town  
08:15 Swamp Murders  
09:10 Murder By Numbers  
10:05 Village Of The Damned  
11:00 Disappeared  
11:55 Murder Comes To Town  
12:50 I Almost Got Away With It  
13:45 Murder By Numbers  
14:40 Village Of The Damned  
15:35 Who Killed Jane Doe?  
16:30 Murder Comes To Town  
17:25 Swamp Murders  
18:20 I Almost Got Away With It  
19:15 Steven Avery: Innocent Or Guilty?  
20:10 Village Of The Damned  
21:05 Married With Secrets  
22:00 Evil Online  
22:55 Forbidden: Dying For Love  
23:50 Swamp Murders



00:00 Hank Zipzer  
00:25 Alex & Co.  
00:45 Disney Mickey Mouse  
00:50 Evermoor Chronicles  
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
01:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
02:05 Binny And The Ghost  
02:30 Binny And The Ghost  
02:55 Hank Zipzer  
03:15 Disney Mickey Mouse  
03:20 Hank Zipzer  
03:45 Alex & Co.  
04:10 Alex & Co.  
04:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
05:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
05:25 Binny And The Ghost  
05:45 Disney Mickey Mouse  
06:00 Stuck In The Middle  
06:25 Tangled: The Series  
06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts  
06:55 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
07:20 K.C. Undercover  
07:45 Bunk'd  
08:10 Kitty Is Not A Cat  
08:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir  
09:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir  
09:25 Tangled: The Series  
09:50 Tangled: The Series  
10:15 Bizaardvark  
10:40 Bizaardvark  
11:05 Liv And Maddie  
11:30 Liv And Maddie  
11:55 K.C. Undercover  
12:20 K.C. Undercover  
12:45 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
13:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir  
13:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir  
14:00 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
14:15 Bunk'd  
14:40 K.C. Undercover  
15:05 Disney Mickey Mouse  
15:10 Kitty Is Not A Cat  
15:35 Elena Of Avalor  
16:00 Tangled: The Series  
16:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir  
16:50 Raven's Home  
17:15 Stuck In The Middle  
18:05 K.C. Undercover  
18:30 Bunk'd  
18:55 Descendants Wicked World  
19:00 Raven's Home  
19:25 Liv And Maddie  
19:50 K.C. Undercover  
20:15 Disney Mickey Mouse  
20:20 Tangled: The Series  
20:45 Bizaardvark  
21:10 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
21:35 Stuck In The Middle  
22:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir  
22:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir  
22:50 Lolirock  
23:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
23:35 Binny And The Ghost



00:00 Trulli Tales  
00:30 PJ Masks  
01:00 PJ Masks  
01:25 PJ Masks  
01:50 The Hive  
02:00 Zou  
02:15 Zou  
02:30 Henry Hugglemonster  
02:55 Henry Hugglemonster  
03:20 The Hive  
03:30 The Hive  
03:40 Zou  
04:10 PJ Masks  
04:35 The Hive

04:45 Henry Hugglemonster  
05:10 Henry Hugglemonster  
05:35 The Hive  
05:45 Zou  
06:00 Zou  
06:15 PJ Masks  
06:30 PJ Masks  
07:00 Trulli Tales  
07:25 PJ Masks Shorts  
07:30 Puppy Dog Pals  
07:45 Doc McStuffins  
08:00 Jake And The Neverland Pirates  
08:15 PJ Masks  
08:30 Vampirina  
09:00 Doc McStuffins  
09:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers  
09:55 Unbungalievable  
10:00 Vampirina  
10:35 PJ Masks  
14:00 PJ Masks Shorts  
14:05 Sofia The First  
17:00 Vampirina  
17:30 Claude  
17:45 Puppy Dog Pals  
18:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers  
18:25 Unbungalievable  
18:30 PJ Masks  
18:45 Vampirina  
19:00 Sofia The First  
19:30 Doc McStuffins  
19:45 The Lion Guard  
20:15 Mission Force One  
20:30 Vampirina  
21:00 Trulli Tales  
21:30 Sofia The First  
22:00 Doc McStuffins  
22:30 Puppy Dog Pals  
22:55 Minnie's Bow-Toons  
23:00 Miles From Tomorrow  
23:30 Trulli Tales



00:05 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja  
00:30 Boyster  
00:55 Boyster  
01:20 Counterfeit Cat  
01:45 Counterfeit Cat  
02:10 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja  
02:35 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja  
03:00 Boyster  
03:25 Boyster  
03:50 Dude That's My Ghost  
04:15 Dude That's My Ghost  
04:40 Counterfeit Cat  
05:00 Guardians Of The Galaxy  
05:25 Disney Mickey Mouse  
05:30 Disney Mickey Mouse  
05:35 Marvel's Avengers Assemble  
06:00 Marvel's Spider-Man  
06:32 Lab Rats  
07:00 DuckTales  
07:32 Big City Greens  
07:45 Furiki Wheels  
08:00 Phineas And Ferb  
08:25 Phineas And Ferb  
08:50 Disney Mickey Mouse  
08:55 Milo Murphy's Law  
09:20 Milo Murphy's Law  
09:45 Phineas And Ferb  
10:00 Gravity Falls  
10:25 Gravity Falls  
10:50 Disney Mickey Mouse  
10:55 Disney Mickey Mouse  
11:00 Lab Rats  
11:32 Lab Rats  
12:00 Phineas And Ferb  
12:32 Phineas And Ferb  
13:00 Mech-X4  
13:32 Mech-X4  
14:00 Mech-X4  
14:32 Mech-X4  
15:00 Supa Strikas  
15:32 Lab Rats Elite Force  
16:00 DuckTales  
16:32 Big Hero 6 The Series  
17:00 Big City Greens  
17:32 Furiki Wheels  
18:00 Lab Rats  
18:32 Lab Rats  
19:00 Disney II  
19:32 Mech-X4  
20:00 DuckTales  
20:32 Big Hero 6 The Series  
20:55 Marvel's Spider-Man  
21:20 Star Wars Rebels

21:45 Phineas And Ferb  
22:00 Furiki Wheels  
22:15 Big City Greens  
22:30 Phineas And Ferb  
22:45 Disney Mickey Mouse  
22:50 Dude That's My Ghost  
23:15 Dude That's My Ghost  
23:40 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja



00:05 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian  
01:50 E! News  
02:50 WAGs  
05:30 Celebrity Style Story  
06:00 Mariah's World  
06:55 E! News Middle East  
07:10 Mariah's World  
08:10 E! News: Daily Pop  
09:10 Botched  
12:00 E! News Middle East  
12:15 WAGs LA  
15:00 E! News Middle East  
15:15 E! News: Daily Pop  
16:15 Botched  
19:00 E! News  
20:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
23:00 E! News Middle East  
23:15 Very Cavallari



00:20 The Middle  
00:45 The Middle  
01:10 The Drew Carey Show  
01:35 The Drew Carey Show  
02:00 My Boys  
02:25 Til Death  
02:50 The Michael J. Fox Show  
03:15 Late Night With Seth Meyers  
04:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
04:50 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
05:40 Mom  
06:05 The Michael J. Fox Show  
06:30 The Mindy Project  
06:55 Great News  
07:20 Late Night With Seth Meyers  
08:10 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
09:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
09:50 Modern Family  
10:15 The Mayor  
10:40 Mom  
11:05 The Michael J. Fox Show  
11:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
12:20 The Mindy Project  
12:45 Great News  
13:10 The Middle  
13:35 The Middle  
14:00 The Drew Carey Show  
14:25 The Drew Carey Show  
14:50 Mom  
15:15 Modern Family  
15:40 The Mayor  
16:05 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
17:00 The Mindy Project  
17:30 Great News  
18:00 The Middle  
18:30 The Middle  
19:00 The Drew Carey Show  
19:30 The Drew Carey Show  
20:00 Modern Family  
20:30 American Housewife  
21:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
22:00 Vice Principals  
22:30 Crashing  
23:00 Girls  
23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers



00:00 Tinker Bell And The Pirate Fairy  
01:30 Hercules (1997)  
03:15 Blank Check  
05:00 Tinker Bell And The Pirate Fairy  
06:30 Muppet Treasure Island  
08:30 Blank Check  
10:15 Hercules (1997)  
12:00 Muppet Treasure Island  
14:00 Ice Princess  
16:00 Bolt

18:00 High School Musical 3: Senior Year  
20:00 The Muppets  
22:00 Ice Princess



00:15 Band Aid  
02:00 Coyote Ugly  
03:45 Tyler Perry's Boo: A Madea Halloween  
05:30 Roxanne  
07:30 Galaxy Quest  
09:15 Tyler Perry's Boo: A Madea Halloween  
11:15 Roxanne  
13:15 Galaxy Quest  
15:00 The Brady Bunch  
16:45 The Discoverers  
18:45 Middle School: The Worst Years Of My Life  
20:30 Kingpin  
22:30 Amateur Night



01:15 Rh+ The Vampire Of Seville  
02:40 A Little Game  
04:15 Mia And The Migoo  
06:00 Ploddy Police Car  
07:20 Last Wizard  
08:45 The Fairy Tales Tree  
10:05 Hocus Pocus Alfie Atkins  
11:30 A Little Game  
13:05 Ploddy Police Car  
14:25 Dinofroz - An Island In The Sky  
15:45 The Fairy Tales Tree  
17:05 Teo: The Intergalactic Hunter  
18:30 Jake And The Giants  
20:05 Dinofroz - An Island In The Sky  
21:25 Last Wizard  
22:50 Hocus Pocus Alfie Atkins



00:25 Before I Wake  
02:10 Coming Through The Rye  
04:05 Down With Love  
06:00 The Man Who Knew Infinity  
08:00 Me Before You  
09:55 Aloha  
11:40 Coming Through The Rye  
13:15 Parental Guidance  
15:00 Kung Fu Panda  
16:40 Nim's Island  
18:20 Sweet Home Alabama  
20:10 Central Intelligence  
22:00 The Stanford Prison Experiment



00:05 Food Factory  
00:30 Ecopolis  
01:20 Smash Lab  
02:10 Science Of The Movies  
03:00 How It's Made  
03:24 How It's Made  
03:48 Weird Connections  
04:12 Weird Connections  
04:36 Ecopolis  
05:24 How Do They Do It?  
05:48 Food Factory  
06:12 Smash Lab  
07:00 How Do They Do It?  
07:26 How It's Made  
07:50 How It's Made  
08:14 Ecopolis  
09:02 Science Of The Movies  
09:50 How Do They Do It?  
10:14 Food Factory  
10:38 How It's Made  
11:02 How It's Made  
11:26 Weird Connections  
11:50 Weird Connections  
12:14 Ecopolis  
13:02 Smash Lab  
13:50 Science Of The Movies  
14:38 How Do They Do It?  
15:02 Food Factory  
15:26 How It's Made  
15:50 How It's Made  
16:14 Weird Connections  
16:38 Weird Connections  
17:02 Science Of The Movies  
17:50 Smash Lab  
18:40 How Do They Do It?  
19:05 Food Factory



## Stars



### Aries (March 21-April 19)

Today is a day you may find yourself extremely understanding and sympathetic to others. There have been many times in your life you have made decisions that others didn't understand and didn't seem to agree with. You know that there are reasons people do the things they do that might be obvious to others. Becoming the friend to others you have always desired that someone be to you is helping you see beyond the surface of other's actions. You may find taking the time to be a true friend and getting to the root of other's problems draws people closer to you. You may find yourself taking more time to get to know your co-workers, peers, and friends on a much more intimate level. This seems to help you come to grips with a much more spiritual side of yourself than usual.



### Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You are ambitious, secure and responsible. All these qualities seem to combine to help you excel in any area you apply yourself. You are strong willed and have a desire to conquer the world and all that comes your way. You are taking time to reflect on any of your past short comings. This time of reflection is a guiding light for you now and will prevent you from repeating any of your past mistakes. Knowledge is power and the wisdom you have gained from past experience has you on the right track. You may feel as though you are on this journey alone. Not much support is felt from your peers. Do not worry. You will find this to be a very profitable time.



### Gemini (May 21-June 20)

This is a time for imagination and creativity when it comes to the thoughts that are going through your head. You are able to eloquently put your thoughts into words. Others will find you captivating and be eager to hear all you have to say. This is a great time to escape by reading a book or watching a movie too. Great things are happening in your life. Your future depends on your ambition and drive. This is a time to follow your gut feelings about things. You should be able to use your intuition to know what trends are coming. Make a move now and you will be ahead of the game. You should find this is a time to make some very profitable decisions. Take action now, Gemini, and you will be ahead of the game.



### Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Watch out! You are ready to make a change. You feel like trying something new and stepping out of your comfort zone. This may be anything from a new hairstyle to a new wardrobe. Chances are whatever you choose will be on the wild side. This is a great way of expressing yourself to others. You are ready to show the world a new you. A positive attitude and high energy fill your world this week. Enjoy a fun time.



### Leo (July 23-August 22)

You have a desire to make a lasting first impression on everyone new you meet. You take care of yourself and have been paying extra attention to how others may see you. Your appearance and style are a focal point in your life now. You want to be a head turner. Romance becomes a focus for you and probably a driving factor behind the way you are taking care of yourself. It is a time you may find yourself indulging in the finer things life has to offer. You feel good about spoiling yourself.



### Virgo (August 23-September 22)

The more unique or unusual it is, the more you are drawn to it today. A shopping trip may find you coming home with a new style. You have taken a giant leap out of your conservative comfort zone. The wilder the better. The evening may find you all dressed up and heading to a new hangout. New friends could be made. You may find yourself at odds with your usual crowd. You have caught others off guard with this big change.



### Libra (September 23-October 22)

You have made smart decisions along the way. You know you are only as strong as your weakest link. You have chosen to surround yourself with a great support system. Your circle of friends may be small, but quality, rather than quantity is what matters. The same applies to the co-workers/employees you have on your team. You are destined to be a success. You seem to have your heart set on bringing something or someone new into your world. Make your choices wisely and you will reap great reward from this decision.



### Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may find your thoughts are very intense now. You may feel as if you are under a tremendous amount of pressure. If decisions are made now you may find you will regret your choices later. You are full of nervous energy and may find yourself acting in haste without putting the necessary thought into the choices you make. You may find someone close to you seems to challenge your taste or choices. This seems to be a stressful and unpleasant time for you. Take a step back and take a deep breath, Scorpio. Take your time and things will work out in your favor.



### Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

If you have a "gut feeling" about someone today, heed it. Your instincts are usually good. Don't act hastily, but be alert. Avoidance is sometime the best response. Don't give anyone an opportunity to cause a problem for you or a loved one. A little awareness could save you a lot of regret.



### Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

This may be a time to keep to yourself. A cool front seems to have moved in. Your usual warm caring personality seems to have been cooled off. Cold and hard have taken the place of the usual warm and loving side of you. This is not a good day to present yourself to others. First impressions last a lifetime and you would not make a good one today. This would be a day to skip any job interview or first date. Spend some time to yourself and find your happy place. The old you will emerge when you bring peace and happiness back into your world.



### Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

This is time that you may feel more inward. You find satisfaction in spending time with the ones you love and the feeling you get from being surrounded by their kindness towards you. You tend to be strong and independent and want others to always see you in this light. You are a rock to many but there are times you need someone to lean on. This is one of those times and you need to realize you do always have to be strong. It is ok to turn to others with your problems. You may find these close friends jump on the opportunity to be able to give back to you. Your mood seems to be much more reflective rather than expressive now.



### Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are experiencing a strong clarity. Your mind is sharp and so is your tongue. You may want to hold back a bit and bite your tongue to avoid conflict and confrontation today in the workplace. You are known for your quick wit and today you seem to be on a roll. You may feel as if though you are at odds with someone close to you. Use this time to clear the air and work on exiting this conflict with a stronger bond than the two of you previously had. Exercise fairness and take responsibility for you actions today. This will help keep your conscience clear and your mind at peace.

## COUNTRY CODES

Afghanistan	0093	Jordan	00962
Albania	00355	Kazakhstan	007
Algeria	00213	Kenya	00254
Andorra	00376	Kiribati	00686
Angola	00244	Kuwait	00965
Anguilla	001264	Kyrgyzstan	00996
Antigua	001268	Laos	00856
Argentina	0054	Latvia	00371
Armenia	00374	Lebanon	00961
Australia	0061	Liberia	00231
Austria	0043	Libya	00218
Bahamas	001242	Lithuania	00370
Bahrain	00973	Luxembourg	00352
Bangladesh	00880	Macau	00853
Barbados	001246	Macedonia	00389
Belarus	00375	Madagascar	00261
Belgium	0032	Majorca	0034
Belize	00501	Malawi	00265
Benin	00229	Malaysia	0060
Bermuda	001441	Maldives	00960
Bhutan	00975	Mali	00223
Bolivia	00591	Malta	00356
Bosnia	00387	Marshall Islands	00692
Botswana	00267	Martinique	00596
Brazil	0055	Mauritania	00222
Brunei	00673	Mauritius	00230
Bulgaria	00359	Mayotte	00269
Burkina Faso	00226	Mexico	0052
Burundi	00257	Micronesia	00691
Cambodia	00855	Moldova	00373
Cameroon	00237	Monaco	00377
Canada	001	Mongolia	00976
Cape Verde	00238	Montserrat	001664
Cayman Islands	001345	Morocco	00212
Central African Republic	00236	Mozambique	00258
Chad	00235	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Chile	0056	Namibia	00264
China	0086	Nepal	00977
Colombia	0057	Netherlands (Holland)	0031
Comoros	00269	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Congo	00242	New Caledonia	00687
Cook Islands	00682	New Zealand	0064
Costa Rica	00506	Nicaragua	00505
Croatia	00385	Nigar	00227
Cuba	0053	Nigeria	00234
Cyprus	00357	Niue	00683
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Norfolk Island	00672
Czech Republic	00420	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Denmark	0045	North Korea	00850
Diego Garcia	00246	Norway	0047
Djibouti	00253	Oman	00968
Dominica	001767	Pakistan	0092
Dominican Republic	001809	Palau	00680
Ecuador	00593	Panama	00507
Egypt	0020	Papua New Guinea	00675
El Salvador	00503	Paraguay	00595
England (UK)	0044	Peru	0051
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Philippines	0063
Eritrea	00291	Poland	0048
Estonia	00372	Portugal	00351
Ethiopia	00251	Puerto Rico	001787
Falkland Islands	00500	Qatar	00974
Faroe Islands	00298	Romania	0040
Fiji	00679	Russian Federation	007
Finland	00358	Rwanda	00250
France	0033	Saint Helena	00290
French Guiana	00594	Saint Kitts	001869
French Polynesia	00689	Saint Lucia	001758
Gabon	00241	Saint Pierre	00508
Gambia	00220	Saint Vincent	001784
Georgia	00995	Samoa US	00684
Germany	0049	Samoa West	00685
Ghana	00233	San Marino	00378
Gibraltar	00350	Sao Tome	00239
Greece	0030	Saudi Arabia	00966
Greenland	00299	Scotland (UK)	0044
Grenada	001473	Senegal	00221
Guadeloupe	00590	Seychelles	00284
Guam	001671	Sierra Leone	00232
Guatemala	00502	Singapore	0065
Guinea	00224	Slovakia	00421
Guyana	00592	Slovenia	00386
Haiti	00509	Solomon Islands	00677
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Somalia	00252
Honduras	00504	South Africa	0027
Hong Kong	00852	South Korea	0082
Hungary	0036	Spain	0034
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Sri Lanka	0094
Iceland	00354	Sudan	00249
India	0091	Suriname	00597
Indian Ocean	00873	Swaziland	00268
Indonesia	0062	Sweden	0046
Iran	0098	Switzerland	0041
Iraq	00964	Syria	00963
Ireland	00353	Taiwan	00886
Italy	0039	Tanzania	00255
Ivory Coast	00225	Thailand	0066
Jamaica	001876	Toga	00228
Japan	0081	Tonga	00676

## Health

# Teetotalers, like big drinkers, more prone to dementia: Study

## Long-term teetotalers roughly 50% more likely to suffer Alzheimers

**PARIS:** People who have sworn off alcohol for decades or longer run a higher risk of dementia late in life than moderate drinkers, according to a new study.

Long-term teetotalers were roughly 50 percent more likely to suffer Alzheimers or another form of neurodegenerative disease, scientists reported in the *BMJ*, a medical journal, on Wednesday.

With heavy drinking, however, dementia became even more prevalent, though for different reasons.

Unlike earlier research, the study did not find a link between abstinence and a shorter life expectancy, as compared to occasional drinkers. The results were based on a review of medical records rather than the more scientifically rigorous clinical trials used to assess new drugs, and the number of cases examined was relatively small. But the startling results are robust, and should prompt government-funded trials to assess "the possible protective effect of light-to-moderate alcohol use on risk of dementia," commented Sevil Yasar, an associate professor at the John Hopkins School of Medicine who was not involved in the study.

At the same time, the study cautioned, the findings "should not motivate people who do not drink to start drinking given the known detrimental effects of alcohol consumption for mortality, neuropsychiatric disorders, cirrhosis of the liver and cancer." Worldwide, about seven percent of people over 65 suffer from some form of dementia, a percentage that rises to 40 percent above the age of 85. The number of sufferers is expected to triple by 2050.

The research, led by Severine Sabia at the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research, also found that among moderate drinkers-wine consumption correlated with



a lower risk of dementia than beer or spirits, such as whiskey, gin or vodka. "Light-to-moderate" drinking was defined, during middle age, as one-to-14 drinks per week, corresponding to the maximum limit recommended for both men and women in Britain. The 14-drink-per-week maximum-similar to guidelines in other countries-is the equivalent of six medium (175-millilitre) glasses of wine at 13 percent alcohol, six pints of four-percent beer, or 14 25-ml shots of 40-degree spirits.

### Alcohol carries other risks

The study was not set up to explain why non-drinkers might be more prone to cognitive decline, but the findings offered possible clues. "Some of the excess risk of dementia in abstainers was explained by greater risk of cardiometric

disease," such as stroke, coronary heart disease and diabetes, Sabia and her team concluded. Non-drinkers canvassed were more likely to be burdened with lifestyle diseases, but the link with dementia held true even after these health problems were taken into account, they reported. Because the study only tracked alcohol consumption starting in midlife, it is also possible that a prior history of heavy drinking might have contributed to dementia many decades later, one expert not involved in the study cautioned.

"Future research will need to examine drinking habits across a whole lifetime, and this will help to shed more light on the relationship between alcohol and dementia," Sara Imarisio, head of research at Alzheimer's Research UK, told the Science Media Centre. In the case of wine, earlier studies have suggested that so-called polyphenolic compounds may offer some protection to neural networks and blood vessels, but such findings remain controversial.

The findings are based on health records-part of the Whitehall II study on long-term health-for more than 9,000 British civil servants who were 35 to 55 years old in 1985.

Alcohol intake of participants was monitored regularly for two decades, and hospital records were examined for signs of heart and alcohol-related disease. A total of nearly 400 dementia cases-with onset occurring, on average, at age 76 — were reported. The study also confirmed that heavy drinking is strongly linked to dementia, with a 17-percent increase in risk for each additional seven drinks per week.

Chronic heavy drinking has been clearly established as a major risk factor for all types of dementia, especially early onset of the disease. — AFP

# CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

248 33 199

### DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM

Consultant Pediatrician

Consultant Pediatrician-Canadian & American Board in Pediatrics-Canadian Board in Pediatric Emergency



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### DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED

Consultant of General Surgery  
Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgery

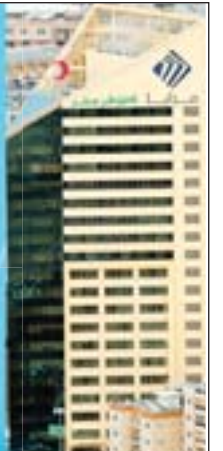


### Academic Certificates – Training

- ◆ Kuwait Board of General Surgery.
- ◆ (IFSO) member .
- ◆ Faculty member of (BEST).
- ◆ Member of Kuwait Surgical Association.

### Scope of clinical Practice.

- ◆ Bariatric surgeries.
- ◆ Gallbladder stones surgeries.
- ◆ Abdominal wall and hernia surgeries.
- ◆ G.I. surgeries.
- ◆ Thyroid and para - thyroid surgeries.
- ◆ Anal surgeries.



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**DR. MOHAMMAD AL HAJRY**  
Canadian Board of Otolaryngology  
Head & Neck Surgery and Facial Plastics.  
Fellow of Royal College of Surgeons-Canada  
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- ◆ Diagnosis & Treatment of Head and Neck benign & malignant tumors.

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Department: Heart & Vascular Center

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- 3- Diagnosis and treatment of heart failure, cardiomyopathies and valvular diseases.
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- ◆ Colonic Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment
- ◆ Laparoscopic mini bypass
- ◆ Transanal minimally Invasive surgery

**Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:**

- ◆ American Board of General Surgery
- ◆ Fellow of American College of Surgery
- ◆ Canadian Board of General Surgery
- ◆ Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada
- ◆ American Board of Colo - Rectal Surgery
- ◆ American Board of Surgical Critical Care

**Dr. Abdullah Al Haddad**  
Surgery Department  
Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic & Colo - Rectal Surgeon

**daralshifa**  
Email: aalhaddad@daralshifa.com

**Dr. Ahmad Alaeddine**  
Head of Cardiology departmenta at Dar Al Shifa hospital

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# Classifieds

## Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171	FlyDubai	22414400
Jazeera Airways	177	Qatar Airways	22423888
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536	KLM	22425747
American Airlines	22087425	Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
	22087426	British Airways	22425635
Jet Airways	22924455	Air France	22430224

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### Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Hot with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 35 km/h.

**BY NIGHT:** Relatively hot with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	46 °C	34 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	46 °C	30 °C
ABDALY	46 °C	29 °C
BUBYAN	---- °C	---- °C
JAHRA	46 °C	31 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	46 °C	28 °C
SALMIYAH	43 °C	34 °C
AHMADI	44 °C	34 °C
NUWAISIB	46 °C	31 °C
WAFRA	46 °C	29 °C
SALMY	44 °C	28 °C

SFC. CHART	02/08/2018 0000 UTC

### 4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	08/03	Hot	46 °C	32 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 32 km/h
Saturday	08/04	Very hot	47 °C	33 °C	VRB-NW	08 - 32 km/h
Sunday	08/05	Very hot and some high clouds will appear	49 °C	34 °C	VRB-NW	15 - 40 km/h
Monday	08/06	Very hot and Dusty	47 °C	35 °C	NW	20 - 45 km/h

### PRAYER TIMES

Fajr	03:40
Sunrise	05:08
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	15:30
Sunset	18:40
Isha	20:04

### RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

MAX. Temp.	46 °C
MIN. Temp.	34 °C
MAX. RH	26 %
MIN. RH	08 %
MAX. Wind	N 57 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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## Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

## Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

# Business

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**38** Ethiopia's economic reform push faces major hurdle: Red tape



**40** BoE raises rates above crisis lows, signals no rush for next hike



**41** Google crafting censor-friendly search engine for China: Report



LONG BEACH: In this file photo, a delivery truck passes containers stacked at the Port of Long Beach in Long Beach, California including one from COSCO, the Chinese state-owned shipping and logistics company. —AFP

## China urges US to 'calm down' in trade row

### Possible new US tariffs on Chinese goods not 'cataclysmic,' Ross

**SINGAPORE/BEIJING:** China yesterday urged the United States to "calm down" and return to reason after the Trump administration sought to ratchet up pressure for trade concessions by proposing a higher 25-percent tariff on \$200 billion worth of Chinese imports.

US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said on Wednesday that President Donald Trump directed the increase from a previously proposed 10 percent duty because China has refused to meet US demands and has imposed retaliatory tariffs on US goods. Trump's threats of higher tariffs weighed on China's financial markets. But Wang Yi, the Chinese government's top diplomat, said US efforts to pressure China would be in vain, urging its trade policymakers to "calm down".

"We hope that those directly involved in the United States' trade policies can calm down,

carefully listen to the voices of US consumers...and hear the collective call of the international community," Wang, a member of the country's state council, or cabinet, said in Singapore.

"The United States' method of adding pressure will not, I'm afraid, have any effect," he told reporters on the sidelines of a regional forum. Worsening trade tension between the two countries would not affect China's stance on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, Wang said. "We deal with diplomatic matters on the basis of principle, not by engaging in trade."

The Chinese yuan also ticked lower against the dollar, extending its year-to-date decline to more than 4.5 percent. There have been no formal talks between Washington and Beijing for weeks over Trump's demands that China make fundamental changes to its policies on intellectual property

protection, technology transfers and subsidies for high technology industries.

The list, unveiled on July 10, hits American consumers harder than previous rounds, with targeted goods ranging from Chinese tilapia fish and dog food to furniture, lighting products, printed circuit boards and building materials.

#### Not cataclysmic

New tariffs that the United States is threatening to impose on nearly half the goods imported from China would have a small impact on the Asian nation's economy and not lead to disaster, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said yesterday.

"It's not something that's going to be cataclysmic," he said in an interview with Fox Business News, explaining that a 25 percent tariff on \$200 billion of goods would only amount to \$50 billion a year, equal to less than 1 percent

of China's economy.

Ross said President Donald Trump "now feels that it's potentially time to put more pressure on" China to "modify their behavior." Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said on Wednesday that Trump directed the increase from a previously proposed 10 percent duty because China had refused to meet US demands and had imposed retaliatory tariffs on US goods.

Trump's threats of higher tariffs also weighed on China's financial markets. But Wang Yi, the Chinese government's top diplomat, said US efforts to pressure China would be in vain, urging its trade policymakers to "calm down."

Meanwhile, world equities markets were in the red yesterday as trade war fears ratcheted higher after the United States said it was looking at more than doubling threatened tariffs on a range of Chinese imports. —Agencies

## Business

# Ethiopia's economic reform push faces major hurdle: Red tape

## New PM pledges to overhaul way country is run

**ADDIS ABABA:** Businessmen who have to deal with Ethiopia's customs system like to joke that if you get a permit to import yellow paintbrushes, make sure every last one is yellow.

If an orange brush slips into the batch, let alone a red one, forget it - your shipment will be tied up for months. Ethiopia has achieved one of Africa's fastest growth rates over the past decade, averaging up to 10 percent a year.

But investors complain about its stifling and antiquated socialist bureaucracy, where the default answer from fearful civil servants is "no" and importing something as mundane as cotton can take six or 12 months. Now they hope things might change. Since taking office in April, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has made peace with Eritrea, freed political prisoners and promised to liberalize the economy.

The 41-year-old says outdated ways of thinking and working are holding back his country of 100 million people, nearly half of whom are under 15. Overhauling the sclerotic government bureaucracy is arguably his biggest challenge, businessmen say.

Abiy, a former military intelligence officer with a doctorate in conflict resolution, is up against an entrenched fear of making decisions by civil servants that delays even routine matters.

"To deliver on our grand reform agenda re-

quires a change in mindset," said Belachew Mekuria, head of the Ethiopian Investment Commission. "It's going to be a very interesting - and at the same time challenging - journey." Investors agree, although they remain cautious.

"You don't break down bureaucracy with a couple of speeches. It will take a while, and there's the risk of disappointment," said a European investor whose firm began financing two projects several years ago.

### Tradition

Reuters spoke to more than a dozen Ethiopian and foreign investors, from entrepreneurs to multinationals. All of them applauded Abiy's fresh approach and hoped it would awaken Africa's second most populous nation from its security-obsessed, socialist slumber.

Fear of the kind of innovation demanded by local businesses and foreign investors has held back what could otherwise become the world's most dynamic economy over the next decade, said a Western investor in the media and e-commerce sectors.

Another problem is that Ethiopia is acutely short of dollars because the government has spent heavily on infrastructure before export earnings from new sectors such as manufactur-



**ADDIS ABABA:** People walk past a shopping mall in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. — Reuters

ing have taken off.

Several investors said getting dollars for imports from local banks takes between three and 12 months as weary clerks navigate the central bank's paper-based FX allocation system. Such idiosyncrasies have their roots in a bureaucracy established over a century ago by King Menelik, who built Ethiopia's railways, telegraph network and tax system, earning comparisons to German nation-builder Otto von Bismarck.

Unlike other African countries, Ethiopia then remained largely untainted by outside influence

because it avoided long periods of colonization. "The bureaucracy is a very old one. It is also typical of a kind of monarchical tradition. Every institution has its own systems, its own turf, its own compartmentalized mandate," said Belachew.

The system became even more rigid under the Derg military regime that overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974, and then under the Marxist-Leninist EPRDF that came to power in the early 1990s after the toppling of the generals. — Reuters



### Ethiopia ranks poorly in World Bank business index

## Bahrain government rejects parliament's subsidy reform plan

**DUBAI:** Bahrain's government has rejected parliament's proposals to reform allowances paid to Bahrainis squeezed by years of austerity on the grounds that they would break government spending caps, lawmakers said.

After oil prices fell in 2014, pressuring state finances, Bahrain cut subsidies and raised taxes and fees to control its deficit. But the austerity has angered some Bahrainis and prompted a backlash in parliament.

Bahrain, which lacks the ample oil reserves of fellow Gulf states, has held off on fresh austerity measures, such as the introduction of value-added tax, until parliament agrees on a new system to compensate low- and middle-income citizens for increases in the cost of living.

The proposal submitted by parliament would have required an increase in government spending at a time when Bahrain is struggling with a current account gap and a large deficit, which have dragged down prices of its bonds and weighed on the dinar.

"The government has indeed asked us to review our proposal," Jamal Fakhrou, the head of parliament's technical commission in charge of the reform, told Reuters. — Reuters

## Turkish lira skids past 5 to dollar and stocks drop on sanctions move

**ISTANBUL:** Turkey's lira tumbled to a record low beyond 5 to the dollar yesterday, after Washington imposed sanctions on two of President Tayyip Erdogan's ministers over the trial of a US pastor accused of backing terrorism.

The sell-off, which also hammered local stocks and Turkey's debt risk profile, reflected deepening investor concern over tensions with the United States, a NATO ally and major trading partner. The White House announced sanctions against Justice Minister Abdulhamit Gul and Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu. It blames both men for involvement in the arrest and detention of Andrew Brunson, an evangelical Christian pastor from North Carolina who has lived in Turkey for more than two decades.

Brunson is charged with supporting the group Ankara blames for orchestrating an attempted coup in 2016. He denies the charges but faces up to 35 years in jail. "Further escalation in the standoff could prompt further capital outflows and have a negative impact on the confidence in the economy," said Jakob Christensen, head of emerging markets research at Danske Bank.

"This is one of the key risks for Turkey, but you also have the underlying structural weaknesses in the economy, which are exacerbating these geopolitical concerns." The lira hit a record low of 5.0934 to the dollar, recovering to trade at 5.0400 by 1127 GMT.

The cost of insuring Turkey's debt against default spiked to the highest in more than six years, while the BIST 100 share index



**ISTANBUL:** A display of foreign exchange rates against Turkish liras as people change their money at Istiklal avenue in Istanbul. — AFP

tumbled more than 2 percent, with banking stocks among the decliners. The lira has lost a fifth of its value this year, battered by rising inflation and concerns over the central bank's independence in the face of repeated calls by Erdogan for lower interest rates.

### 'Hostile action'

Turkey's Foreign Ministry said it would retaliate against what it called Washington's "hostile" action. "We call on the US administration to walk back from this wrong decision," it said in a statement on Wednesday. "If the Turkish response is a measured one, there might be room for a measured relief. But without more visible steps to deescalate, the medium- to longer-term path for the lira would be weakness again," said Inan Demir, senior emerging market economist at Nomura. — Reuters

## Business

# US jobless claims rise modestly, point to labor market strength

## Four-week average of claims falls 3,500

**WASHINGTON:** The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits rose less than expected last week, pointing to sustained strength in the labor market despite trade tensions.

Initial claims for state unemployment benefits increased 1,000 to a seasonally adjusted 218,000 for the week ended July 28, the Labor Department said yesterday. Claims dropped to 208,000 during the week ended July 14, which was the lowest reading since December 1969.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast claims rising to 220,000 in the latest week. The labor market has remained robust despite trade tensions between the United States and its major trade partners, including China, Canada, Mexico and the European Union, which have hurt the stock market.

"Claims had started to move higher in mid-June, leading us to question whether it could be the fallout of protectionist measures," said Ble-

rina Uruci, an economist at Barclays in Washington. "The decline over the past few weeks, however, suggests no such effect on labor markets yet." The Trump administration has imposed duties on steel and aluminum imports, provoking retaliation by the trade partners. It has also slapped 25 percent tariffs on \$34 billion of Chinese imports. Beijing retaliated with matching tariffs on the same amount of US exports to China.

On Wednesday, President Donald Trump proposed a higher 25 percent tariff on \$200 billion worth of Chinese imports. Economists have warned that the tit-for-tat tariffs could disrupt the supply chain and weigh on manufacturing.



**Continuing claims drop 23,000**

For now, the economy is on strong footing. The Federal Reserve on Wednesday left interest rates unchanged while offering an upbeat assessment of both the labor market and economy. The US central bank said "the labor market has continued to strengthen and economic activity has been rising at a strong rate."

The dollar held near two-week highs against a basket of currencies after the claims data. Prices for US Treasuries were trading higher. US stock index futures fell amid the escalating trade tensions. The Labor Department said only claims for Maine were estimated last week. The four-week moving average of initial claims, considered a better measure

of labor market trends as it irons out week-to-week volatility, fell 3,500 to 214,500 last week, the lowest reading since mid-May.

Last week's claims data has no bearing on July's employment report, which is scheduled for release on Friday, as it falls outside the survey period. According to a Reuters survey of economists, nonfarm payrolls likely rose by 190,000 jobs in July after increasing by 213,000 in June.

The unemployment rate is forecast falling one-tenth of a percentage point to 3.9 percent in July. Job growth averaged 215,000 per month in the first half of this year and the labor market is viewed as being near or at full employment. The claims report also showed the number of people receiving benefits after an initial week of aid fell 23,000 to 1.72 million in the week ended July 21. The four-week moving average of the so-called continuing claims slipped 4,500 to 1.74 million. —Reuters

## Spanish taxis call off strike against Uber

**MADRID:** Spanish taxis late on Wednesday called off their days-long strike against online ride-hailing services like Uber after Madrid agreed to let regional governments regulate the sector.

The strike began in Barcelona on Wednesday last week and spread to Madrid at the weekend as drivers demanded action against what they believed was poor enforcement of regulations on VTCs (tourism vehicles with chauffeur).

On Monday, it spread even further to cities across the country, with taxi drivers blocking main roads and surrounding airports and train stations. The strike mirrors other similar work stoppages in European countries, as taxi drivers across the continent complain ride hailing competitors are threatening their livelihoods, arguing for instance their licenses are much more expensive than those for VTCs. Spanish taxi federations want the authorities to strictly enforce legislation under which there should be 30 traditional taxis for each VTC.

The taxi strike committee said in a statement that it had called off the work stoppage across Spain after the government said it would allow the country's regional governments to regulate VTC licenses.

But it warned that taxi drivers would "remain vigilante" and "return to the streets" if this move does not lead to tighter controls on ride-hailing services.

Shops and restaurants in Madrid and Barcelona complained earlier Wednesday of a 15 to 30 percent drop in sales due to the taxi strike. In Barcelona, a major tourist magnet, sales at shops and restaurants in the center were estimated to have dropped between 15 and 25 percent, said Gabriel Jene, head of Barcelona Obrera, which represents businesses located on the main, central thoroughfares of the city.

To make matters worse, the taxi strike is but the



**MADRID:** Portuguese taxi drivers join their Spanish colleagues to block an avenue amid a strike by Spanish cabbies in Madrid on Tuesday. Spanish cabbies called off their strike against Uber late on Wednesday. —AFP

culmination of a tough year for the seaside city, which last August suffered a deadly terror attack followed closely by a failed secession bid in October that triggered many large-if peaceful-protests.

Barcelona airport was also hit by various strikes by security workers, or more recently Ryanair cabin crew. "We've been experiencing a year of 'permanent conflict'," said Salva Vendrell, vice-president of RETAILcat, a group that represents shops and restaurants in 10 Catalan cities including Barcelona.

"It's hurting the image of the city," he told AFP, adding his grouping estimates sales have dropped an average of 30 percent in Barcelona this year due to the various events, particularly in central, touristy areas.

In Madrid, meanwhile, Luis Pacheco of the COCEM trade grouping estimated sales had dropped between 20 and 30 percent due to the strike as well as unrelated public works on the main Gran Via thoroughfare.

VTC drivers have in turn criticized their traditional taxi peers, charging some have been attacked.

The central government's office in Madrid, which met with members of Unauto, the grouping that represents VTCs, said police were "probing more than 60 complaints for physical assault, damage to vehicles, coercion and public disorder." —AFP

## US escalates China trade dispute to secure early breakthrough

**LONDON:** The United States has adopted an "escalate to negotiate" strategy towards China, threatening a dramatic hike in tariffs to try to force a resumption of trade talks while the US economy remains strong and as elections approach in November.

US President Donald Trump has reportedly rejected a plan to levy tariffs of 10 percent on an additional \$200 billion of imports from China and ordered aides to prepare a proposal for tariffs at the higher rate of 25 percent. The levies are in addition to the tariffs on \$34 billion of imports that have already gone into effect and the \$16 billion of tariffs announced but not yet implemented.

The administration's approach to China is the same one it has employed in dealing with North Korea, Iran, the European Union and NAFTA partners. The basic strategy, including the risks and opportunities, will be familiar to anyone who has studied the Cold War confrontation with the Soviet Union ("On escalation: metaphors and scenarios", Kahn, 1965).

The administration's decision to escalate the confrontation dramatically at this point, threatening significant tariffs on a wide range of imports, including consumer items, is likely to stem from a combination of strength and fear.

### Escalation dominance

So far, the trade war appears to have hit China's economy and financial markets harder than the United States, which has given the ad-

ministration confidence that it is escalating from a position of strength. The US S&P500 equity index is up by more than 5 percent since the start of 2018, and 25 percent since the start of 2017, while China's Shanghai composite index has fallen by 13 percent and 7 percent respectively.

The US dollar has strengthened by 5 percent against China's yuan since the beginning of the year and has risen by around 3 percent on a trade-weighted basis against the currencies of other major US trading partners. China's economy has shown signs of slowing, with the central government resorting to fiscal and monetary stimulus to offset the slowdown in external demand and boost confidence.

In contrast, the US economy expanded at an annualized rate of 4.1 percent in the second quarter, the fastest for almost four years, according to advance estimates.

US manufacturers have reported a broad-based upturn in business activity in recent months, while consumer confidence is close to multi-decade highs. The asymmetric economic and financial performance of the United States and China has convinced the White House it has "escalation dominance" and should press home its advantage.

The White House strategy has been to escalate pre-emptively, secure in the belief China has more to lose than the United States on each of the next few rungs up the escalation ladder.

Until now, China has matched US tariff moves but not sought to escalate them, which has also probably also emboldened the White House to think it holds a stronger position on the escalation ladder.

### Temporary advantage?

But if the White House thinks it is escalating from a position of strength, it probably also fears strength may not last forever and could diminish the longer the conflict lasts. —Reuters

## Business

# BoE raises rates above crisis lows, signals no rush for next hike

## Policymakers still see gradual and limited hikes ahead

**LONDON:** The Bank of England pushed interest rates above their financial crisis lows yesterday, but signalled it was in no hurry to raise them further as Brexit approaches with no clear outline of Britain's future relationship with the European Union.

The BoE's nine rate-setters were unexpectedly unanimous in their vote to raise rates to 0.75 from 0.50 percent, the level at which they have spent most of the past decade apart from 15 months after the 2016 Brexit vote when they were cut even lower. Economists polled by Reuters had mostly expected a 7-2 vote in favor of a hike. The BoE said that while growth had slowed ahead of Britain's departure from the EU in March 2019, the country's economy was operating at almost its "speed limit," or full capacity, raising the prospect of more home-grown inflation pressure ahead. But the message for borrowing costs remained one of gradual and limited increases as the central bank saw inflation only a fraction above its 2 percent target over the next few years. BoE Governor Mark Carney, explaining a new estimate by the central bank of neutral interest rates for Britain's economy, stressed the gradual path for rising rates ahead.

"Policy needs to walk-not run-to stand still," he said. Sterling rose modestly against the dollar immediately after the BoE's announcement of a 9-0 vote to raise rates but turned around and hit its lowest levels of the day after Carney's comment.

The BoE said its forecasts were based on bets by investors who expect another rate hike only in late 2019 or early 2020, with Bank Rate creeping up to 1.1 percent in late 2020. That was a fraction lower than a projection of rates of 1.2 percent the last time the BoE published forecasts for the economy in May. "The economy has done just about enough for the Bank of England to justify a hike today.

But no one should get too excited about this being a sign of things to come," said Luke Bartholomew, an investment strategist at Ab-



**BoE votes 9-0  
to raise Bank  
Rate to 0.75%**

erdeen Standard Investments. "It is almost unthinkable that the Bank of England will follow up with further rate rises in the next few months given the risks on the horizon." The world's fifth-biggest economy has slowed since the referendum decision to leave the EU. With less than eight months until Brexit, London and Brussels—as well as key members of Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservative Party—remain far apart on what their future

trading relationship should look like. The BoE said the economy "could be influenced significantly by the response of households, businesses and financial markets" to news on Brexit. But the central bank continued to stress that Britain's economy was at risk of too much inflation even with slow growth.

The central bank said inflation in two years' time was likely to be 2.09 percent, above the BoE's 2 percent target. It expected Britain's economy would grow by 1.4 percent this year, unchanged from its forecast in May, but it nudged up its 2019 forecast to 1.8 percent from 1.7 percent. Wages were likely to be growing by an annual 2.5 percent at the end of this year, a bit slower than forecast in May, before picking up to 3.25 percent in 2019, unchanged from before. U-TURN RISK Several private-sector economists have challenged the BoE's view that inflation pressures are building and say raising rates now only risks a U-turn by the central bank if Britain fails to get a Brexit deal.

Carney has said that, in that event, all bets on future BoE rate hikes would be off. Some investors think the risk of a global trade war is another reason for caution. In its statement Thursday, the central bank said it saw "tentative signs that actual and prospective protectionist policies were starting to have an adverse impact" on global trade. It also fleshed out its thinking on how far it is likely to go with its planned rate hikes by publishing a new long-term forecast for what it called Britain's



**LONDON:** Bank of England Governor, Mark Carney, speaks during the central bank's quarterly Inflation Report press conference in London, yesterday. —AFP

trend real interest rate, or "R\*", of zero to 1 percent, more than 2 percentage points below its pre-financial crisis level. Adjusted for the BoE's inflation target, this would imply Bank Rate of 2-3 percent to keep growth and inflation rates stable when the economy is running at full capacity. In the shorter term, the Bank Rate implied by a so-called equilibrium real interest rate, or "r\*", was likely to be somewhat lower, the BoE said but it did not give an estimate. Carney said the estimates should not be considered as a target for BoE policy but added r\* was likely to rise slowly. —Reuters

## Sterling weakens after BoE caution on more rate hikes

**LONDON:** The pound extended losses yesterday after the Bank of England raised interest rates from crisis era lows but Governor Mark Carney expressed caution about future tightening and the risks of a cliff-edge Brexit. A broadly rallying dollar also hit the pound as Carney spoke to reporters.

The move lifting interest rates to 0.75 percent from 0.5 percent was widely expected and priced in by traders, although the unanimous decision of the BoE's nine rate-setters was not. The market initially took that unanimity as a more hawkish-than-expected sign.

But sterling later succumbed to selling pressure and dropped 0.8 percent to \$1.3017, down from around \$1.31 before Carney had given his news conference.

The pound also fell against the euro from an earlier flat position. It dropped 0.4 percent at 89.150 pence per euro as Carney spoke. "For me the pound is moving lower as Carney is showing some sympathy towards a possible

hard Brexit, they are preparing for it as we know. The "walk not run" comment looked to coincide with a further solid move lower for the pound," said Neil Jones, Head of Hedge Fund FX sales at Mizuho Bank.

Carney reiterated that given that an uncertain Brexit was on the horizon and inflation was expected to fall towards its two percent target over the next three years, the bank would raise rates only gradually and to a limited extent.

"Policy needs to walk-not run-to stand still," he said. Investors have been betting that there will be no further hikes before Britain leaves the EU in March, limiting any strength in the pound.

Sterling has fallen for three consecutive weeks against the dollar and is down close to 10 percent since April, amid worries that Britain will fail to secure a trade deal with the European Union before it exits the bloc. London and Brussels, as well as members of Prime Minister Theresa May's government, remain far apart on what the future trading relationship should look like.

"It's a slightly more hawkish rate hike than expected. The Bank of England will continue to signal that rate hikes will be needed but that won't happen in November or February ... May would be my guess for the next hike," said Kallum Pickering, a UK economist at Berenberg. "It's all about Brexit for sterling now." —Reuters

## Starbucks and Alibaba join forces as China coffee war brews

**SHANGHAI:** Starbucks coffees will be delivered to Chinese consumers with the help of e-commerce giant Alibaba, the companies said yesterday, as two of the world's biggest names in retail join forces in a China coffee war that is rapidly heating up.

The partnership comes with Starbucks facing an aggressive challenge from Chinese upstart Luckin Coffee, which has grown rapidly on a business model of delivering beverages ordered via mobile apps.

"We truly believe that this enduring partnership will elevate the coffee culture in China," Starbucks president and CEO Kevin Johnson said at a Shanghai news conference.

Starbucks products ordered by mobile apps will be brought to customers by Ele.me, Alibaba's food-delivery unit. Johnson called the tie-up "rocket fuel" for the US company's emerging digital strategy.

But Luckin, which has spiced the brewing rivalry by accusing Seattle-based Starbucks of "monopolistic" practices in China, tartly dismissed the Alibaba alliance.

In a statement, co-founder and Senior Vice President Guo Jinyi labelled Starbucks a "latecomer" that was "imitating others and



**SHANGHAI:** Starbucks' president and CEO Kevin Johnson speaks during a press conference in Shanghai yesterday. —AFP

losing its own individuality."

Traditionally tea-drinking China is seeing an explosion in coffee consumption, becoming Starbucks' key market after the United States and its main source of new growth. Seattle-based Starbucks has more than 3,400 cafes in more than 140 Chinese cities and plans to double its stores by 2022. It has said a new Starbucks opens every 15 hours in China.

Starbucks officials stressed that its existing growth thrust would continue, but that the Alibaba tie-up would add "Starbucks delivery kitchens" to supermarkets run by Alibaba. —AFP



## Business

# Google crafting censor-friendly search engine for China: Report

## Human rights activists decry 'Dragonfly'

BEIJING: Google is crafting a search engine that would meet China's draconian censorship rules, a company employee told AFP yesterday, in a move decryed by human rights activists.

Google withdrew its search engine from China eight years ago due to censorship and hacking but it is now working on a project for the country codenamed "Dragonfly", the employee said on condition of anonymity.

The search project—which works like a filter that sorts out certain topics—can be tested within the company's internal networks, the source said. The news has caused anxiety within the company since it first emerged in US media reports on Wednesday, the employee said.

The tech giant had already come under fire this year from thousands of employees who signed a petition against a \$10-million contract with the US military, which was not renewed.

"There's a lot of angst internally. Some people are very mad we're doing it," the source said.

A Google spokesman declined to confirm or deny the existence of the project.

"We provide a number of mobile apps in China, such as Google Translate and Files Go, help Chinese developers, and have made significant investments in Chinese companies like JD.com," spokesman Taj Meadows told AFP.



### Amnesty says Google must change course

"But we don't comment on speculation about future plans."

#### Rights, democracy filtered out

News website The Intercept first reported the story, saying the search app was being tailored for the Google-backed Android operating system for mobile devices.

Terms about human rights, democracy, religion and peaceful protests would be blacklisted, according to The Intercept. The app will automatically identify and filter websites blocked by China's Great Firewall, the news outlet said. The

New York Times, citing two people with knowledge of the plans, said that while the company has demonstrated the service to Chinese government officials, the existence of the project did not mean that Google's return to China was imminent.

Citing "relevant authorities", the state-owned China Securities Daily said reports suggesting that Google was returning to the Chinese market "do not conform to reality".

Amnesty International urged Google to "change course". "It will be a dark day for internet freedom if Google has acquiesced to China's extreme censorship rules to gain market access," Patrick Poon, a China researcher for Amnesty,



BEIJING: This file picture shows a Chinese flag flying next to the Google company logo outside the former Google China headquarters in Beijing.— AFP

said in a statement. "In putting profits before human rights, Google would be setting a chilling precedent and handing the Chinese government a victory."

US internet titans have long struggled with doing business in China, home of a "Great Firewall" that blocks politically sensitive content, such as the 1989 Tiananmen massacre.

Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and The New York Times website are blocked in China, but Microsoft's Bing search engine operates in China. In early 2010, Google shut down its

search engine in mainland China after rows over censorship and hacking.

Google had cried foul over what it said were cyberattacks aimed at its source code and the Gmail accounts of Chinese human rights activists. But the company still employs 700 people in three offices in China working on other projects. In December, Google announced it would open a new artificial intelligence research centre in Beijing. Earlier last year, Chinese internet regulators authorized the Google Translate app for smartphones.— AFP

## Tesla says on track for profit despite bigger Q2 loss

SAN FRANCISCO: Tesla shares revved yesterday on news the electric car maker is on the road to being profitable this year despite losing more money than analysts expected in the recently ended quarter.

Tesla shares raced up more than 9 percent to \$328.99 in after-market trades that followed release of earnings figures and a call in which chief executive Elon Musk patiently fielded questions and expressed regret for rudely brushing off inquiries from some analysts a quarter earlier. "I'd like to apologize for being impolite on the last call," Musk said to an analyst whose query he had dismissed. "There really is no excuse for bad manners."

Musk said a lack of sleep and long work days had darkened his mood that day. The Tesla chief had reacted defensively to questions from the news media and from the financial community, abruptly shutting down questions from analysts during the company's May conference call on earnings. Tesla has faced multiple controversies in recent months, many of them stemming from comments made by the mercurial Musk.

#### Improving production

The Silicon Valley-based company reported a

\$717.5 million loss that was more than twice the \$336.4 million it lost in the same quarter a year ago. Revenues meanwhile jumped 43.5 percent to \$4.0 billion.

The company also burned through less cash than many analysts expected. Tesla said its closely-watched ramp-up of production of the Model 3 has hit its stride after earlier missing a series of targets.

Output of the Model 3, the company's first targeting the middle market and a major gamble for Musk, met a 5,000 per week benchmark in June and repeated that pace "multiple times" in July.

Tesla said it is on track to hit 6,000 vehicles per week by late August and expects to reach 10,000 per week "sometime next year." Tesla executives said they have started to make a profit on cars, and predicted the "margin" will grow as the company benefits from hard-won production-line efficiencies.

The electric car maker announced in June that it would cut nine percent of its staff in a bid to achieve profitability.

In its earnings statement, Tesla projected that it would reach profitability in the third quarter and stay profitable in the fourth quarter.

"Going forward, we believe Tesla can achieve sustained quarterly profits, absent a severe force majeure or economic downturn, while continuing to grow at a rapid pace," the company said.

"Our first impression is positive," said CFRA Research analyst Efraim Levy. "We like the more muted tone of the company's outlook, with the absence of unnecessary new stretch goals," Levy said. "Perhaps it reflects a more cautious Elon Musk." — AFP

## Siemens eyes major revamp as energy woes sap profit

FRANKFURT: Falling demand for gas turbines weighed on Siemens's quarterly earnings yesterday, but the German conglomerate stuck to its confident outlook as it unveiled a major revamp to make its industrial divisions more profitable.

Net profit at the sprawling group plunged 14 percent to 1.2 billion euros (\$1.4 billion) in the third quarter of its financial year, compared with the same period a year earlier. Revenue at Siemens—which also builds trains, industrial robots and medical scanners—fell four percent to 20.5 billion euros, slightly below analysts' expectations.

Siemens blamed "a sharp decrease in profit" at its ailing power and gas

unit, as well as overall "negative currency effects" and higher taxes for the slump.

Quarterly income was driven by the group's digital services, led by a spike in profits at its factory automation arm.

The group also highlighted a 16-percent increase in overall orders, boosted by demand for big-ticket items like trains and wind turbines, while orders in its Healthineers medical devices business were flat. "Our global team delivered a strong quarter, highlighted by outstanding order intake," chief executive Joe Kaeser said in a statement.

"We diligently address our opportunities and challenges going forward," he added. Siemens said it would embark on a major restructuring in October, trimming its industrial units from five to three to make them more independent and better able to respond quickly to market demands. The overhaul has been spurred by troubles in Siemens' power and gas unit, which has long been grappling with "structurally" lower demand as energy trends shift towards renewables.— AFP

## Sports

# Hamels holds down Pirates to win Cubs debut; Orioles thump Yankees

## Grandal's walk-off homer lifts Dodgers over Brewers

**CHICAGO:** Cole Hamels, making his Cubs debut, struck out nine and gave up one unearned run in five innings Wednesday as Chicago clobbered the host Pittsburgh Pirates 9-2 to split a two-game series. Willson Contreras hit his ninth homer for the Cubs, who pounded out 15 hits. Contreras, Jason Heyward and Ben Zobrist each had three hits. Hamels (6-9) gave up three hits and walked two. Reliever Brandon Kintzler, also making his Cubs debut, gave up one hit in 1 1/3 scoreless innings. Pittsburgh starter Nick Kingham (5-6) lasted one inning, giving up four runs (two earned) and three hits with a walk and a strikeout. He made 51 pitches.

### Dodgers 6, Brewers 4 (10 innings)

Yasmani Grandal hit two home runs, including the game-winner in the 10th inning, on a night when Brian Dozier had a home run among his three hits in his Dodgers debut, and Los Angeles pulled beat visiting Milwaukee. Grandal's game-winning shot came after Matt Kemp broke an 0-for-26 slide with a leadoff single in the 10th. Grandal crushed a 1-1 pitch from Matt Albers (3-3) into the seats in the right field corner. Dylan Floro (4-2) pitched a perfect top of the 10th to earn the victory. The Dodgers ended their three-game losing streak.

### A's 8, Blue Jays 3

Sean Manaea took a shutout into the seventh inning, and batterymate Jonathan Lucroy drove in four runs with three hits, helping Oakland complete a historic season-series sweep of visiting Toronto. The win was Oakland's third in three days at home against the Blue Jays and seventh straight this season, capping Oakland's first season-series sweep of seven or more games since going 7-0 against Baltimore in 2004. Manaea (10-7) allowed one run on five hits in six-plus innings. He fanned five and walked two.

### Nationals 5, Mets 3

Anthony Rendon hit a two-run homer, and Tommy Milone threw seven strong innings as Washington defeated visiting New York. This game was much different from Tuesday's series opener, when the Nationals crushed the Mets 25-4. Milone (1-0) allowed one run on three hits in his seven innings. The left-hander struck out nine without a walk and retired 13 of the final 14 batters he faced. Ryan Madson took care of the eighth before Kelvin Herrera closed it for his 16th save.

### Orioles 7, Yankees 5

Sonny Gray lasted 2 2/3 innings and was booed off the Yankee Stadium mound as New York fell to Baltimore. Gray (8-8) tied a career high by allowing seven runs while also surrendering eight hits. It was the ninth time he has allowed seven runs and first instance since May 30, 2017, at Cleveland when he was with Oakland. Trey Mancini and Renato Nunez each had



PITTSBURGH: Cole Hamels #35 of the Chicago Cubs pitches in the first inning against the Pittsburgh Pirates at PNC Park on August 1, 2018 in Pittsburgh. — AFP

three hits and knocked in two runs to lead the Orioles' offense. Mancini homered, and Nunez had two doubles.

### Rays 7, Angels 2

Willy Adames and Jake Bauers homered, and Tyler Glasnow had a strong debut with his new team in Tampa Bay's win over Los Angeles at St. Petersburg, Fla. Glasnow, who was acquired as part of a trade-deadline deal Tuesday that sent starting pitcher Chris Archer to the Pittsburgh Pirates, got the start Wednesday as part of the Rays' bullpen-oriented approach. In three innings, he gave up one run on two hits. Jacob Faria (4-3) took over for Glasnow to start the fourth inning and went 3 2/3 innings, allowing one run on four hits.

### Cardinals 6, Rockies 3

Yadier Molina's two-run double in the eighth inning provided critical insurance as host St. Louis defeated Colorado. Rookie Austin Gomber (1-0), the third of six pitchers for St. Louis, earned his first career win with an inning of two-strikeout, one-walk work in the sixth. Molina, Marcell Ozuna and Harrison Bader each had three hits for the Cardinals.

### Tigers 7, Reds 4

Jose Iglesias drove in three runs, and Detroit

overcame the early loss of starting pitcher Mike Fiers to collect a win over visiting Cincinnati. Fiers left the game after two innings with a left lower shin contusion. He was struck by a Mason Williams liner in the second and pitched to two more batters before departing. Drew VerHagen (2-2) replaced Fiers and tossed three scoreless innings while getting credited with the victory. Shane Greene recorded the last three outs for his 23rd save.

### Indians 2, Twins 0

Carlos Carrasco allowed just four hits over 7 1/3 shutout innings as Cleveland blanked Minnesota in Minneapolis. Brad Hand pitched the final 1 2/3 innings, allowing only a bunt single to Jorge Polanco, to earn his 26th save of the season. Carrasco (13-5) struck out 10 and didn't walk a batter. He moved into a tie with CC Sabathia, Sam McDowell and Sonny Siebert for second-most games in Indians history with 10-plus strikeouts and no walks with three-behind Corey Kluber (10).

### Astros 8, Mariners 3

Marwin Gonzalez hit two of Houston's four home runs as the Astros won at Seattle. Jake Marisnick, recalled earlier in the day from Triple-A Fresno, and Max Stassi also went deep for the Astros, who began an eight-

game trip by taking two of three from the Mariners. Teammate Evan Gattis went 3-for-5 with two doubles. Astros left-hander Dallas Keuchel (9-9) allowed three runs on eight hits in seven innings.

### Royals 10, White Sox 5

Alex Gordon began and ended a flurry of 10 unanswered runs over a four-inning span by Kansas City, who went on to win at Chicago for the second day in a row. Gordon's two-run double in the third gave the Royals the lead for good at 2-1. His two-run homer in the sixth capped the outburst by Kansas City, which reached double digits in runs scored for the seventh time this season. It also gave Gordon his first four-RBI game since Aug. 18, 2016. Jakob Junis (6-11), who was 0-8 with a 6.67 ERA in his previous 10 starts, allowed four runs over 5 2/3 innings.

### Marlins at Braves, ppd

The scheduled game between Miami and host Atlanta was postponed on Wednesday because of heavy rains that drenched most of the area near SunTrust Park all day and into the evening. The game will be made up as part of a day-night doubleheader on Aug. 13 at SunTrust Park. A 1:35 pm ET game will precede the regularly scheduled 7:35 pm ET game. — Reuters

## Sports

# Badminton's legend bid for 6th world title meets a sorry end

## Not so 'Super' - legend Lin Dan dumped out of World Championships

**NANJING:** Badminton legend Lin Dan's bid for a sixth world title met a sorry end as the man widely regarded as the best player of all time was well beaten by Chinese compatriot Shi Yuqi in the last 16. The 34-year-old "Super Dan" was the most high-profile casualty on a day when men's number one and reigning champion Viktor Axelsen of Denmark and women's number one Tai Tzu-ying of Taiwan both progressed in Nanjing. Lin, a two-time Olympic and five-time world champion, may be reaching the end of his career but he remains the biggest draw in badminton.

The crowd willed him on against his younger opponent Shi, 22, but Lin bowed out with a whimper, 21-15, 21-9. Shi, the third seed, joins Axelsen and Japan's strongly fancied Kento Momota in the quarter-finals of the World Championships. The 24-year-old Axelsen pulled through against 10th seed Angus Ng Ka-long of Hong Kong and will play China's Olympic champion Chen Long in a mouthwatering showdown. Axelsen admitted that he

was not at his best—so it helped that he was able to draw on the crowd, who have taken to the Dane partly because of his efforts to learn Chinese.

Having a good grasp of Mandarin helps in a sport where many players are Chinese or of Chinese descent. Axelsen has been learning for about four years and can give interviews in the language. He has even taken to translating for his rivals and he can also listen in on the tactics of his Chinese opponents. "It really helps me communicate with my Chinese fans and I really appreciate all the support out here," he told AFP. "Having the Chinese fans yelling your name, I really appreciate that. "It is also really convenient to be able to speak a bit, not only with the other players, but at restaurants and out there in the real world, so to speak."

As well as endearing himself to Chinese fans, Axelsen hopes having the language will be useful for life after badminton. Ax-

elsen won the first game 21-19, then he and Ng went toe-to-toe in the second, before the Dane prevailed 21-18. He celebrated with a swing of his fist. "It meant a lot. Sometimes when you feel like you are not at your highest level, you also have to be able to win," he said. "I struggled a little bit to win it and that's why I showed some emotions out there today," he added, before passing a couple of Chinese players and exchanging pleasantries—in Chinese.

In the women's draw, hot favorite Tai recovered from a slow start to book her place in the last eight, where she was joined by Spain's Olympic champion Carolina Marin. Tai was behind in the opening exchanges against Zhang Beiwen, the Chinese-born American who needed internet crowd funding to make it to Nanjing. But the 24-year-old Tai's quality shone through, winning 21-19, 21-14 in 34 minutes to set up a meeting with China's sixth seed He Bingjiao. — AFP

## Officials honor Kuwait shooters



By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** A reception was held for Kuwait shooters who participated in the Clay Shooting Grand Prix tournament that was held in Todi - Italy earlier in the month. The reception was held in the presence of President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Engr Duajj Al-Otaibi and Kuwait Shooting Sport Club Assistant Secretary Engr Mohammad Al-Ghurba. Kuwaiti shooter Ahmad Al-Afasi was able to win second place and the silver medal in the Double Trap Event, while Ahmad Al-Awwad won the Junior's Skeet Bronze Medal. In the Trap Team Event shooters Khalid Al-Mudhaf, Talal Al-Rashidi and Abdelrahman Al-Faihan won third place and the bronze medals.

Engr Duajj Al-Otaibi said this achievement is yet another one that it is expected - and it comes through good planning by both the board of directors and the technical department. He said the shooters' continued training and hard work brought such achievements and the result made by Ahmad Al-Awad is a promising one as "we at KSSC rely heavily on juniors because they are the future of Kuwait Shooting".



Al-Otaibi dedicated this achievement to HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and the Kuwaitis.

Engr Al-Otaibi lauded the support of the honorary President of KSSC Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, Information Minister, State Minister for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri

and Public Authority for Sports and its Director General Humoud Fulaiteh. He said preparations are underway for the 8th Asian Clay Shooting and 11th Air Gun Shooting Tournament to be held in November in Kuwait - with 45 countries participating. The club will begin its local 2018-2019 season with the tournament of HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on October 4th 2018 at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex.

## Samba badminton: From Brazilian slum to world's acclaim

**NANJING:** If it was not for badminton, the Brazilian Ygor Coelho says that he would have ended up like some of his friends from their Rio favela - caught up in drugs or dead. Instead, the 21-year-old with a beaming smile is making a name for himself as South America's best badminton player and an example for others growing up in tough circumstances.

Coelho was defeated in the last 16 of the World Championships yesterday in Nanjing, but not before his story grabbed attention and won him many admirers in China. Exhibiting fleet, samba-like footwork, Coelho - ranked 39 in the world - sprang a shock in beating 11th-seeded HS Prannoy of India on Wednesday. Coelho's run came to an emphatic end with a comprehensive 21-11, 21-7 defeat to Taiwan's Chou Tien-chen, but that did nothing to wipe the big grin off his face.

At times, Coelho has to pinch himself that all of this - the crowd chanting his name, the media interest, playing sport for money - is real. Even speaking English, a necessity when taking part in top-level international competition, is something that he never thought possible. Asked by AFP what he would be doing now if it were not for badminton, Coelho said: "It's a hard question, but for sure badminton has changed my life. "I've learnt English, I travel around the world, I have good experiences, friends all over the world. "I've learnt a lot from badminton."

### 'Some friends died'

Coelho has since left the Chacrinha slum of his boyhood on Rio's western outskirts, instead training and living in France and Denmark. But his tough upbringing in a community blighted by drug violence remains a major part of his identity. Coelho started playing badminton - a sport hardly associated with football-mad Brazil - at three thanks to his father, Sebastiao Dias de Oliveira, a PE teacher and badminton coach. "My father created a social project in badminton in the favela to help people not go in the bad way, not do drugs, this kind of stuff," said Coelho. "My friends went into that kind of life and some of them died. "Me doing this here, I am like a hero to some of them (at the project) and they are trying to follow the same way as me." — AFP

## Sports

# Curran treble lifts England as India reel in the first Test

## Root laughs off Kohli's run out send-off

**BIRMINGHAM:** England's Sam Curran took three wickets in quick succession as India suffered a dramatic top-order collapse in the first Test at Edgbaston yesterday. Curran's treble strike reduced India to 76 for three at lunch on the second day, a deficit of 211 runs after England made 287 in their first innings. Surrey left-arm swing bowler Curran, in only his second Test match, dismissed Murali Vijay, KL Rahul and Shikhar Dhawan in an inspired spell of three wickets for eight runs in eight balls. At lunch, the 20-year-old son of the late Zimbabwe all-rounder Kevin Curran, had figures of three for 23 in six overs. India were now looking to captain and star batsman Virat Kohli (nine not out) and Ajinkya Rahane (eight not out) to revive the innings in the first of a five-match series. It seemed as if openers Vijay and Dhawan had come through a tough spell against the new ball by taking India to 50 without loss.

But first-change Curran made it 50 for one in the 14th over when Vijay was lbw on review after missing a well pitched-up inswinger. Two balls later Curran dismissed Rahul for four via the batsman's ugly flat-bat drag-on. Left-hander Dhawan, fortunate to see an edged drive off Curran fly past third slip Keaton Jennings, had no such luck when, on 26, he nicked a well-directed Curran outswinger to Dawid Malan at second slip. Earlier, it took India just 10 balls on to wrap up England's first innings, the hosts adding two runs to their overnight 285 for nine before Curran was caught behind off Mohammed Shami for 24.

At that stage England, who won the toss, would have been disappointed at being dismissed for under 300 on a good batting pitch as they marked their

1,000th Test with an all-too familiar batting collapse. They had been well-placed at 216 for three on Wednesday thanks to a partnership of 104 between captain Joe Root (80) and Yorkshire team-mate Jonny Bairstow (70). But the run out of Root by Kohli, who gave his England counterpart a colorful send-off, sparked a slump that saw England lose six wickets for just 67 runs. India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, belying his reputation as a poor performer outside the sub-continent, took four for 62 in 26 overs and Shami three for 64 in 19.4 overs.

### Root laughs off

Meanwhile, England captain Joe Root said the controversial send-off he received from India skipper Virat Kohli after being run out on the opening day of the first Test at Edgbaston was "quite funny" and added to the "theatre of the game". England had been well-placed at 216 for three, with Root seemingly on course to score a first Test century since his 136 against the West Indies during last year's day/night clash at Edgbaston. But his 11th Test fifty without a hundred since that innings ended in frustrating fashion when, with Yorkshire team-mate Jonny Bairstow calling him for a tight second run, he was run out for 80 by Kohli's direct hit from midwicket. It was also the finish of a stand worth 104 and the start of a collapse that saw England lose six wickets for 67 runs on the way to a stumps score of 285 for nine. Kohli rubbed salt into the wound by blowing kisses in the direction of Root and putting his finger to his lips. He also did the 'mic drop' gesture in imitation of Root's celebration of his one-day series-clinching hundred against



**BIRMINGHAM:** England's bowler Sam Curran (2nd right) celebrates taking the wicket of India's Hardik Pandya (left) for 22 runs on the second day of the first Test cricket match between England and India at Edgbaston in Birmingham, central England yesterday. —AFP

India at Headingley. Meanwhile the words Kohli appeared to utter in Root's direction after the run out could yet lead to action by match referee Jeff Crowe, the former New Zealand captain.

"I didn't see it at the time but I saw it last night," Root told BBC Radio's Test Match Special in an interview broadcast yesterday. "It actually adds to the theatre of the game. It's good to have those little moments within things. I thought it was quite

funny." He added: "I'm sure within the five-match series there will be plenty of that stuff going on. It adds to the whole drama of this series." Asked if Kohli's celebration would fire England up, Root replied: "We'll have to wait and see. I can't see it becoming an issue throughout this game or moving forward. "But it makes entertaining cricket for everyone to watch, which is exactly what you want in Test cricket." —Agencies

## Cancer-stricken Lyle sends emotional message to fans

**SYDNEY:** Cancer-stricken Australian golfer Jarrod Lyle thanked friends and fans in an emotional message yesterday after deciding to halt his treatment for leukaemia, saying he was overwhelmed by the outpouring of support. The 36-year-old former US PGA Tour player moved into palliative care this week to see out his final days, with his body not able "to take anymore" after acute myeloid leukaemia returned for a third time.

His plight has seen goodwill messages from across the globe, including from fans, players and even movie superstar Dwayne Johnson. "I feel like I'm the luckiest golfer going around because so many people took an interest in me and took an interest in, I guess, my fight," Lyle, breathing heavily, said in an audio clip on Inside The Ropes.

He thanked his many "friends around the world, whether they're spectators, whether they're golfers, whether they're marshals". "It's going to be hard to leave that behind, but they know that I love them. "They know that all the fighting that I did do was to get back out and play golf again." Lyle, who has two young children, overcame leukaemia as a 17-year-old before suffering a recurrence in 2012. He won that battle and made his return to professional golf at the Australian Masters in November 2013. But his health deteriorated again in recent months.

"It's going to be hard but, at some point, it's going to happen and they'll get on with their lives," he said of his family and friends. "I just feel very, very lucky." Lyle joined the PGA Tour in 2007 and managed a handful of top-10 finishes. Golfers around the world have paid tribute, with Australian great Greg Norman yesterday saying he was "absolutely devastated". "Jarrod - you have exemplified strength and courage for your wife and beautiful daughters, for Australia and for the golf community that has walked this road with you for many years," he tweeted. "The world will be less without you. Godspeed my friend." —AFP

## Giant-killer Konta into quarters at San Jose WTA

**LOS ANGELES:** Johanna Konta followed up her stunning victory over Serena Williams with another brisk triumph Wednesday, downing US teenager Sofia Kenin 6-1, 6-4 to reach the quarter-finals of the WTA hardcourt tournament in San Jose. Konta, who won her first WTA title at this event back in 2016, showed no sign of a let-down after handing 23-time Grand Slam champion Williams the most lopsided defeat of her career — 6-1, 6-0 on Tuesday.

"I kind of approached today as a separate challenge," Konta said. "I just played the challenge of the day and the opponent that I had, and really just tried to do the best that I can with that." The tournament lost another big name when top-seeded Spaniard Garbine Muguruza pulled out of the tournament with a right arm injury, hours before she was to face former world number one Victoria Azarenka for a place in the quarters.

The Spaniard, bounced from the second round in her title defense at Wimbledon, had been hoping to rebound on the hard courts of San Jose with the US Open looming in less than a month. "I've been feeling some pain in my right arm for a couple of days and realized

I am not ready to play the match, so hopefully I can recover for the next tournaments," Muguruza said in a statement. For Konta, however, it was full speed ahead. The Briton needed just 70 minutes to dispatch Kenin, blasting 20 winners - including nine aces - with just 13 unforced errors.

Kenin put up a determined defense, but 19 unforced errors proved too much to overcome and she was unable to convert either of her two break point opportunities. Konta, a former world number four now ranked 48th, next faces fourth-seeded Elise Mertens of Belgium for a place in the semi-finals. Mertens reached the last eight with a 6-2, 6-0 victory over American wild card Ashley Kratzer. "(Mertens is) a great player, she's been playing very, very well and consistently well this season, and that's a big task and she's been doing that so well," Konta said.

"Every tournament that I go into, I want to be there until the very end," she added. "Obviously, being two matches in, I'm giving myself that chance to keep going further. So I think that's where I'm at, really — I'm grateful and looking forward to just having another match here." In other second-round action on Wednesday, American Danielle Collins defeated Vera Lapko of Belarus 6-1, 3-6, 6-1. Collins next faces Azarenka, who cruised to a 6-1, 6-0 victory over Russian Anna Blinkova — the lucky loser drafted to replace Muguruza in the draw. —AFP

## Sports

# Murray outfights Edmund; Zverev booked a matchup

## Paire fined \$16,500 for Washington meltdown

**WASHINGTON:** Three-time Grand Slam winner Andy Murray collected the biggest victory of his injury comeback Wednesday at the ATP and WTA Washington Open while defending champion Alexander Zverev booked a matchup with his older brother. Murray, sidelined by a right hip injury for 11 months until returning in June, ousted fourth seed Kyle Edmund 7-6 (7/4), 1-6, 6-4 in an all-British matchup to reach the third round of the hardcourt tuneup for the US Open.

"That has been my best win since I started playing again," Murray said. "It's a great win for me. It'll give me more confidence going forward." World number three Zverev defeated Tunisia's Malek Jaziri 6-2, 6-1, to send the 21-year-old German top seed into his first ATP match against 30-year-old Mischa Zverev, the 15th seed who beat American Tim Smyczek 6-2, 7-6 (9/7). "We played the final of Wimbledon a lot of times in our backyard," Alex Zverev said. "I was 12. He was 22. I don't think I ever won. But this is on hardcourt."

On a day when reigning US Open champion Sloane Stephens was ousted by Germany's Andrea Petkovic and Australian Nick Kyrgios withdrew with a sore left hip, Murray stole the show with an impressive victory. "Hopefully my body will adapt to the matches and get back to what it's supposed to be doing," Murray said. "As the weeks progress, I hope to have more days like today where the pressure and the expectations all grow." Former world number one Murray, now ranked 832nd, outlasted his 18th-ranked

rival, breaking on a forehand return winner to advance after two hours and 32 minutes. "Now I have to get my body to play that way consistently and work on getting better with every match," Murray said. The 31-year-old Scotsman, who unleashed a primal scream and flurry of fist pumps after winning his opener, wiped away sweat this time before eventually pointing to the heavens, punching the air with his right fist and pumping his fist with satisfaction.

"Much better in terms of the way I played," Murray said. "Got a lot more points off my forehand. I was able to be more aggressive. I wanted to dictate more points and be inside the baseline, especially on the main points and particularly in the third set. I was less nervous. I increased my intensity at the end of the second set. I thought I did that well." Romania's 93rd-ranked Marius Copil, who ousted French 14th seed Jeremy Chardy 6-4, 6-4, will face Murray on Thursday for a quarter-final berth.

### No 3 Stephens stumbles

Third-ranked Stephens lost to 91st-rated Andrea Petkovic 2-6, 6-4, 6-2. Stephens, who won the Miami Open in March, made a run to the French Open semi-finals but stumbled early in her first hardcourt stop before defending her first Grand Slam title. "Hopefully some things will connect in the next few weeks coming into the US Open," Stephens said. Petkovic, down a set and a break, rallied and won the final four games to reach the quarter-finals, her first victory over

a top-10 foe since beating then-number five Garbine Muguruza at Doha in 2016. "It's definitely a confidence boost," Petkovic said. Japanese third seed Naomi Osaka, ranked 17th, is the only top-45 player remaining in the women's draw. Kyrgios, ranked 17th, tweeted he was "guttled" to withdraw over the same injury that caused him to retire from an Atlanta Open quarter-final last week. "I haven't had enough time to be ready," Kyrgios said. "The physio recommended a couple of days of rest, rehab and treatment. I've got ample time for it to settle down before Toronto. It's disappointing. But at this stage I can't risk aggravating the injury. Last year I wasn't healthy at the US Open so I want to be right for that." Japanese seventh seed Kei Nishikori beat US qualifier Donald Young 6-3, 6-4 just before rain washed out the night's final five matches, including US second seed John Isner's second-round against compatriot Noah Rubin.

### Paire fined \$16,500

In another development, French player Benoit Paire has been fined \$16,500 after a racket-smashing meltdown during his first-round defeat by Marcos Baghdatis at the Washington Open this week. Paire, known for his volatile temperament, smashed three rackets and kicked a court-side bench and was booed off the court after appearing to give up on match point down. The 29-year-old initially lost his cool when dropping serve to trail 5-2 in the final set of his 6-3 3-6 6-2 defeat. After falling, he smashed his racket over



**WASHINGTON:** Andy Murray of Great Britain reacts to missing a shot from Kyle Edmund of the Great Britain during Day Five of the Citi Open at the Rock Creek Tennis Center on August 1, 2018. — AFP

and over into the court, then took another one from his bag and destroyed that. Another frame bit the dust at the end of the contest. Paire was sanctioned for "audible obscenity, unsportsmanlike conduct and a lack of giving best effort". "Yes, yes it's true I got upset yesterday," he wrote on Instagram. The ATP fine was more than double the appearance money he made at the tournament. — Agencies

## Tennis clocks get good reviews but cut into tune time

**WASHINGTON:** New serve and warm-up clocks that debuted in ATP and WTA main draws this week received generally good reviews from players, although hurried warm-ups cut into music time for some. The serve clock gives players 25 seconds to begin their service motion from the time the chair umpire announces the score.

The warm-up clock allows one minute from on-court arrival to get to the net, five minutes for warming up and another minute to get ready to play. "It's a positive change for tennis," three-time Grand Slam champion Andy Murray said after his first-round match at the Washington Open. "It's one of those things in tennis that's so stupid. How are you supposed to count 25 seconds in your head?" While umpires have some discretion, the clock assures players and umpires are on the same wavelength when it comes to measuring the gap, with ball bouncing and gestures not counted as starting a serve motion.

"It was great. I don't feel any pressure," said three-time Grand Slam champion Stan Wawrinka. "You still have a lot of time and it's good for the game. For sure you look (at the clock) but you're always early compared to the umpire." The biggest complaints came from two 20-year-old rising stars, Japan's Naomi Osaka and American Frances Tiafoe. But it wasn't about the serve clock. It was about one-minute countdown from walking out to getting to the net for the coin toss. For players accustomed to a more leisurely pace in their teen years, it's tough to take off the headphones and leave behind their music so quickly. "It's good. I think

it would be well to speed it up. Some guys definitely take their time, move bottles around. But long matches are still going to be long matches," said 41st-ranked Tiafoe. "The minute to walk on, I don't like that. I had to take my headphones off so I didn't get fined there." Osaka, ranked 17th, was listening to Kendrick Lamar ahead of her opener when she realized she needed to get moving. "The most panicky thing for me is the minute you have to get to the net for the coin toss. It cut into my music," she said. "I usually listen to music all the way to the bench and I had to stop half way. I was a little upset about that."

Reigning US Open champion Sloane Stephens said it will take some time to adapt to the clock, especially in tight situations. "It's a little weird. You have to pay attention," Stephens said. "When you're 6-6 in the third set of a close match you don't want to look at a clock. But it is what it is. Hopefully everyone will adjust well." Japan's Kei Nishikori, the 2014 US Open runner-up, knows he will have less time to decide where he wants to go with serves and to formulate strategy between points. "For myself, it's not going to be easy," he said. "I'm not going to have time to think much about where to put my serve. I won't have much time to think between the points and with the heat it's going to be a little bit tough."

### Helps 'stronger' player

Germany's Andrea Petkovic, a 2014 French Open semi-finalist, said she adapted quickly after some nervous moments at the start. "I like it. It does speed up the game," she said. "I got ready a little quicker than I used to. It did stress me out a little bit first match. In the beginning I was looking at it all the time. When I realized I was doing fine, it relaxed me." She wouldn't mind seeing it in every event, although it will only be used in the US Open and tuneup events this year, with consideration for a wider rollout in 2019. "I think it would be a good thing," Petkovic said. "It brings an edge to it and makes it more physical. I think it favors the physically stronger player." — AFP

## Son released for full Asian Games under Spurs deal

**SEOUL:** Son Heung-min will miss South Korea's first two matches at the Asian Cup in January under a compromise agreed with Tottenham Hotspur to release him for this month's Asian Games, the Korea Football Association (KFA) said Wednesday. The South Korean striker will fly to Indonesia for the Asian Games—where a gold medal is likely to win him exemption from military service—after Spurs' Premier League season opener against Newcastle United on August 11, a KFA spokesman said.

Spurs had initially sought to keep Son back until August 18, when they have a Premier League match against Fulham. That would have effectively kept the 26-year-old out of the group stage for Asia's mini-Olympics, where the football tournament runs from August 14 to September 2. But Spurs later relented, striking a deal that rules Son out of South Korea's Asian Cup games on January 7 and 11 against the Philippines and Kyrgyzstan, as well as an international friendly in November. There are precedents for footballers being granted exemptions from South Korea's 21-month military service, as happened in 2002, when the national team reached the World Cup semi-finals, and in 2014, when they won gold at the Asian Games in Incheon. However, Son missed South Korea's triumph in 2014 when his former club, Bayer Leverkusen, refused to release him. — AFP

## Sports

# Liverpool upbeat after transfer coups as Manchester Utd sweat

## Intense frustration for Manchester United boss Mourinho

**LONDON:** Liverpool have spent big in the transfer window in an attempt to close the gap on Premier League champions Manchester City but it has been a summer of intense frustration for Manchester United boss Jose Mourinho. Elsewhere, Pep Guardiola finally landed Leicester's Riyad Mahrez for a club-record fee in an otherwise quiet window so far for City while Arsenal have signed a clutch of players but no marquee names to whet the appetite.

Premier League clubs spent a record £1.4 billion (\$1.8 billion, 1.57 million euros) on players in a summer splurge last year, according to football analysts Deloitte. But there is nothing so far to match the arrival of Paul Pogba at Manchester United two years ago in a then world-record deal or Alexis Sanchez's move from the Emirates to Old Trafford in January.

The transfer window closes at 1600 GMT on August 9, a day before the first game of the season, which sees Manchester United take on Leicester City. Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp did his business early, bringing in Brazil's World Cup goalkeeper Alisson just weeks after two shocking errors by Loris Karius in the Champions League final defeat to Real Madrid. He also picked up midfielders Fabinho from Monaco and Naby Keita from RB Leipzig and added Stoke City's Xherdan

Shaqiri to an already formidable array of attacking talent that includes Mohamed Salah.

But the German manager is warning Liverpool not to get carried away with celebrating their success in the transfer market after splurging more than £170 million. "We need to be ready for the big challenges, the big goals," he said. "We have to be this angry, aggressive, greedy team full of desire that wants to win each game. "All the other teams have quality as well so we need to be ready for fights, not celebrating signings and stuff." Mourinho, unable to resist an early dig at his rival, said Liverpool's transfer activity ought to increase expectations of a first top-flight title since 1990.

"With the investments you are making last season and you make now, that will probably be the record of the Premier League this season, a team that was a finalist in the Champions League - you have to say you are a big candidate, you have to win," Mourinho said during United's pre-season tour of the United States, during which they were thumped 4-1 by Liverpool. The United boss himself has cut an increasingly frustrated figure in the build-up to the season, lamenting his failure to land his top targets. The Portuguese is desperate to close the gap to Guardiola's side but so far has just picked up Brazil midfielder Fred, who

did not play a single minute at the World Cup in Russia, young defender Diogo Dalot from Porto, and veteran goalkeeper Lee Grant.

City, who finished 19 points clear of United last season, have been relatively quiet this time around but they finally snared Mahrez for £60 million, further enhancing their dazzling forward options. The City boss said he was unfazed by Liverpool's lavish spending, remaining happy with the nucleus of the squad that romped to the Premier League title. "Every club does what they believe, I understand completely," he said. "They are contenders to win the title, Liverpool are always a contender because of the history they have."

### Hazard to stay?

Chelsea's Eden Hazard looked like he could be at the centre of one of the biggest transfer stories of the summer when he hinted at the World Cup he might want a fresh challenge. His comments sparked speculation he could be off to Real Madrid to replace the departed Cristiano Ronaldo.

The European champions have also been linked with Chelsea goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois and Brazil forward Willian. Britain's Sun newspaper reported on Wednesday that Courtois has told Chelsea he will quit the club next year on a free



Manchester United's coach Jose Mourinho

transfer unless they sell him this summer. The only major signing for the 2016-17 Premier League champions is Brazil midfielder Jorginho from Napoli, with new boss Maurizio Sarri professing himself bored with the transfer market. Arsenal, preparing for a season under a new manager for the first time for more than two decades, have signed a clutch of players including Switzerland defender Stephan Lichtsteiner but Unai Emery has not yet landed a marquee name. Tottenham, about to move into a new stadium, are the only one of the top sides not to have signed a single player. There is still time but the clock is ticking. — AFP

## Tianjin pour cold water on possible Axel Witsel switch

**BERLIN:** Borussia Dortmund appear to have suffered a setback in their quest to sign Belgium midfielder Axel Witsel from Chinese club Tianjin Quanjian in the current transfer window. Dortmund are reportedly eager to activate a 20-million-euro (\$23.2m) buy-out clause in Witsel's contract, but Quanjian head coach Paulo Sousa poured cold water on a potential transfer with the World Cup star's deal to run until December 2019. "I haven't received any information on Witsel's transfer, neither from the club nor the player himself," Sousa told Chinese broadcaster CGTN.

"It is my understanding that the player may have a transfer clause in his contract, but the clause could only be triggered during the transfer window. "Now that the Chinese transfer window has closed (on July 12), the transfer won't happen. "I'm convinced that Witsel will be back. He is an integral part of our team."

Quanjian owner Shu Yuhui echoed

Sousa's stance in a later interview in the Tianjin media by saying "Witsel will return (to China) on August 5". According to German media, Witsel is currently on holiday on the Spanish island of Ibiza and is reportedly eager to join Bundesliga side Dortmund, who have qualified for the Champions League for 2018/19.

The deal seemed set to be wrapped up on Monday when Belgian broadcaster RTBF claimed the 29-year-old, who helped Belgium finish third at the World Cup, was already in Dortmund for a medical, which turned out to be untrue. However, Germany's top-selling daily Bild still expects Witsel to become a Dortmund player in the coming days.

New head coach Lucien Favre is reportedly eager to include him in a new-look Dortmund midfield alongside Germany midfielder Julian Weigl and new signing Thomas Delaney, who has joined from Werder Bremen. — AFP

## Lampard, Bielsa add star quality to Championship

**LONDON:** Marcelo Bielsa and Frank Lampard bring a touch of star quality to the English Championship but face a stiff task to restore the lustre of fallen giants Leeds United and Derby County. Both men also have something to prove on a personal level - Argentine veteran Bielsa will want to show he can still cut it at the sharp end while Lampard is embarking on his first job in management after a glittering playing career.

And the two men will not have to wait long to pit their wits against each other — their sides meet on August 11 in Derby. Fans may allow both men a honeymoon period but supporters of both clubs — who have been champions of England five times between them — ultimately believe they belong in the Premier League. Despite the pressure, the much-travelled Bielsa, 63, refuses to be a hostage to fortune. "The history of this club, everyone knows how to measure success or failure at the end of the season," he said. "If you try to predict the future you're almost becoming a demi-god rather than a football coach."

While the Championship lacks the superstar names of the Premier League, it is notoriously competitive and Bielsa and Lampard begin at a disadvantage as the clubs relegated from the top flight have the benefit of generous "parachute" payments.

Stoke City, who dropped out of the Premier League in May, are early favorites to bounce straight back up, with West Brom also tipped to do well. Lampard's first match comes on Friday, away to Reading. The former England midfielder played under Reading's manager Paul Clement at Chelsea, when Clement was assistant to Carlo Ancelotti.

Lampard, who enjoyed huge success as a player at Chelsea, is a phlegmatic character while Bielsa is renowned for his fiery temperament, leaving Lazio after just two days and parting ways with Lille last year after only a few months at the helm. Club owner Andrea Radrizzani has staked a lot on making him the highest-paid Leeds manager and will hope to see the Bielsa that delivered the 2004 Olympic title for Argentina and guided Athletic Bilbao to two cup finals in the 2011-12 season.

Bielsa, whose team host Stoke on Sunday, needed little convincing when given the opportunity to revive the club, who were English league champions in 1992, the season before the Premier League was born.

"Nobody had to convince me. I was convinced by the strength of Leeds United as a club and an institution," he said. "I looked at things from a sporting, football point of view and those things together helped me make my choice." Lampard, 40, whose uncle is the former West Ham and Tottenham manager Harry Redknapp, pledged to confront his new challenge head on. "I don't have a management CV and don't proclaim to," he told the BBC. "Any job has its risk elements but you take them on and you do so with a positive nature. "I am delighted that they have taken that risk and chosen me and I want to prove them right and get success." — AFP

# Serie A champ Juventus top MLS All-Stars on penalties

## Juventus prevail 5-3 in a shoot-out

**WASHINGTON:** Serie A champions Juventus got the best of Major League Soccer's All-Stars in a penalty shootout Wednesday after an entertaining 1-1 draw in the North American league's mid-season exhibition. Before a crowd of 72,317 at Mercedes-Benz Stadium - home of MLS's Atlanta United - Juventus prevailed 5-3 in the shoot-out after New York Red Bulls forward Bradley Wright-Phillips missed his penalty attempt.

After Wright-Phillips' effort bounced off the post to leave Juventus up 4-3 - Mattia De Sciglio fired into the upper left corner past Columbus goalkeeper Zack Steffen to settle it. Andrea Favilli had put Juventus ahead in the 21st minute, heading in a curling cross by Matheus Pereira. The MLS All-Stars, selected from around the league through fan voting, pulled level in the 26th minute through Atlanta United's Josef Martinez - the Venezuela star and former Torino forward who leads MLS with 24 goals in 23 matches.

Juventus keeper Wojciech Szczesny saved an initial effort, but after a scramble in the area, Martinez bundled the ball in to score in front of his home crowd. "It's been a moving week here," Martinez said. "I have to thank all the fans in Atlanta for the way they support us all the time and the wonderful experience in this game." He added, however, that there was "a lot of pressure" on the All-Star team. "Beyond the fact that we had a very good opponent, it was an important game, especially a team of this caliber. We had never played together before. We only had three days to meet, but I think we looked good despite that."

It marked the second straight year that the



**ATLANTA:** Leandro Fernandes #34 of Juventus scores on the fourth penalty kick against Zack Steffen #18 of the MLS All-Stars during the 2018 MLS All-Star Game on August 1, 2018. — AFP

All-Star Game ended in a 1-1 draw to go to a shoot-out. Last year, Real Madrid beat the All-Stars 4-2 on penalties at Soldier Field in Chicago. The crowd was the largest ever for the MLS All-Star game, surpassing the 70,728 for the 2010 edition in Houston.

The game was one of four matches for Juventus on their North American tour, but they haven't brought off-season acquisition Cris-

tiano Ronaldo, the five-time Ballon d'Or winner whose 100 million-euro (\$117 million) move from European champions Real Madrid was announced in July.

With three wins from three matches, Juventus will look to make it a clean sweep of the tour on Saturday night against Real Madrid at FedEx Field in Washington, DC. "It was really a wonderful game, and it was a good preparation for

us," said Juventus manager Massimiliano Allegri, who said he was "very pleasantly surprised" by the atmosphere in Atlanta. "You know it's not easy to put 70,000 people in a stadium like today," he said. The All-Stars were without Los Angeles Galaxy forward Zlatan Ibrahimovic, who was voted into the contest against his former club by fans but would have been playing in his third game in seven days. — AFP

## 'Heading the ball' riskier for female players: Study

**TAMPA:** Brain damage from heading a football may be five times more extensive in women than men, said a US study based on nearly 100 amateur players. The report in the journal *Radiology* suggested that sex-specific guidelines may be needed to guard against head injuries in football, or soccer as it is widely called in the United States.

"Researchers and clinicians have long noticed that women fare worse following head injury than men, but some have said that's only because women are more willing to report symptoms," said lead author Michael Lipton, professor of radiology, psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. "Based on our study, which measured objective changes in brain tissue rather than self-reported symptoms, women do seem more likely than men to suffer brain trauma from heading soccer balls." For the study, 49 male and 49 female players were given a form of MRI called diffusion

tensor imaging (DTI), which analyzes the health of the brain's white matter by looking at water balance in the tissue.

Players' ages ranged from 18-50, and both groups reported a similar number of headings over the previous year. Men reported an average of 487 headings and women 469. The scans showed that "the volume of damaged white matter in women soccer players was five times greater than for male players," according to the report. The women had eight brain regions where white matter—which involves communication between different parts of the brain—were affected, compared to three in men. Researchers said the brain changes were "subclinical," meaning the players did not report any altered thinking ability.

But the changes remain a concern because they could be a precursor to further injury and brain damage, including cognitive decline and behavioral changes. "Before serious dysfunction occurs, it's wise to identify risk factors for cumulative brain injury—such as heading if you're female—so that people can act to prevent further damage and maximize recovery," said Lipton. The study gave no formal reasons for the differences, but some experts suggest that neck strength, sex hormones or genetics could be to blame. About 30 million women and girls play soccer worldwide, according to the International Federation of Association Football, known as FIFA. — AFP

## UEFA extends Nasri doping ban from six to 18 months

**NYON:** UEFA extended former France international Samir Nasri's doping ban from six to 18 months on Wednesday over the intravenous drip treatment he received at a Los Angeles clinic in 2016. The 31-year-old, who is currently without a club, was suspended for six months in February after taking a multi-vitamin booster in contravention of World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) rules. The ban was backdated to July 1, 2017, meaning the ex-Manchester City and Arsenal midfielder will be cleared to return next January. He can resume training with a club at the start of November.

Nasri had the drip treatment while he was on loan at Sevilla during the 2016-17 season, prompting the Spanish anti-doping agency to open an investigation. He retroactively appealed to UEFA to grant him a therapeutic use exemption (TUE), but his request was refused by European football's governing body. Nasri left Turkish side Antalya in January after disappointing six-month spell following his arrival from Manchester City. Six-time Olympic swimming champion Ryan Lochte was handed a 14-month suspension last week for a similar infraction, with athletes usually only allowed to receive an IV in the case of medical treatment. — AFP

# Heading the ball 'riskier' for female players: Study

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