

Friday Times

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Strengthening the oversight of the manpower authority



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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I have been following for some time now the efforts of the Public Authority for Manpower and its measures to prevent violations of the labor law in Kuwait in order to protect the rights of both the worker and the employer.

The authority has imposed multiple penalties in cases of violation of the provisions of the law - from temporary suspension of the employer's file to permanent suspension and referral to judicial authorities. This is all well and good. But supervision and follow-up is essential to stop any attempt of manipulation by any party.

The partial suspension is temporary until the violation is resolved. The authority has the power to lift the suspension temporarily to grant the employer time to amend the situation, and the file can be sealed if the reasons for the suspension are not

addressed. This is as important as follow-up and scrutiny.

I believe PAM is active in its efforts to carry out its work, but I also see some licensees trying to circumvent the law and exploit the privileges of the license that has been granted to them. These include those who close the shop but have registered employees on their licenses, or fake employees registered on the license who do not actually work for them. This is a danger to the security of the country and it also means there are people who are in the country without a real job, mostly self-employed in return for paying a large sum of money to the license holder annually for a work permit.

I know there are surprise inspections of workplaces, but not all workplaces are like restaurants, because there are licenses for institutions or small companies with limited workers that may not exceed three people, for example. So the question remains - how many companies have real employees and an actual worksite as mentioned in the file of employment at the ministry of social affairs and labor and PAM?

The other important issue concerns absconding reports filed against workers. The authority allows an employer to file an absconding notice against a worker if they are absent from work for seven days. The employer is obliged to notify the worker's absence from work to the interior

ministry within 15 days.

What is important to me is to verify the authenticity of the complaint, because in the past some employers tried to avoid paying the salary of the worker by filing an absconding complaint against him. When this worker is arrested he loses his dues, while the employer will escape accountability. That is history now, because the labor law now seems to solve this problem by specific procedures that verify the veracity of the complaint. I think this ends one path of possible manipulation.

However, the authority has the power to deprive the worker of a work permit if it is proven that he violated the provisions of the labor law or the labor contract. This is why I believe that verifying the correctness of the complaint is important to avoid mistakes that may be at the expense of the worker and the employer.

I believe that the labor law is clear and comprehensive in all aspects and upholds the rights of workers, because it is the only law has an understanding of the circumstances of the expat worker. But this doesn't mean the end of all possible mistakes or cheating, so follow-up and audits along with the amendment and updating of laws and procedures are required to preserve workers' rights. I urge all workers to seek to read and understand the labor law in Kuwait to know what to do and not do.

Don't look at their parking space, look at their disability

IN MY VIEW

By Abdulaziz Al-Ashban
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assigned especially for handicapped people. Another solution is to clamp the offender's car or impound it for a set period of time.

Personally, I have experienced this problem myself. I was going to a shopping mall with my family for a night out, but when we arrived at the parking lot, all the handicapped parking spaces were fully occupied, but luckily after roaming around the lot for a bit, we found an empty space. However, when we got out of our vehicle, we noticed that a car was parked next to us in a handicapped parking space without any evidence that that person was authorized to park in such a spot, unlike us. My family got immensely frustrated at this blatant disregard of the laws. What frustrated my family even more is that the person who was responsible for reprimanding people for such offenses did not notice this and was loitering near the entrance without a care in the world, far away from where this person parked his car.

Have we deteriorated as a society to do things like these? We should respect the fact that these spaces are made for disabled people, and this undoubtedly takes time for some people to understand that. I am not saying that disabled people do not have rights in Kuwait - on the contrary, disabled people do have a lot of rights in this country, such as the right to be employed in private and public sectors and 100 percent medical and health insurance, to name a few. As a society, we should respect these rights, and the least we can do to show them this respect is not to take their parking spot. To conclude, I hope citizens are made aware of this issue and that someone in a high position of authority is made aware of this issue as well.

I am frustrated and absolutely enraged by the fact that we as a society often act in purely selfish and inconsiderate ways. One of my pet peeves is the near absolute disregard and disrespect people have for the designated disabled parking spaces. Every time I see someone who isn't disabled park in one of these places, it's like a slap in the face of all those with disabilities.

According to an article in Kuwait Times in July, 104 handicapped parking violations were committed in Kuwait. From my personal experience, I have seen this in many public places (such as shopping malls), where people take advantage of handicapped parking spaces just to make it more convenient for them and their families, as these designated spots are situated as close to the entrance as possible in order to make it accessible for handicapped people to enter that place.

These people do not have a handicapped person with them in the car nor do they have the handicapped sign displayed visibly on their cars. The consequence of such an offense in some public places such as supermarkets and co-ops is a fine of KD 100. However, in some shopping malls, the only consequence that I have seen is a 'no parking' sticker stuck on the window of the passenger seat. At this point, you might be asking yourself: What is my issue here?

Well, it is quite simple. I think that the enforcement of these laws in this country is very lenient. As a result, some citizens have become careless when it comes to where they park their cars - so careless that some park their cars as soon as they lay their eyes on an empty parking space, whether it is a handicapped parking space or not, and completely disregard the punishment.

Solutions or alternatives have to be carefully thought about this problem. One solution that I would propose is to have a police officer monitor cars that come into the parking lot, so it is easier to punish people parking in spaces

PHOTO OF THE DAY



The beautiful calm of Alshaheed park during a winter day. - Photo by Hassan Jaloul / KUNA

Kuwait Times

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Local



VINTAGE KUWAIT AT THE BAIT AL OTHMAN MUSEUM



By Faten Omar

If you love to reminisce about the past and the way things used to be, then Bait Al-Othman Museum is your next destination! The museum is located on Abdullah Al-Othman Street in Hawally, named eponymously after the owner of the house who turned it into a museum. It was inaugurated by HH the Amir in April 2013. The museum documents the history and culture of Kuwait from the pre-oil era to the present time.

Bait Al-Othman was renovated by the Kuwait Heritage Team, which has preserved noteworthy and historical artifacts of the country in its beautifully refurbished rooms. The museum is built in traditional Kuwaiti-style architecture with big courtyards and wooden ceilings, doors and windows. Its large parking lot is full of old cars from the Historical, Vintage and Classic Cars Museum of Kuwait.

Local



The museum has rare historical items and antiques from old Kuwaiti houses. Various handicrafts and Kuwaiti dhow models are also on display. Other items include old movies and memorabilia of Kuwaiti companies such as Kuwait Oil Company and Kuwait Airways, with outfits and pictures of the old airport on display.

The museum's visiting hours are 9:30 am to 12:30 pm and 4:30 pm to 9:00 pm. It is open daily except on Friday mornings. The entry fee is KD 1.

Bait Al-Othman Museum in Hawally captures the essence of vintage Kuwait, celebrating the country's unique and diverse history through a versatile collection of artefacts, memorabilia and historical documents and items. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

78% OF FILIPINO HOUSEMAIDS WITHOUT A WEEKLY DAY OFF

By Ben Garcia

A recent social media controversy in Kuwait stirred up regarding the working week of domestic helpers in Kuwait. The reality is that the vast majority of domestic workers do not get a weekly day off, despite the legal requirement to do so.

In an informal survey conducted by Kuwait Times with more than 200 Filipino domestic helpers, we found that around 78 percent do not get a day off every week. The survey confirms that a majority of employers do not follow the domestic labor law, limiting their adult employees freedom and basic working rights.

A memorandum of agreement (MoA) was signed between the Philippines and Kuwait in May detailing working hours and days off that were specifically requested by the Filipino president in exchange for lifting a temporary ban he had imposed on sending Filipino workers in Kuwait. However, two months after the signing of the MoA, more than two-thirds of Filipina housemaids still do not get a weekly day off from work.

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte imposed the ban in February in the wake of reports that Filipino workers were

abused and even died in Kuwait, including domestic helper Joanna Demafelis, whose body was found in a freezer at her employers' residence.

"I really hope and pray that one day, we are allowed to go out regularly. This is my wish - I really need a break after the long week of work. We are human beings and have all the right to take a break and enjoy life," said Lina, a maid in Kuwait for more than 12 years.

"I only get a day off every Christmas - that's it. But given the chance, I want to enjoy life during off days, but I don't get any," said Felicitas. Another participant in the survey said she only gets 2-3 hours off per month. "At least I can send money to my family in the Philippines," she said.

Sponsors often treat domestic helpers, especially younger women from the Philippines, like little more than children. Though these women are legal adults and given huge responsibilities including the care and feeding of children, they are not permitted to leave the sponsors' homes without chaperones.

"My mama (female employer) doesn't allow me to visit Kuwait City or any other place without 'bodyguards' (ie without being accompanied by someone from the family) as they do not trust anyone mingling with us, especially strangers. I think this is okay - I am being cared for and protected," said 56-year-old Amfaro F, a housemaid who has remained with one sponsor for the past 20 years.

Quite often sponsors cite possible risks including the helper obtaining a boyfriend and getting pregnant - a crime that can result in the helper going to jail, since sex outside of marriage is illegal in Kuwait - or the domestic worker absconding.

A 2015 report by the International Labor Organization on employers attitudes toward domestic helpers in Kuwait cites similar ideas:

"Another practice that reinforces the power and control of employers over domestic workers was the perception that it is up to the employer to grant a day off, rather than the domestic worker's right to a rest day. Furthermore, if days off were granted, it was perceived that

Sponsors view domestic helpers as child-like and untrustworthy, despite the extensive responsibilities they shoulder in caring for the home and children

it is up to the employer whether the domestic worker could spend the day off outside or inside the home. "If the worker leaves the house she would later bring problems to the house." "It is for her [domestic worker] security to stay at home."

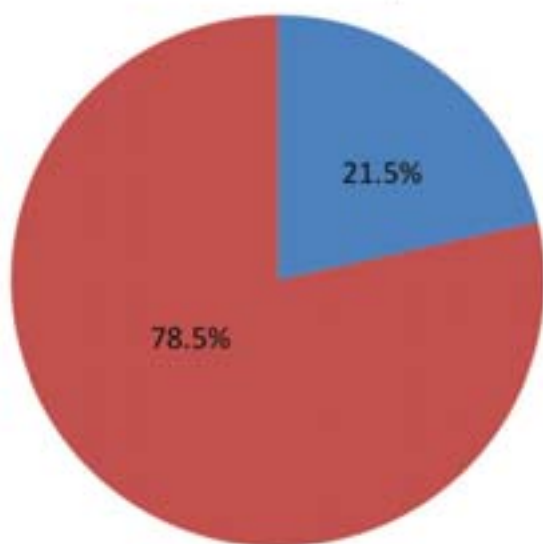
The last hints at another major problem. Sponsors view domestic helpers as child-like and untrustworthy, despite the extensive responsibilities they shoulder in caring for the home and children. This extends to the government on both sides as well.

In his recent visit to Kuwait, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) Deputy Administrator Arnell Arevalo Ignacio floated an idea of a day care center for Filipino domestic helpers. Local agency owners initially agreed to the idea, but nothing has been heard about it since then.

"The memorandum of agreement is there and it was signed. But it is just a piece of paper and we have to do more, for example, the implementation, mechanism and some groundwork to meet the needs of all stakeholders. The president wants me to work on details. We didn't sign this agreement just to leave it hanging," Ignacio had said.

Initial talks on the MoA were held in July in Kuwait, to be followed by a second round of talks in the Philippines.

Domestic helpers' access to days off



■ Domestic helpers with days off
■ Domestic helpers without days off

Percentages based on more than 200 interviews conducted by Kuwait Times.



1st



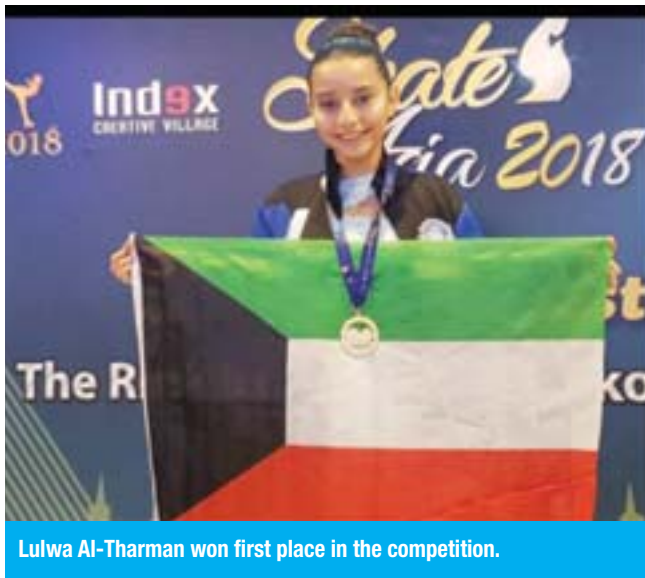
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Local

Kuwait's figure skating team wins more medals



Lulwa Al-Tharman won first place in the competition.

KUWAIT: Kuwait's female figure skating team won four new gold medals yesterday at the Asian tournament in Bangkok. Hanan Al-Qallaf, Lulwa Al-Tharman, Fatima Ashkanani and Maryam Al-Atwan won first place in the competition after a distinguished performance. Qallaf said in a phone call with KUNA that she and her teammates' involvement in the tournament, which culminated in a great win, is a remarkable start for them in the game, which is increasing in popularity in the Asian continent. Qallaf, who won two gold and one silver medals, said Kuwait's figure skaters are mostly young, which signifies an opportunity to continue achievements in future tournaments. She thanked the Kuwaiti Winter Games Club board for its great support to the players. — KUNA



BANGKOK: Hanan Al-Qallaf and Fatima Ashkanani won first place after a distinguished performance. — KUNA photos



Maryam Al-Atwan won first place in the competition.

Al-Baz: A dhow that returned after decades

KUWAIT: Al-Baz is a Kuwaiti sailboat that was known for ferrying water between the Kuwait coast and Shatt Al-Arab to meet Kuwaiti residents' need of drinking and cooking water. The sea played a major role in the lives of Kuwaitis in the past prior to the discovery of oil, and the country - up until the 40s of the last century - imported freshwater daily through sailboats (dhows) with wooden water tanks.

A book issued by the Kuwait Research and Studies Center said with the increase in population and the need for freshwater, the government and merchants established a shareholding company in 1940 called the Kuwait Water Company to provide freshwater to residents.

The book said the company asked a well-known shipbuilder at the time - the late Ahmad bin Salman Al-Ustath - to build 20 dhows. It added the Al-Baz dhow was one of these 20 boats Ahmad bin Salman built, and many Kuwaiti skippers captained it until the boats were abandoned at the end of the 1940s after oil was discovered in Kuwait desert. The book mentions that Iranian skipper Ahmad Hussein bought the Al-Baz dhow from the Kuwait Water Company and altered it to become a cargo boat plying between Dubai and Kankoon port in Iran.

Hussein later decided to resell the boat to Kuwaitis "because they have the right to it more than others", so it returned to its homeland after a 65-year absence by tugging it. It remained four months in Kuwait's Doha port before the National Council for



The Al-Baz dhow is on display in Sharq. — KUNA

Culture, Arts and Letters brought it to the coast. In January 2007, Al-Baz was hauled to its final place near other heritage boats displayed behind Al-Sharqiya school across Souq Sharq including the Al-Harby dhow, Al-Qattaa dhow and the Ghazal launch. — KUNA



US and Kuwait security forces conduct crisis response exercise

Army chief of staff meets US general

KUWAIT: Approximately 400 US military personnel join Kuwaiti security forces from Aug 9 to 16 for Invincible Sentry 2018 (IS 18), a crisis response exercise conducted by US Central Command in coordination with other US government agencies and the government of Kuwait. An exercise consisting of simulated scenarios to facilitate a coordinated partner response to transnational terrorism, Invincible Sentry is a regularly scheduled event between US Central Command and individual partner nations. The government of Kuwait agreed to host IS 18, the US Embassy in Kuwait said in a press statement.

The majority of this year's exercise will be conducted at military training areas and other remote locations throughout Kuwait, with a small headquarters element participating at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida. The US military participates in more than 80 exercises with partner nations in the US Central Command area of responsibility each year. Exercises in the region are designed to strengthen military-to-military relationships, promote re-

gional security and improve interoperability with partner nations.

As indicated in the joint statement following the second US-Kuwait Strategic Dialogue in Washington in Sept 2017, the United States and Kuwait remain committed to enhancing a long-term partnership. The United States is proud to have contributed to the liberation of Kuwait over 27 years ago, and reiterates its commitment to Kuwait's security. Invincible Sentry 18 aims at expanding the military-to-military engagements, enhancing mutual capabilities to keep our people safe, and promoting long-term regional stability and joint-operations between the United States and Kuwait, the US Embassy statement concluded.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lt Gen Mohammad Khaled Al-Kheder met in his office yesterday his counterpart at the US Central Command Lt Gen Michael X Garrett and his accompanying delegation. During their meeting, both sides discussed bilateral relations and ways to strengthen military cooperation, in addition to other topics of mutual interests, the di-



KUWAIT: Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lt Gen Mohammad Khaled Al-Kheder meets his counterpart at the US Central Command Lt Gen Michael X Garrett yesterday. — KUNA

rectorate of moral guidance and public relations at the ministry of defense said in a press statement. The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief of Staff Gen Abdullah Nawaf Al-Sabah,

Joint Training Director Brig Fawaz Al-Harbi and the Chief of the Military Cooperation Office at the US Embassy in Kuwait Brig Gen Randolph J Staudenraus. — Agencies

Kuwaiti envoy urges addressing issue of missing Kuwaitis in Iraq

NEW YORK: Kuwait Representative to the United Nations Mansour Al-Otaibi said Wednesday the question of Kuwaitis and third country nationals who went missing in Iraq during the invasion of Kuwait in 1990 continues to be an "unhealed wound". The families of those missing people are still suffering and waiting to know the whereabouts of their loved ones, he said during a Security Council session on the situation in Iraq. Since 2004, no progress has been made in the search for 236 out of 605 missing people, Otaibi complained.

"The 28th anniversary of the catastrophic invasion of Kuwait passed a few days ago. Since then, the Security Council has been busy addressing the impacts of that disaster. The Council adopted dozens of resolutions and many of the obligations stipulated in these resolutions have been met. However, the question of missing Kuwaitis and third country nationals which is a humanitarian issue cited in the UNSC resolutions 687 (1991), 1284 (1999) and 2107 (2013) has yet to be addressed," he explained.

Otaibi appreciated the efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) - the chair of the Tripartite Commis-

sion, tasked with ascertaining the fate of missing and POWs during the 1990-1991 Gulf War. The Tripartite Commission is composed of representatives of Iraq, Kuwait and the 1990-1991 Coalition (the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Saudi Arabia). Otaibi also thanked the Iraqi government, represented by the ministry of defense, urging it to double its efforts in order to end the suffering of the families of the missing people.

He called on the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) to pursue its mandate and speed up ascertaining the fate of the missing Kuwaitis and retrieval of the stolen Kuwaiti property as per the provisions of the UNSC Resolution 2107. He reaffirmed Kuwait's support to the UNAMI chief Jan Kubis and the Iraqi government in this regard. In statements to KUNA following the UNSC session, Otaibi reiterated that Kuwait would spare no effort in support of the Iraqi government, the UNAMI and the Tripartite Commission in their quest for locating the whereabouts of the missing Kuwaitis and third country nationals. Earlier today, Kubis, who is also the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Iraq, briefed the Security Council on the latest developments of the situation in Iraq. — KUNA



Mansour Al-Otaibi

Blaze guts wood shop

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Firemen from four fire centers battled a blaze in an industrial Shuwaikh carpentry shop and prevented it from spreading to other shops. No injuries were reported. The fire started in a power transformer before igniting the lumber.

Factory sealed

Ahmadi municipality emergency team closed a factory in the stables area in cooperation with police and sent the workers to concerned authorities for legal action.

New MoI e-services

Acting director of the interior ministry's relations and security information department Brig Tawheed Al-Kandari said many e-services were added to the interior ministry's site. He said citizens can inquire about their passports through www.moi.gov.kw. He said other applications include SOS, which allows the public to contact the interior ministry and get help quickly in case of an emergency by pressing the SOS button.

Co-op Union bldg fined

The Environment Public Authority found the Cooperative Union building in violation of article 56 of the environment protection law, and it was issued a citation.

Summer is cooler

Meteorologist Essa Ramadan said this year's summer is Kuwait and the region is cooler than last year, contrary to the heat waves in Europe and other parts of the world.



Firemen battle the blaze at a carpentry shop.



Municipal inspectors raid an illegal factory.

Fatal accident

A Bangladeshi was killed, while an Afghan and an unidentified person were injured and taken to Adan Hospital following an accident on Fahaheel Road. The Bangladeshi's body was taken to the coroner.

Restaurant closed

The Food and Nutrition Authority closed a shop for having 650 kg of expired meat, in addition to a popular restaurant and a juice bar in Mubarakiya. The authority's team found that the restaurant was selling food unfit for human consumption, and laboratory tests revealed harmful bacteria in it, so it was closed and the case was sent to the public prosecution.



Gaza militants halt fire after deadly flare-up with Israel

Chinese women fight censorship to push for change

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LA MALBAIE: In this file photo taken on June 9, 2018, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau addresses a press conference at the conclusion of the G7 summit in La Malbaie, Quebec. Trudeau said on August 8, 2018, his government will not stop calling out human rights abuses, after its criticisms of Saudi Arabia triggered a diplomatic row. "Canada will always speak strongly and clearly in private and in public on questions of human rights," the prime minister said, refusing to back down or apologize to the kingdom. — AFP

Canadian studies shattered by row

Saudi students will be relocated to other countries

OTTAWA: Naseem waited three years to be accepted to a Canadian postgraduate program. With two years left before she would receive her PhD, the Saudi student's plans have been upended thanks to a diplomatic spat. The kingdom this week suspended all scholarships to Canada as part of a rupture between the two countries over Ottawa's criticism of Riyadh's human rights record. Saudi students will be relocated to other countries.

For Naseem, that could mean she and her husband, who is studying to be a medical doctor, may never earn their degrees. And she feels totally lost, having left Saudi Arabia just after her father passed away in 2017 to pursue her academic dream, 6,500 miles (10,500 kilometers) away from home. "Everything is gone," said the mother of two, who lives in Toronto but spoke to AFP during a family visit to Riyadh. "I still have two years to get a PhD, and my husband needs two years to graduate as a doctor. We had the perfect plan. Now we might have to start from zero, but I cannot do it. I just can't," she said.

For Samira, the complications are similar. She and her husband were married in Jeddah on Tuesday, a day after the Saudi measure was announced. They'd planned to live in Canada until he completes his studies, but at the wedding she felt "broken, disappointed," she said. "I am about to quit my life to go

live with my husband in Canada, where he owns a house. Now, I don't know where we will go. All our plans were smashed with one decision, and we weren't even married yet."

Loss of revenue

According to Canadian government figures, there were 192,000 international students from 200 countries enrolled in Canadian universities and colleges last year. Saudi students, who currently number about 8,000, are among the largest group.

For universities, the loss of fees from the students, who pay from Can\$30,000 to Can\$80,000 annually for tuition and living expenses, will hurt.

International students contributed Can\$15.5 billion (US\$12.0 billion) to the Canadian economy last year, including tuition, textbooks, housing and other expenses. "That's more than the auto parts and lumber industries in Canada," said Pari Johnston of Universities Canada, an association which represents 96 universities.

In Ontario, where one in five of all Saudi students are enrolled, the recall could cost "tens of millions of dollars," according to the Council of Ontario Universities. "Attracting international students is an essential part of a broad economic development plan for Ontario since Ontario's ability to draw top talent from around the world in turn helps attract global investment and business," a spokesperson for the council said. Students face far greater difficulties as they seek transfers, less than a month before the start of classes. "This is a major disruption for them. They may lose a semester or a whole year of studies," said Johnston. It is not easy to just relocate people who have been living in Canada for years. "It's just not easy.

I still have two years to get a PhD

I don't know what to do," Naseem said. "Now we have to find a place where we are both accepted, and where we can pursue our studies. Is it possible?! I don't think so," she said. "We're still trying to sort out the situation," the University of Ottawa's Veronique Vallee told AFP. "Our main concern is the wellbeing of the students." The school has 246 Saudi students,

the majority of whom are enrolled in medicine, science or engineering programs. In Western Canada, 150 Saudi students at the University of Regina in Saskatchewan were told they have a month to leave the country. "I have been doing this job for almost 20 years, I have worked in several schools in Canada, this is the first time I've seen something of this nature," Livia Castellanos, the school's chief international officer, told public broadcaster CBC.

Medical students will be especially hit hard by the chaos unfolding, with about 800 Saudis being trained by Canada to become doctors. "Many medical trainees are in the middle of their residencies and any disruption would delay completion of their training," said Genevieve Moineau of the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada.

She noted that a medical degree typically takes three to four years to complete and is followed by an additional two to seven years of "residency training." According to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, up to 25,000 patients could also be affected by the loss of Saudi medical residents. "This could impact healthcare in Canada," Johnston said. "Residents provide care to Canadians every day as part of their training. The Saudis represent one third of care teams at teaching hospitals." — AFP

International

Syrian Kurds to face tough talks to preserve autonomy

‘There’s a mentality that won’t accept this right away’

QAMISHLI: Syria’s Kurdish minority, hailed as an indispensable Western ally during the war against the Islamic State group, faces hard bargaining with Damascus to save its hard-won autonomy. Early last year, President Bashar Al-Assad’s government held just 17 percent of Syrian territory and was unable to do anything about the autonomous institutions the Kurds have set up in areas under their control. But a succession of Russian-backed victories over the jihadists and a range of rebel factions has transformed the balance of power.

Assad’s government now controls nearly two-thirds of Syria and is determined to reassert its authority over Kurdish-held territory which forms the lion’s share of the rest. Recognizing their weakened position, Kurdish leaders and their supporters last month opened talks with Damascus, desperate to salvage what they can of the institutions they painstakingly built over the years. “We are trying to preserve everything we built in terms of the autonomous system, the institutions, the democracy,” said leading Kurdish figure Saleh Muslim. “But there’s a mentality that won’t accept this right away, so it has to happen gradually,” Muslim said.

Before the start of Syria’s civil war in 2011, the Kurds were an oppressed minority in what was effectively a one-party state with an Arab nationalist ideology that had no tolerance for Kurdish traditions or the Kurdish language. Hundreds of thou-

sands did not even have Syrian citizenship. But after government troops withdrew from Kurdish-majority areas in 2012, local authorities began forming their own security forces and institutions, including a Kurdish-language school curriculum.

Trying to reconcile those institutions with the system in force in government-held areas will be a formidable task. “Syria will not go back to what it was. There needs to be decentralized democracy,” Muslim said. “We have our project, which we believe will be a model for all of Syria — and we’re holding onto it.”

‘Everything recalculated’

In late July, Damascus hosted the first round of talks with the Kurdish administration. Joint committees were formed to discuss economic issues, politics, military affairs and public services. The ultimate goal was “drawing a roadmap that leads to a decentralized Syria,” says the political arm of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), the Kurdish-led alliance which Washington backed against IS.

Between them, the SDF and its allies control around 30 percent of Syria, including several of its largest oil fields. “The government and Kurdish-led SDF are the two players that control the vast majority of Syrian land,” said Mutlu Civiroglu, an analyst in Kurdish affairs. “One way or another, these two forces will find a solution. Either they



RAQA: In this file photo taken on February 8, 2017, a member of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), made up of US-backed Kurdish and Arab fighters, raises a flag of the SDF near the village of Bir Fawaz, 20 kilometers north of Raqa during their offensive to retake the former the Islamic State (IS) group’s stronghold. — AFP

fight, or they do it peacefully.” The Kurds are ready to negotiate because of President Donald Trump’s repeated pledges to end the US troop presence in northern Syria that has been their principal protection. In late May, Assad gave the Kurds a stark choice, warning that if talks fail,

“we’re going to resort... to liberating those areas by force.” Nonetheless, the Kurds feel they have a strong negotiating position. “We had never been part of the equation, but today, everything has been recalculated... We will defend what we established,” Muslim said. — AFP

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International

Gaza militants halt fire after deadly flare-up with Israel

It was the third major escalation since July

GAZA CITY: Gaza militants halted fire yesterday after targeting Israel with some 180 rockets and mortars, provoking Israeli strikes across the enclave that killed three Palestinians, including a toddler, in another severe flare-up of violence. It was the third major escalation since July and came despite attempts by UN officials and Egypt to secure a long-term truce between Israel and Hamas, the Islamist movement that runs the Gaza Strip. Two Palestinian officials said on condition of anonymity that Gaza militants halted rocket fire at noon yesterday. One of the officials said "they consider this round of escalation over."

Israel's military declined to comment. Beginning on Wednesday night and into yesterday, fireballs and explosions shook the Gaza Strip while plumes of smoke rose from the enclave. In nearby Israeli communities, residents were sent scrambling to bomb shelters. Most of the rockets fired by Palestinian militants landed in open areas, but at least two hit the Israeli town of Sderot near the Gaza Strip and sirens sounded throughout the night and into the morning.

Medics reported at least four wounded taken to Israeli hospitals, including a 30-year-old Thai woman in moderate to severe condition after being injured in the Eshkol region bordering the Gaza Strip. Israel's military reported seven civilians wounded. Those killed in the Gaza Strip included Enas Khammash, 23, and her 18-month-old daughter Bayan, according to the health ministry in the Hamas-controlled enclave. They were killed in an air strike in Jafarawi in central Gaza, the ministry said,

while her husband was injured. The ministry said Khammash was also pregnant. A Hamas militant was also killed in the strikes and at least 12 others injured, the health ministry said.

'On high alert'

Before the Gazan decision to halt fire, rockets and mortars targeting Israel had continued sporadically yesterday morning as had Israeli strikes in parts of the Gaza Strip. "I rented this house to civilians and I'm surprised that this house was bombed," said Abdul al-Hakeem Abu Amra, the owner of the house where the woman and child were killed.

In Sderot, the Israeli city near the Gaza Strip, a gaping hole could be seen in front of a small, three-storey building. A car parked nearby was smashed. "I will never leave, never," said Hagit Shetreet, 45, who had to run to a shelter due to the rocket fire. Israel's army said it targeted more than 150 Hamas military locations, including militant compounds and weapons manufacturing sites.

Military spokesman Jonathan Conricus said he had no information on the woman and child being killed, but noted a pregnant Israeli woman was taken to hospital Wednesday night after a rocket landed nearby. "What I can say is that we targeted by definition only military targets that were clearly used by Hamas where there was an active presence of Hamas and nothing else," he told journalists.

The military said Israel was targeted with around 180 rockets and mortars from late Wednesday into Thursday. Thirty of them were intercepted by air defence systems, according to the army. A



GAZA CITY: A picture taken on August 8, 2018 in Gaza City shows smoke plumes rising following an Israeli air strike. —AFP

statement from the military wing of Hamas claimed responsibility for the rockets. It said the Palestinian "resistance" had fired a large number of rockets at "enemy positions in the Gaza envelope".

'Deeply alarmed'

The three flare-ups since July, which follow months of tensions due to protests and clashes along the Gaza border, have raised fears of a fourth war between the two sides since 2008. Nickolay Mladenov, the UN envoy for the Middle East con-

flict who has been seeking to negotiate a long-term truce between Israel and Hamas, said he was "deeply alarmed."

"For months I have been warning that the humanitarian, security and political crisis in Gaza risks a devastating conflict that nobody wants," he said in a statement. Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas called on the international community to "immediately and urgently intervene." Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was convening a meeting of his security cabinet.—AFP

Syrian troops shell Idlib, drop leaflets ahead of assault

SARAQEB: Syrian regime forces shelled rebel and jihadist positions in the northwestern province of Idlib yesterday and dropped leaflets warning of an impending assault. The province is the largest chunk of territory still in rebel hands, and President Bashar Al-Assad has warned it would be his military's next priority.

Yesterday, government helicopters dropped leaflets over towns in Idlib's eastern countryside urging people to surrender, an AFP correspondent said. "The war is nearing an end... We are calling on you to join the local reconciliations, as many of our people in Syria did," said the leaflets, which were stamped with the military's seal. Such surrender deals typically see rebels hand over territory to government troops in exchange for a halt to shelling, the return of state institutions, and a chance to either join regime forces or be bussed out of the area. "The fate of your family, children, and future depend on your decision," warned the leaflets.

Heavy artillery and rocket fire yesterday morning slammed into territory around Jisr al-Shughur, a key town in the southwestern part of the province, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. "The shelling is in preparation for an assault but there has been no ground advance yet," said Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman. "Regime reinforcements including equipment, soldiers, vehicles and ammunition have been arriving since Tuesday," he said. They were

being distributed along three regime-held fronts, including in neighboring Latakia province just west of Jisr Al-Shughur, in the Sahl Al-Ghab plain south of Idlib, and in a sliver of the province's southeast that is already in government hands. Al-Watan newspaper, which is close to the government, also reported yesterday that army troops had bombed rebel and jihadist positions in the area.

Idlib, which has escaped regime control since 2015, lies along the border with Turkey but is otherwise nearly completely surrounded by government-held territory. Around 60 percent of it is now held by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), which is led by Al-Qaeda's former Syria affiliate, while the rest is controlled by rival opposition factions. Syrian troops have recaptured key swathes of the country in recent months with help from ally Russia, which has brokered a string of surrender deals with rebels.

Dozens arrested

Apparently fearing a similar arrangement for Idlib, HTS has been arresting dozens of figures in the province that have been go-betweens with the regime. Early yesterday, the group detained several such figures from villages in Idlib's southeast, calling them "chiefs of treason", according to an HTS-linked media agency.

The Britain-based Observatory, which relies on a network of sources inside Syria, said it had documented more than 100 such arrests by HTS and rival forces this week alone. Idlib province is home to around 2.5 million people, including rebels and civilians transferred en masse from other territory that fell to Syrian troops after intense assaults. It was designated last year as one of four "de-escalation" zones where violence was supposed to be reduced ahead of a nationwide ceasefire. It is the only such zone left, after Assad's troops in recent months recaptured the other three with a blend of military assaults and "reconciliation" deals.—AFP

Attack on Yemen bus carrying children

SANAA: An attack on a bus carrying children in rebel-held northern Yemen yesterday left dozens of people dead or wounded, the International Committee of the Red Cross said. "Following an attack this morning on a bus driving children in Dahyan Market, northern Saada, (an ICRC-supported) hospital has received dozens of dead and wounded," the organisation said on Twitter without giving more details.

"Under international humanitarian law, civilians must be protected during conflict," it added. The Houthi rebels' Al-Masirah TV reported that 39 people had been killed and 51 wounded, "mostly children". It accused the Saudi-led coalition fighting the Shiite rebels on the side of the government of hitting the bus in an air strike. It was not possible to verify the toll or who was behind it.

There was no immediate comment from the coalition, which intervened in 2015 to try to restore the internationally recognized government to power after it was driven out of the capital Sanaa by the rebels. The UN children's agency UNICEF said it was "very concerned with the initial reports of children being killed". "I am watching with horror the images and videos coming from Saada in #Yemen and I have no words. How was this a military target? Why are children being killed?" tweeted UNICEF's resident representative in Yemen, Meritxell Relano.

Last Thursday, attacks on a hospital and a fish market in the strategic rebel-held port city of Hodeida killed at least 55 civilians and wounded 170, according to the ICRC. The coalition denied responsibility for those attacks. Yemen's war has left nearly 10,000 people dead since 2015 and unleashed what the United Nations describes as the world's worst humanitarian crisis.—AFP

International

Russia vows to retaliate against new US sanctions

Latest salvo in a series of disputes between the rival powers

MOSCOW: The Kremlin yesterday vowed to retaliate against “unacceptable” new US sanctions against Russia over its alleged role in a nerve agent attack on a former spy as the ruble and Russian stocks tumbled. The action by the US State Department is the latest salvo in a series of disputes between the rival powers and comes less than a month after US President Donald Trump met his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Helsinki.

The State Department said Wednesday the new sanctions were in response to “the use of a ‘Novichok’ nerve agent in an attempt to assassinate UK citizen Sergei Skripal” — who was a Russian double agent — and his daughter Yulia on English soil in March. They are aimed at punishing Putin’s government for having “used chemical or biological weapons in violation of international law,” spokeswoman Heather Nauert said in a statement. But the punitive measures triggered a furious reaction from Moscow.

Russia will “work on developing retaliatory measures,” foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told journalists, accusing the US of “demonising Russia”. “We consider categorically unacceptable the linking of new restrictions, which we as before consider illegal, to the case in Salisbury,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists. He called the US an unpredictable partner but said “Moscow retains hopes of building constructive relations with Washington”. The announcement of sanctions

caused Russian stock markets to drop dramatically on opening and the ruble reached its lowest point since November 2016. The markets and the currency rebounded slightly over the day while remaining sharply down. Finance minister Anton Siluanov assured Russians that the government and the central bank have “all the necessary tools to ensure financial stability,” saying the economy has become more resistant to external shocks in recent years.

Threat of wider sanctions

The move could cut off hundreds of millions of dollars worth of exports to Russia, said a senior State Department official on condition of anonymity. The official told reporters the administration decided to impose a “presumption of denial” for the sale to Russia of “national security sensitive” US technologies that require federal government approval. Such technologies have often been used in items including electronic devices as well as calibration equipment. The exports were previously allowed on a case-by-case basis.

In the event of non-compliance, the official added, a second round of “draconian” sanctions would be given a green light. These could go as far as a ban on Russian airlines using US airports. The latest US action follows the Treasury’s imposition of sanctions in March against 19 Russian citizens and five entities for interfering in the 2016 US election — the toughest steps



SAINT PETERSBURG: Russian President Vladimir Putin attends the Navy Day parade. — AFP

against Moscow since Trump took office. Also in March, Washington ordered the expulsion of 60 Russian diplomats, and the closure of Russia’s consulate general in Seattle. Moscow ordered 60 American diplomats expelled in a tit-for-tat response. Britain said it welcomed the US response to the chemical attack in Salisbury, the sleepy English town where the Skripals were

poisoned. A spokesman for Prime Minister Theresa May said the sanctions send “an unequivocal message to Russia that its provocative, reckless behavior will not go unchallenged”. This week, Britain’s Guardian newspaper reported London is preparing to ask Moscow to extradite two Russian citizens suspected of carrying out the Salisbury attack. — AFP

When Czechoslovaks made jokes in front of Soviet tanks

PRAGUE: Even when Soviet tanks invaded their country on August 21, 1968, to wipe out a pro-democracy movement, Czechoslovaks managed to maintain their unique sense of humor. Devoid of other means of defense, they turned Czechoslovakia into a humor magazine of sorts, by writing ironic slogans in chalk or paint on walls or scrawling them on papers posted around town.

“We’ve deepened the friendship so much that it reaches rock bottom,” wrote an anonymous joker, pointing out that the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia in the company of four Warsaw Pact allies. The forces crushed the Prague Spring movement that had briefly introduced democratic reforms to the totalitarian Soviet-led regime. “Lenin, wake up, Brezhnev has gone mad!” said another slogan, perhaps hoping that the father of the Soviet Union might have disapproved of the invasion orchestrated by one of his successors. In the same vein, another common phrase suggested that Vladimir Lenin “would be ashamed to see you here”. This one was frequently chanted by both Czechs and Slovaks facing the Soviet-led troops, as it rhymed in both languages.

‘Ivan, go home’

“Ivan, go home, we want to go to school,” protesters said as the beginning of the school year approached, using “Ivan” as an ironic generic term for “Russian”. “Ivan, go home, your Natasha is dating Kolya,” went another slogan, which then inspired a popular song: “Go home Ivan, Natasha is waiting for you/ Go home Ivan, our girls don’t love you/ Go home Ivan, and don’t ever come

back!” Such chants puzzled the ordinary Soviet soldiers who did not understand why they were sent to Czechoslovakia in the first place and now had to face the question “Why did you come?” dozens of times a day in Russian from Czechs and Slovaks. Many slogans also targeted Moscow’s insistence that Czechoslovakia had welcomed the Soviet Army with open arms for having “crushed an emerging counter-revolution”. “The TASS news agency reports that the soldiers were welcomed with flowers. We add: this is true, but they were in flying flower pots,” went one such joke. Another phrase quoted a made-up correspondent from the Soviet news agency as saying: “Twelve new counter-revolutionaries were born in Prague today. Send more tanks!”

Ten commandments

The typical humor seen in the classic Czech novel “The Good Soldier Svejk”, whose hero pretends to be both naive and stupid to steer clear of problems, was on display in numerous appeals against collaborating with the occupiers and their local helpers. The Vecerni Praha newspaper published “Ten Commandments” for local residents: “1) I don’t know, 2) I don’t know them, 3) I won’t tell, 4) I don’t have that, 5) I can’t do that, 6) I won’t give that, 7) I can’t, 8) I won’t sell that, 9) I won’t show that, 10) I won’t do that.”

To slow down the Soviet army and secret services, Czechs and Slovaks painted road signs across the country white, while streets were renamed “Dubcek Street” after the reformist leader Alexander Dubcek. A popular case of word play involved the fact that then Czechoslovak president Ludvik Svoboda’s last name means “freedom” in both Czech and Russian.

Svoboda at first cautiously supported Dubcek’s reforms, but he bowed to the Soviet-imposed “normalisation” in the end. “Welcome, Svoboda. Have you brought freedom?” asked an inscription on a wall when Czechoslovak leaders were due to return from a visit to Moscow. Czechoslovakia did not finally shed totalitarian rule until 1989, four years before splitting into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. — AFP

Italy police find hash worth up to \$230m in fuel tanks

ROME: Eleven Montenegrins who hid more than 20 tons of hashish worth up to 200 million euros (\$232 million) in a rescue ship’s diesel tanks have been arrested, Italian police said yesterday. The Guardia di Finanza (GDF) finance police said they arrested the suspects early yesterday in Palermo after escorting the Panamanian rescue boat to the Sicilian capital. They raided the boat at sea after observing suspicious activity near the north African coast, the GDF said in a statement.

The drugs were found hidden in two of the boat’s diesel tanks after the police emptied all 400,000 liters of the fuel held in the ship’s 18 tanks, purportedly meant for migrant ships in distress. The diesel was also confiscated. Colonel Francesco Mazzotta from the Palermo branch of the GDF told AFP that the drugs were most likely destined for the European market. He could not say whether the diesel was also being smuggled for sale on the black market.

“The boat is one that is used to offer help to other ships in difficulty, that’s why they have so much fuel storage capacity and why the crew used the tanks to hide the drugs,” Mazzotta said. “Had they been subject to checks at sea it would have been impossible to find the drugs because it is too dangerous to empty the tanks when the boat is not docked.” Mazzotta could not say whether the suspects had links to the Sicilian Mafia or other Italian organized crime groups. — AFP

International

Congressman, Trump loyalist, indicted for insider trading

Vowed to clear his name and secure re-election

NEW YORK: US House Republican and Trump loyalist Chris Collins, who has been indicted by federal prosecutors for securities fraud, remained defiant Wednesday as he vowed to clear his name and secure re-election. Collins was arrested and charged along with his son Cameron Collins and another defendant for their role in illegal trading of stock in Australian biotech firm Innate Immunotherapeutics, where the elder Collins was a board member, according to the indictment, which was just unsealed.

“As I fight to clear my name, rest assured I will continue to work hard for the people and constituents of the 27th Congressional District of New York, and I will remain on the ballot running for re-election this November,” he told a press conference late Wednesday. Collins, 68, “tipped his son to confidential corporate information at the expense of regular investors. And then he lied about it to law enforcement to cover it up,” according to Geoffrey Berman, the US Attorney for the Southern District of New York.

Cameron Collins then used the insider information “to make timely trades in Innate stock and tip others,” the indictment alleges. Among the charged co-conspirators was Cameron’s fiancée’s father, Stephen Zarsky. Innate had been

“

I will continue to work hard for the people

”

developing a drug to treat multiple sclerosis, but in June 2017 the drug’s clinical trial was declared a failure.

As a board member, Collins was informed of the “extremely bad news” by the company’s chief executive before the findings were publicized. Collins was a major investor in the company, owning millions of dollars’ worth of its stock. He himself did not trade any of his holdings ahead of the negative report’s publication,

in part because he was already under investigation by the Office of Congressional Ethics regarding his holdings. His stock ultimately declined by millions of dollars in value when the share price plummeted by 92 percent one day after the trial results were released, federal

prosecutors said. But he knowingly broke the law by alerting his son to the privileged data before its publication, it added.

‘Meritless’ charges

The trades allowed Cameron Collins, Zarsky and others “to avoid over \$768,000 in losses that they would have otherwise incurred” if they sold the stock after the announcement, according to the indictment. Lawyers for the congressman insisted he had done nothing wrong and



ALEXANDRIA: Kevin Downing, attorney for former Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort, arrives at the Albert V Bryan United States Courthouse. — AFP

would be “completely vindicated.”

Collins told reporters he was “proud” of his affiliation with Innate. “I may have lost most of the money that I invested in the company, but I took the chance to bring relief to those who deal with the dreadful disease of secondary progressive MS every day,” he said. “The charges that have been levied against me are meritless, and I will mount a vigorous defense in court to clear my name.”

Collins, who represents Buffalo’s suburbs and other counties in western New York, was the first House Republican to openly support Trump’s bid for the party’s nomination in the 2016 race, and he has remained loyal to the president. House Speaker Paul Ryan said the allegations demand a “thorough investigation.” But he stopped short of a harsh reprimand, stating only that Collins will be removed from the House Energy and Commerce Committee. — AFP

Firefighters make progress in California

MENDOCINO: Thousands of firefighters, backed by US troops and crews from as far away as Australia and New Zealand, made progress Wednesday in their battle with California’s biggest wildfire on record—but the weather forecast for the rest of the week is not promising, officials said.

Nearly 20 major fires have ravaged the sprawling western state over the past two weeks, fanned by strong winds and sweltering temperatures. The wildfires have left at least nine people dead, including four firefighters, and forced tens of thousands of residents to abandon their homes.

“It’s scary, it’s nerve-wracking,” said Jay Michael, who was resting in a van in a parking lot in Clearlake Oaks with Gretchen Fritsch after they fled their home. “I got a feeling my home’s still there,” Michael told AFP. “My gut’s telling me it’s still there but...” He said it was the eighth time they have evacuated while living in the area north of San Francisco, and the third time this year.

The National Weather Service said conditions were expected to remain very hot and windy until at least Saturday evening. While no respite was expected from the weather, authorities said the

14,000 firefighters battling the blazes have made progress against the giant Mendocino Complex Fire in the state’s north-made up of the River Fire and the Ranch Fire.

The Mendocino Complex Fire has ravaged 300,000 acres (120,000 hectares) — an area approximately the size of Los Angeles—and is California’s largest wildfire since record-keeping began a century ago. The River Fire is 81 percent contained, having burned 48,920 acres, Cal Fire said. The Ranch Fire has grown to 251,000 acres and is 46 percent contained.

Fire sweeps over barriers

Overall, the Mendocino Complex Fire has destroyed at least 221 structures, 116 of them residences, Cal Fire said. More than 10,000 other structures are threatened. The Ranch Fire, which poses the biggest challenge, has swept across natural barriers like rivers, as well as a ditch dug with earth-moving machinery.

“The River Fire is looking really good, looks like we’ve got some good containment line around that fire,” said California firefighters’ spokesman Kevin Sweeney. “So the focus now is on the north and east line of the Ranch Fire—also, we’re looking at the southern border,” he said. Helicopters and airplanes, including two massive DC-10s and a 747 jumbo jet, have supported firefighters by dousing the flames with water.

Besides firefighters from around the country and abroad, about 1,000 National Guard personnel are supporting wildfire operations in California, with another 450 in Oregon and 170 in



LODOGA: Smoke from the Mendocino Complex fire hangs over a valley. — AFP

Washington state. The Carr Fire, near the town of Redding, has engulfed more than 173,000 acres since igniting July 23, killing seven people so far, including two firefighters. As of early Wednesday, firefighters had managed to get it 47 percent contained. Another major fire, Ferguson, has left two people dead and forced the closure of part of Yosemite National Park. It is currently 43 percent contained. In southern California near San Diego, hundreds of firefighters have been deployed to tackle the fast-moving Holy Fire.

Forrest Gordon Clark, 51, was arrested on sev-

eral charges including two counts of arson in relation to that blaze. Cal Fire officials said a shift in the weather can make a big difference for firefighting crews—lower temperatures give crews a chance to slow fire growth and better contain them. On Monday alone, 127 wildfires were burning on 1.6 million acres of land in 11 states, the National Interagency Fire Center said. The Mendocino Complex Fire is the second blaze to break records in California in as many years, following the Thomas Fire in December 2017 that destroyed 281,893 acres. — AFP

International

Venezuela lifts oppn lawmakers' immunity for drone 'attack' trial

'Everyone knows that it's a set-up to persecute and convict'

CARACAS: A super-legislative body loyal to President Nicolas Maduro revoked the immunity of two Venezuelan opposition lawmakers Wednesday, in order to put them on trial for allegedly masterminding a drone "assassination" bid on the leader. Maduro, who has systematically sidelined the opposition as he tightens his grip over his troubled nation, accuses the opposition and Colombia of being behind Saturday's drone "attack."

He has singled out two lawmakers: Julio Borges, former speaker of the opposition-dominated legislature who now lives in exile; and Juan Requesens. Requesens was seized by intelligence officers overnight, while Venezuela's Supreme Court on Wednesday ordered Borges' arrest. The Constituent Assembly — a body set up last year by Maduro to arrogate powers from the elected legislature — followed up by stripping Borges and Requesens of their immunity.

The elected body, called the National Assembly, has said it will dismiss any attempt to remove its members' immunity as unconstitutional. Its past decisions, however, have been annulled by the Supreme Court. Attorney General Tarek William Saab said moves were being made to put Requesens on trial, while Maduro is pressing Colombia and the US to extradite opposition figures he alleges are plotting to topple him from abroad, including Borges. The embattled president says he was targeted by two drones carrying C4 explosives.

Live images on Saturday showed Maduro halting his speech at a Caracas military parade following a detonation that prompted dozens of soldiers in front of him to run away in panic. Borges, who on Tuesday attended the swearing-in of Colombia's new president, Ivan Duque, called Maduro's accusation against him "a farce." "Everyone knows that it's a set-up to persecute and convict anybody that opposes your dictatorship," Borges wrote on Twitter. Later, he told AFP that he feels "safe" in exile. "I feel safe in Colombia. I feel thankful. The move has no political or legal grounds," he said of the decision to strip his immunity.

Intensifying 'repression'

Saab said Wednesday that three of seven suspects arrested in the wake of the incident had appeared before a judge. Maduro has used his control of the Supreme Court, electoral authorities and security forces to concentrate power in his hands. The Eurasia Group, a risk consultancy, said that following the drone incident, "the immediate impact will be for Maduro to intensify repression against his opponents and close ranks."

It added that, while there was no imminent fall predicted for Maduro, "holding onto power will become increasingly challenging in the long term, particularly if he fails to provide guarantees and privileges to key stakeholders amid deteriorating economic conditions, and while social dy-



CARACAS: Venezuelan opposition deputy Juan Guillermo Requesens and Rafaela Requesens, father and sister of opposition deputy Juan Requesens, are seen next to a poster with an image of Venezuela President Nicolas Maduro at the entrance of El Helicoide, the headquarters of the Bolivarian National Intelligence Service (SEBIN). — AFP

namics remain fragile." After Maduro established the all-powerful Constituent Assembly last year, four months of violent protests and a security crackdown flared, leaving 125 people dead.

Venezuela's diplomatic isolation also deep-

ened, with most countries in the Americas slamming Maduro as undemocratic and increasingly dictatorial. The political turmoil has worsened Venezuela's ability to respond to its economic collapse. — AFP

Brazil presidential debate will not feature jailed Lula

BRASILIA: Brazil stages its first presidential election debate yesterday with eight of the crowded field locking horns but also one notable absentee — jailed frontrunner Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. Thirteen candidates have officially entered the election, which starts with a first round October 7 and is almost sure to go to a runoff two weeks later.

With deeply unpopular President Michel Temer not seeking a new term and Latin America's biggest country in a deep funk after years of recession and corruption scandals, it is the least predictable election in decades. The debate on TV Bandeirantes will not feature four of the candidates, who have too small a presence in Congress to qualify. But the real missing piece in the puzzle will be former two-term president Lula, who leads in opinion polls but is serving a 12-year sentence for corruption and looks almost sure to be barred from the ballot.

A court rejected his request to take part in the debate by jail cell video link. So far, TV Bandeirantes has not responded to requests from Lula's leftist Workers' Party to mark his absence with an empty chair at the debate, or to allow his vice presidential pick, former Sao Paulo mayor Fernando Haddad, to take his place. But for the Workers' Party, even an absent Lula is a powerful weapon. With around 30 percent in the polls,

he would lead a first round and easily win a runoff.

Because he has lost an appeal to his corruption conviction, he in theory will be barred under the Brazilian clean slate law. But Lula's lawyers are pushing for an escape route in the courts. The main candidates due to appear during the debate include right-winger Jair Bolsonaro, who is polling in second place after Lula, and his next biggest rivals: center-right former Sao Paulo governor Geraldo Alckmin and environmentalist Marina Silva.

Pessimism

The October polls will also see elections for 27 governors, all 513 congressional lower house deputies and two thirds of the 81 senators. But so far voters appear hardly enticed by the prospect. A poll published this month by the National Confederation of Industries showed 45 percent of Brazilians "pessimistic or very pessimistic" about the elections. While voting is obligatory, a third plan to cast spoiled ballots, the poll found. Other polls point to between 33 and 41 percent of the electorate defying the law to skip voting. "Unlike in other countries, there has been no new leader appearing in Brazil who is able to surf the wave of discontent," political analyst Matias Spektor told AFP. "Brazil's political system continues to generate a lot of frustration."

If Lula is barred, as expected, Bolsonaro from the conservative PSL party and Silva would be the main beneficiaries, according to current polling. They stand out among the crowd with platforms "very focused on social discontent over socioeconomic factors and corruption and (in Bolsonaro's case) violent crime in the big cities," said Thiago Vidal, a political consultant. — AFP

Top Zimbabwe opponent detained

HARARE: Western governments and the UN expressed alarm yesterday as top Zimbabwe opposition figure Tendai Biti was detained after a failed attempt to flee to neighboring Zambia and claim asylum. Biti, a veteran figure in the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), made a dash across the border Wednesday, facing allegations of inciting post-election protests at home.

Zambian authorities rejected his asylum claim and handed him back to Zimbabwean police — in defiance of a court ruling, according to Biti's lawyers. The UN refugee agency said it was "gravely concerned about reports of the forced return" of Biti, an internationally-respected finance minister in Zimbabwe's 2009-2013 power-sharing government.

"Forcibly returning refugees and asylum-seekers to their country of origin is a serious violation of international refugee law," the UNHCR said in a statement. It urged Zambia to investigate the incident, which comes after ac-

cusations that Zimbabwe's authorities are pursuing a heavy crackdown on the opposition over its claims that last week's landmark elections were rigged. Zambian government spokeswoman Dora Siliya said authorities had only received the ruling blocking his expulsion after it was too late.

"The court order only came after he was handed back to the Zimbabwe authorities," she said. "His asylum was denied on the basis that in his country there is no breakdown in the rule of law," she said, adding that Biti himself was "running away from the due process of the law" as he was wanted by authorities.

Western nations said they were "deeply disturbed by continuing reports that opposition supporters are being targeted by members of the Zimbabwean security forces". In a joint statement, the EU, US, Canadian and Australian missions to Zimbabwe urged authorities to "guarantee the physical integrity and safety of Mr Biti, to ensure that his constitutional and human rights are respected, and that he will be treated in full accordance with the rule of law".

Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, a non-profit organisation, said Biti had been taken to Harare's central police station. — AFP

International

After saying #MeToo, Chinese women fight censorship to push for change

‘We want to create a safe space for women to speak up’

KUALA LUMPUR: Battling censorship and stereotypes, Chinese women are organizing online to harness the momentum of the country's nascent #MeToo movement in a push for authorities and businesses to end sexual misconduct. The latest wave of sexual misconduct claims in China emerged last month after Lei Chuang, the founder of Yi You - a charity that fights discrimination against people with hepatitis B - confessed to a sexual assault case and quit his position.

It has snowballed since then and at least 20 women have come forward to share allegations of sexual misconduct against other prominent individuals, from the charity sector to media and academia. Elaine Chen, a brand manager for a beauty product, said she was astonished and angered by the latest case, involving Yi You. She took to online chat groups to discuss the issue with other women to decide what to do.

“Our purpose is very simple - that every woman who comes forward and shares their story can find some sort of support,” Chen said, as she took a break from interviewing candidates for a job opening at her company. “We want to create a safe space for women to speak up. And if they want to reach out for help, for legal advice or counselling, they know help is here,” she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone from China.

Chen is part of a group on WeChat, China's most popular messenger app, that has grown to over 200 people within a few weeks, with volunteers taking up tasks such as recording new cases, offering legal advice and organizing media cam-

paigns. Some of the sexual misconduct cases that have been reported in the media were first discussed in the group. “This will be a long-term campaign. We can't just sit here and do nothing,” said the 28-year-old, who like other women in the group, juggles her day job and activism.

‘Rice bunny’ movement

Official data on sexual harassment cases in China are hard to come by, but a third of Chinese college students said they have suffered sexual violence or sexual assault, the non-profit China Family Planning Association said in 2016. But even though accusations of sexual misconduct by dozens of women against U.S. film producer Harvey Weinstein triggered a #MeToo movement across the globe last year, it was conspicuously quiet in China in the beginning.

Weinstein has denied having non-consensual sex with anyone. China's #MeToo-style moment only came in December, after a university professor was accused of sexual misconduct, but the movement fizzled out quickly. Chinese authorities have tried to contain the issue, censoring some of the social media posts on Weibo, the country's equivalent of Twitter.

Millions of social media users in the country, however, have found ways to circumvent censorship, such as using the phrase “rice bunny”, which is pronounced “mi tu” in Mandarin. Bai Fei, one of the women who set up the WeChat group, said a team of volunteers is tasked with compiling the cases before making them public. Often these

a friend - comedian Aditi Mittal, who helped her break into the scene in Mumbai. Mhatre now performs in comedy clubs, drawing applause for stories of discrimination, from separate utensils for maids in most households to “servant's elevators” in posh buildings. “They believe servants should not eat on the same plates as they do. So go ahead, hide your dishes. But you still eat food that I have cooked,” she says in one of her routines. India's rising affluent class, along with growing numbers of working women, have spurred demand for domestic workers. There are an estimated 50 million domestic workers in India, most of them women, who are regularly exploited in the absence of legal protections, campaigners say.

The National Policy for Domestic Workers, which was updated this year and guarantees a fixed minimum wages and social security, has been pending government approval since 2011. Mhatre's comedy club sets have gone viral on social media over the past week, including one in which she speaks of rich women haggling over a few rupees even as they spend blindly on products purchased at swank malls. “The solution is a sticker. People have little empathy for a fellow human, but have a lot of respect for the price on a sticker,” she says in the routine. —Reuters

Mumbai maid spotlights bigotry through stand-up

MUMBAI: Deepika Mhatre cooked meals, washed dishes and bathed babies for years as a domestic worker in Mumbai, until she discovered her true talent - stand up comedy. Aside from entertaining denizens of Mumbai's hip comedy scene, Mhatre has become a voice for India's largely-voiceless domestic workers, many of whom face discrimination daily. “Our employers like our work, but not us,” she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. “We keep their homes clean, but when we are in the same lift as them, they don't like it. We smell, they say. They like us to remain invisible.” Mhatre's unexpected path to comedy began when one of her employers - who was nice and “unlike other madams” - organised a talent show for domestic staff. Others danced and sang, but Mhatre told jokes about their jobs.

Her set was a surprise hit, and she said her employer and a reporter present at the event were so impressed that they introduced her to



BEIJING: This file picture taken on May 25, 2018 shows two women walking out of a Starbucks coffee shop. —AFP

budding campaigners do not know each other in real life, she added. “We do not necessarily meet with the victims too, as sometimes they want to protect their privacy,” said Bai, a women's rights campaigner. The women are now pushing for a code of conduct in the workplace, and asking businesses and charities to set up a mechanism such as a hotline or website to allow victims to report sexual harassment anonymously.

The non-profit Inno Community Development Organisation, which is spearheading the

initiative, said the code of conduct is still being drafted, but 400 individuals and charities have pledged to support it. “We hope that all the industries will have such mechanisms to deter future cases,” said Wang Ying, the deputy director of the group based in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou. “Our strategy now is to target businesses and the different industries, but at the end of the day, we hope there will be legal reforms at the national level,” she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. —Reuters

Begging is not a crime, New Delhi court rules

BANGKOK: A court in New Delhi has struck down a law that made begging in the Indian capital a crime, a major victory for campaigners who have long argued that the legislation was being used to harass and intimidate the homeless and the poor. In an order yesterday, the Delhi High Court declared several provisions of the legislation to be unconstitutional.

“People beg on the streets not because they wish to, but because they need to. Begging is their last resort to subsistence,” acting Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice Hari Shankar wrote in the 23-page order. “Criminalizing begging is a wrong approach to deal with the underlying causes of the problem (and) violates the fundamental rights of some of the most vulnerable people.”

India has no federal law on begging and destitution. About 20 states had adopted the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959, which carries a penalty of detention of three to 10 years in so-called beggar homes. Rights campaigners have argued that the law's description of begging was overly broad, and that it allowed the police to detain or arrest anyone who is poor or homeless, including

nomadic communities, street performers and migrant workers.

“The law against begging is one of the single most oppressive laws against poor and destitute people in a country that has no social protection net,” said Harsh Mander, a campaigner and lead petitioner in the case. “We are very satisfied with the order, and expect other states will follow suit in decriminalizing begging,” he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone on Thursday.

Delhi has 46,724 homeless people - among the most in India - according to the 2011 census. Rights groups say the actual figure is three times higher. With an inadequate number of homeless shelters, thousands are forced to sleep under flyovers and on pavements, leaving them vulnerable to harassment by the police, Mander said.

In its order, the court noted that the presence of beggars is evidence that the state is failing to provide basic services to its citizens. “The State simply cannot fail to do its duty to provide a decent life to its citizens and add insult to injury by arresting, detaining and ... imprisoning persons who beg in search for essentials of bare survival,” it said. In order to check forced begging, the court retained provisions of the law that punish those who employ people to beg. Activists say tens of thousands of children across India are drugged, beaten and forced to beg by traffickers who then take the money. —Reuters

International

Bangladesh detains 12 online activists over protest ‘rumors’

Protests last week left about 1,000 people injured

DHAKA: Bangladesh police have arrested at least 12 social media activists accused of spreading rumors on Facebook during student protests last week that left about 1,000 people injured, a top official said yesterday. Dhaka and other cities were this month paralyzed by more than a week of protests that saw tens of thousands of school and college students take to the streets.

Rights groups have criticized the police response to the demonstrations, including the high-profile arrests of a renowned photographer, television actress and senior journalist during the protests. Authorities have investigated about 1,000 Facebook accounts they claim incited violence during the unrest, said Dhaka police deputy commissioner Nazmul Islam. “We have so far arrested 12 people for spreading rumors. Hopefully in the next couple of days we will arrest more people,” he said.

Some of those arrested had claimed four girls were raped and two protesters were killed at the height of the demonstrations on Saturday, Islam added. Bangladesh’s internet law allows the regulation of social media and internet comment but rights groups accused the government of using the internet laws to crackdown on legitimate and peaceful dissent. Amnesty International has called the legislation “draconian” and the Freedom

House watchdog group says it has “created a climate of intimidation”.

Photographer detained

Award-winning photographer Shahidul Alam, television actor Kazi Naushaba and the chief executive of an online news outlet were among those who were arrested and charged under the internet laws during the unrest. Alam was detained on Sunday after giving an interview to Al Jazeera television and commenting on the demonstrations on Facebook. He said he was beaten while in custody. Islam said rumors spread online had led to the “destruction of 382 public vehicles, including eight police vehicles. Among those three police vehicles were burnt.”

“Almost 1,000 people were wounded, 45 police were also wounded seriously,” he added. Protesters across Bangladesh demanded better safety on Bangladesh’s chaotic, corruption-riddled transport network after a bus killed two teens in late July. At the height of the protests, hundreds of students set up roadblocks across Dhaka, checking whether cars and buses had valid licenses and vehicle safety certificates.

Police responded with tear gas and rubber bullets while alleged pro-government groups attacked demonstrators, photographers and even the US ambassador’s car. The

tions. Wiraphon was also required to return 28.6 million baht (\$861,700) to 29 donors who filed complaints. The ruling on the rape charge is expected in October, a public prosecutor said. The monk is accused of having sex with an under-age girl around a decade ago and fathering a child with her. He faces the prospect of an additional 20 years behind bars if convicted.

Thailand is mostly Buddhist and the religion is woven into everyday life, with most men spending at least some time in a monastery as novice monks. But the junta that seized power in 2014 has taken a strong line against a Buddhist clergy mired in scandal. Extortion, sex and drug cases tied to the clergy have shocked the public, and authorities last year floated the idea of introducing digitized ID cards to better track monks with criminal convictions.

In May the abbot of the tourist magnet “Golden Mount” temple in Bangkok surrendered to police after \$4 million was found in bank accounts in his name. Police are also investigating whether millions of dollars under control of the National Office of Buddhism was misused. In a high-profile case in February 2017, troops laid siege to the temple of a mega-rich Dhammakaya sect on the outskirts of Bangkok for weeks in an effort to find and detain its controversial abbot, who remains at large despite accusations of massive fraud. —AFP



MUMBAI: Indian photographers and journalists gather outside the Mumbai press club to protest against the arrest of activist and photographer Shahidul Alam in Dhaka. —AFP

police action drew international attention, with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s government criticized by the United Nations, United States and rights groups. Analysts said the protests reflected simmering discontent among Bangladeshi youth and highlighted

broader issues including the absence of public accountability and the rule of law. Most protesters had returned to school this week amid fears of further government repression if the unrest continued, according to student activists. —AFP

Thai court sentences ‘jet-set monk’ to 114 years

BANGKOK: A Thai court sentenced a disgraced former monk to 114 years in prison yesterday, a court official said, more than a year after he was extradited from the United States. Wiraphon Sukphon made headlines in 2013 when footage emerged of him wearing designer aviator sunglasses with a Louis Vuitton bag on a private jet.

The 39-year-old fled to the US but was sent back after he was accused of raping a minor and deceiving donors who gave him money to build the world’s largest emerald Buddha image. A further probe revealed he owned luxury cars and multiple bank accounts valued at about \$700,000. Wiraphon was convicted of money laundering, fraud and violating the Computer Crime Act for raising funds online, a Bangkok court official told AFP.

“Judges convicted him and sentenced him altogether to 114 years,” the official said, adding that under Thai law Wiraphon would not serve more than 20 years for the convic-

Australia strips 5 of citizenship over IS links

SYDNEY: Five people have been stripped of their Australian citizenship for fighting alongside the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria, with officials saying yesterday the country was a better place without them. They join notorious Islamic State fighter Khaled Sharrouf — who made headlines when he posted a Twitter image of his young son holding a severed head — as the only nationals to be kicked out under tougher anti-terror laws.

“I can confirm that five more individuals have ceased to be Australian citizens because of their involvement with Islamic State offshore,” home affairs minister Peter Dutton said in a statement. “Fundamentally, citizenship requires allegiance to this country... these five dual-nationals have been acting against Australia’s interests by engaging with terrorism and have effectively chosen to leave the Australian community.”

The five are all aged in their 20s and 30s. Dutton provided no further details on their identities but welcomed their exclusion. “Australia is a safer place for not having them return,” he said. Canberra has become increasingly concerned about Australian nationals returning home after fighting alongside Islamic State abroad and has passed a series of tougher national security laws in recent years.

That includes legislation where people can forfeit their citizenship if they also hold a passport from another country, and therefore are not left stateless. Sharrouf, the first Australian national stripped of his passport for Islamic State links, was also a Lebanese citizen. He left Australia for Syria in 2013 with his family. His Australian wife Tara Nettleton, who went with him, has since died and Sharrouf was believed to have been killed in a drone strike in Iraq in 2015. Later media reports cast doubt on whether he was dead. The fate of their five children remains unknown. Sharrouf sparked international revulsion in 2014 when he posted pictures on social media of his young son Abdullah holding the rotting severed head of a soldier. —AFP

International

Aftershocks rock Lombok as quake death toll tops 300

Evacuation shelters that are short of food, clean water

MATARAM: The death toll from a devastating earthquake on the Indonesian island of Lombok jumped to 319 yesterday, as strong aftershocks triggered panic among traumatized survivors waiting for aid in the worst-hit regions. The shallow 6.9-magnitude quake Sunday leveled tens of thousands of homes, mosques and businesses across Lombok, with relief agencies only just starting to reach survivors in some of the worst-hit areas four days later.

"Our latest update is that 319 people died," said Indonesia's chief security minister Wiranto, who like many Indonesians goes by one name, adding that rescue efforts were ongoing and complicated by aftershocks. The number forced from their homes in the disaster has soared to 270,000, national disaster agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho said, with around 1,000 people severely injured.

Most of the displaced are sleeping under tents or tarpaulins near their ruined homes or in evacuation shelters that are short of food, clean water and medical help. Makeshift medical facilities have been set up to treat the injured. Survivors of the quake have also been shaken by hundreds of aftershocks, including a shallow 5.9-magnitude quake Thursday which caused people to flee evacuation shelters crying and screaming.

Motorcycles parked on the street in northern Lombok's Tanjung district toppled over and the walls of some nearby buildings collapsed. "We were stuck in the traffic while delivering aid, sud-

denly it felt like our car was hit from behind, it was so strong," witness Sri Laksmi told AFP. "People in the street began to panic and got out of their cars, they ran in different directions in the middle of the traffic." Twenty-four people were injured by falling debris in the tremor, Nugroho said.

'Exceptionally destructive'

Authorities and international relief groups have begun organising aid, but badly damaged roads have slowed efforts to reach survivors in the mountainous north of Lombok, which bore the brunt of the quake. Aid had begun trickling into some of the most isolated regions by mid-day Thursday, officials said, but many displaced people still lack basic supplies.

In some parts of northern Lombok, survivors can be seen standing on the road with cardboard boxes asking for donations and food. "It is already clear that Sunday's earthquake was exceptionally destructive," Christopher Rassi, the head of a Red Cross assessment team on Lombok, said in a statement. "I visited villages yesterday that were completely collapsed."

Workers with heavy machinery are searching the rubble of homes, schools and mosques, with hope of finding any survivors fading. There are fears that two collapsed mosques in north Lombok had been filled with worshippers. Rescuers have found three bodies and also managed to pull one man alive from the twisted wreckage of one mosque in Lading Lading village, while at least one body has been spotted under the rub-



LOMBOK: A young man salvages belongings as he climbs over debris of a collapsed house in Kayangan in northern Lombok island. — AFP

ble in Pemenang. Authorities are gathering information from family members with missing relatives to determine how many more people may have been in the buildings when they collapsed, national search and rescue agency spokesman Yusuf Latif told AFP.

Across much of the island, a popular tourist

destination, once-bustling villages have been turned into virtual ghost towns. Evacuees in some encampments say they are running out of food, while others are suffering psychological trauma after the powerful quake, which struck just one week after another tremor surged through the island and killed 17. — AFP

UN sounds nuke warning to mark Nagasaki bombing

TOKYO: Millions still live in fear of nuclear war with many countries ramping up their atomic arsenals, the head of the United Nations warned yesterday, marking the anniversary of the Nagasaki bombing. Antonio Guterres, the first sitting UN secretary general to attend ceremonies honoring those who died in the bombing, said that even 73 years later, there was still a "shadow cast by the dread of unthinkable carnage."

Nuclear-armed states are spending "vast sums" to modernize their arsenals and "disarmament processes have slowed and even come to a halt," noted Guterres. "There is an urgent need for disarmament of all kinds, but especially nuclear disarmament," stressed the secretary general. The US dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima on August 6,

1945, killing around 140,000 people. The toll includes those who survived the explosion itself but died soon after from severe radiation exposure.

Three days later, the US dropped a plutonium bomb on the port city of Nagasaki, killing some 74,000 people. Japan announced its surrender in World War II on August 15, 1945. Yesterday in Nagasaki, crowds flocked to pray and pay their respects at the 10-metre high peace statue. Guterres and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe laid wreaths to honor the dead and family members carrying buckets of water to purify altars bowed in memory of their loved ones.

The ceremony came amid lingering worries over North Korea's nuclear threat and in a year when President Donald Trump has pledged to bolster the US arsenal. Mayor of Nagasaki Tomihisa Taue also issued a passionate call for denuclearisation. "To the great concern of those in the atomic-bombed cities, a shift towards openly asserting that nuclear weapons are necessary and that their use could lead to increased military might is once again on the rise," Taue said. — AFP

Koreas to hold high-level talks

SEOUL: The two Koreas will hold high-level talks next week to prepare for a third summit between the South's President Moon Jae-in and the North's leader Kim Jong Un, Seoul said yesterday, as a diplomatic rapprochement takes hold. Although the South's unification ministry did not elaborate on where the summit would take place, Moon had previously agreed to visit Kim in Pyongyang during the autumn after the two leaders held a historic meeting in April.

In a statement the ministry said the two sides would hold high-level talks on Monday on the Northern side of the truce village of Panmunjom to "discuss preparatory matters regarding a South-North summit". The overture came from Pyongyang, Seoul said, which suggested Thursday the two sides hold talks to "review progress" since the April summit that paved the way for a landmark meeting between Kim and US President Donald Trump in Singapore in June.

Cross-border exchanges between the two Koreas have significantly increased since then, with the neighbors planning to hold reunions for war-separated families later this month for the first time in three years. The South Korean delegation at Monday's meeting will be led by Unification Minister Cho Myoung-gyon, who visited Pyongyang last month to attend a friendly basketball match between the two Koreas, Seoul said.

"We will hold in-depth discussions with the North for a successful South-North summit," the ministry said. The summit will mark the third meeting between

Moon and Kim, after the two leaders held a surprise encounter in May. Sporting cooperation helped spark a diplomatic thaw after the North agreed to participate in the Winter Olympics held in the South last February, sending athletes and top officials including Kim's sister Kim Yo Jong to the Games. But even as ties have improved, little progress has been made on the key issue of the North's denuclearization. Although Trump touted his summit with Kim as a historic breakthrough, the nuclear-armed North has since criticized Washington for its "gangster-like" demands of complete, verifiable and irreversible disarmament. Meanwhile the US has urged the international community to maintain tough sanctions on the isolated regime.

Moon, the mediator

Moon, who has prioritized improving ties with the North, played a key role in brokering a remarkable detente between Washington and Pyongyang after months of Kim and Trump trading insults and threats of war. At a summit in April in the Demilitarized Zone that divides the peninsula, Moon and Kim shook hands for the first time, with Kim famously inviting his South Korean counterpart to step briefly into the North in an unscripted moment before live TV cameras. They met a second time a month later in a bid to salvage a planned summit between Kim and Trump, after the US leader cancelled, citing "open hostility" from Pyongyang, before changing his mind and heading to Singapore. Koo Kab-woo, professor at the University of North Korean Studies, said Moon was trying to act as a mediator between Pyongyang and Washington as the two sides struggle to find common ground on denuclearization. — AFP

Lifestyle

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Nurse Maria Torero poses with the cats she takes care of in 'Casita Gatuna', the cat shelter she held at her home in Lima, Peru. — AFP

Skin bleaching in Africa: An 'addiction' with risks

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Visitors attend the 'Frida Kahlo: Masterpieces from the Museo Dolores Olmedo, Mexico City' exhibition at the Hungarian National Gallery in Budapest, Hungary. — Reuters

'Communist' Frida Kahlo swept up in debate on cultural change in Hungary

Sixty-four years after her death, the personal life and politics of Frida Kahlo have come under scrutiny in Hungary. A right-wing pro-government newspaper has criticized a hugely popular exhibition of her work at the Hungarian National Gallery in Budapest for "promoting communism". The criticism comes as part of a wider national debate on culture and cultural policy since nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban won a third consecutive mandate in April.

Orban's supporters and pro-government journalists have argued in the past weeks that after Orban won another strong mandate, it was now time for a shift in culture towards conservative values to end what they call a dominance of leftist-liberal artists. In a July 14 article entitled "This is the way communism is promoted using state money", the Kahlo exhibition was listed in the right-wing newspaper Magyar Idok along with some other galleries, artists and exhibitions.

"You won't believe it but Trotsky has emerged in Budapest again, this time from Frida Kahlo's bed," the newspaper wrote, referring to her affair with Leon Trotsky, a key figure in the



Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia, during his later exile in Mexico. Trotsky was assassinated in 1940. Kahlo was affiliated with the communist Party of Mexico and is also said to have decorated the head of her bed with images of communist leaders Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao, according to Mexico's Museo Frida Kahlo. The Kahlo exhibition, the international musical Billy Elliot and a string of gallery shows have found themselves under fire in a series of articles in the newspaper.

The paper added there was "no aesthetic problem" with the exhibition of the "Mexican communist painter", which is drawing up to 3,000 visitors a day. The National Gallery declined comment. Kahlo has become one of the twentieth century's most famous artists in the decades since her death, and her work draws huge interest. The Budapest exhibition of paintings coincides with a Kahlo exhibition at London's Victoria & Albert Museum that focuses on her life story through personal artefacts.

New era

Galvanising the debate about cultural policy, Orban said on July 28 major changes lie ahead in this field and his third election victory was "nothing short of a mandate to build a new era." "An era is determined by cultural trends, collective beliefs and social customs. This is now the task we are faced with: we must embed the political system in a cultural era," Orban told hundreds of supporters in a landmark speech.

A government spokesman declined comment when asked about the looming changes. Since Orban was first elected in 2010, his Fidesz party has rewritten Hungary's constitution, gained control of state media, and businessmen close to Orban and Fidesz have built empires. Orban has successfully challenged western liberal taboos, winning the 2018 election with a strong anti-immigration campaign and by focusing on the importance of national pride and unity, and a "strong Hungary".

A group of around 60 artists and art historians signed a manifesto rejecting the listing of artists in Magyar Idok saying the attacks were unfounded. In June, Magyar Idok also published an article by a guest commentator who accused the musical Billy Elliot in the Hungarian State Opera of spreading homosexual propaganda among its young audience. Billy Elliot has been on the program for two years, with over 100,000 viewers so far. The State Opera cancelled 15 of 44 performances planned for June-July.

It said in a statement on its website the performances had not been cancelled because of the press controversy. But it noted people had lost interest in seeing the show following the coverage. Tamas Fricz, a right-wing political analyst who has helped organize mass rallies for Orban, said the aim was "not to destroy liberal culture" but to adjust the system to reflect the right-wing conservative political dominance, while also preserving the values of liberal arts.

"The autonomy of individual institutions should be preserved but I think the government ... has the right to firmly and consciously favor and support conservative thinking, artists, works of culture," Fricz said. — Reuters

INDIAN FILM STAR PREPARES FOR NEW ROLE - IN POLITICS

Indian movie star Kamal Haasan, whose latest film releases today, enjoys causing a stir as an actor and now he is looking to shake up Indian politics as well. Haasan is one of the biggest names in Indian cinema and has appeared in more than 200 films since making his debut aged six over half a century ago. The 63-year-old, who has endured battles with censorship, recently formed his own political party and plans to fight for artistic freedoms that he says are being curbed. "It's happening all around the country and should be challenged. Every artist should assert his or her right to speak," Haasan, from the southern state of Tamil Nadu, told AFP in an interview.



In this photograph Indian Bollywood film actor, director, screenwriter, and producer Kamal Haasan speaks during an interview with AFP for the promotion of his upcoming Hindi and Tamil film 'Vishwaroopam 2' in Mumbai. — AFP

The multiple award-winning screen icon is the latest in a long line of Indian actors hoping to transform their popularity at the box office into votes at the ballot box. Haasan launched Makkal Needhi Maiam in February, a political party based in Tamil Nadu that translates to "People's Justice Centre" in the local language.

It will contest polls for the first time in India's next general election, likely to be held in spring 2019 when Prime Minister Narendra Modi will seek a second term. Critics have accused Modi's right-wing Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party-led government of fuelling intolerance and giving a platform to anti-Muslim sentiment. Haasan, whose films have had a political hue since the 1980s, said his party's priorities will be to "defend freedom of speech, and maintain and

safeguard the diversity and multi-religious quality of the nation".

"My decision (to get into politics) was accelerated by what is going on in the country but especially in my state," the actor said during the interview in Mumbai. "I wanted to challenge the status quo. And I am not inventing this decorum of centrism. We had it, and I want to regain it." Haasan, who also produces, directs and sings in many of his movies has appeared in films across several Indian languages—Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Hindi—making him a truly nationwide star. He has picked up a number of awards throughout a glittering career including the Padma Bhushan, India's third-highest civilian honour, and was made a Chevalier of France's Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. Some of his most notable movies include "Vikram", "Maharaja" (The Great River), and "Nayakan" (The Hero).

Controversies

His latest movie, the action spy thriller "Vishwaroopam 2" (titled "Vishwaroopam 2" in Tamil and meaning "The Magnificent Incarnation 2"), hits screens across India on Friday. It is the sequel to 2013's "Vishwaroopam", which was controversially banned by the Tamil Nadu government despite being cleared for release by India's censor board. The administration of the late J. Jayalalithaa, herself a former prominent actor, blocked the movie's release on law and order grounds after Muslim groups claimed it could disturb communal harmony.

Only after the Chennai-based Haasan threatened to leave the state and agreed to mute five scenes was the film released, two weeks late. It cost the actor, who also wrote and directed the movie, around 600 million rupees (\$8.74 million based on today's exchange rate). Haasan has been no stranger to controversy throughout his acting career. "Hey Ram" caused an outcry in 2000 for supposedly depicting Mahatma Gandhi in a poor light while 1992's "Thevar Magan" (Son of Thevar) was accused of portraying an Indian community as violent.

His venture into politics came after another Indian cinema icon, Rajinikanth, also floated the idea of forming his own party. Both are looking to follow in the footsteps of Jayalalithaa and her mentor M.G. Ramachandran, who was also a famous actor before becoming Tamil Nadu chief minister. — AFP

Photo shows a view of the old bridge over the Sazava river in the Czech village of Davle, located 25km far from the capital Prague. — AFP photos



Soviet army nearly 'battled' US filmmakers in Prague Spring

Propaganda-fuelled Soviet soldiers were ready to take on American and German armies during the 1968 invasion of former Czechoslovakia—before they realized the "enemies" were filmmakers. "I remember the noise made by a tank unit on August 21, 1968," said Kvetoslava Dufkova, a pensioner from the small town of Davle just south of Prague, who was 14 at the time. "The Soviets then arrived in the centre of Davle and there they came across, to their big surprise, an army they thought was German," she told AFP.

Like many locals, Dufkova had been acting as an extra in "The Bridge at Remagen", a John Guillermin war film starring George Segal and Robert Vaughn that was shot in Davle. "The guys in the tanks were stunned to suddenly see 'a German army' in front of them. They began negotiations, which lasted several hours," Dufkova said of the alarming moment that took place 50 years ago. After some time, the invading troops understood they were facing actors and not the expected imperialist cutthroats.

Last bridge across Rhine

From March 1968, the town of Davle was turned into a movie set, with residents mingling with Hollywood stars in American and Nazi military uniforms while tanks and other army vehicles drove by. Davle was also surrounded by replica buildings imitating those in Remagen, a town in western Germany. "Near our house there was a pile of dead soldier mannequins that the filmmakers would distribute here and there during filming," said Antonin Dvorak, a 78-year-old pensioner from Davle.

The film tells the story of how the US army took hold of the last bridge still standing across the Rhine in March 1945, following the German army's failure to destroy it while waiting for the retreating Nazi troops to cross the river. United Artists producers took advantage of a political thaw in what was then communist Czechoslovakia to go on location there. And the 1968 Prague Spring movement opened the country up to the West. Producers picked Davle because of the resemblance of a local bridge to the one at Remagen, as well as the presence of skilled film staff, including stunt performers and prop men. "During the shooting of a scene in which the bridge is bombed, a horse fell through the railings into the river," recalled Dufkova. "We all thought the horse would



A photo shows a view of the old bridge over the Sazava river in the Czech village of Davle.

die, but rescuers managed to save the animal. It was a very moving moment." There were 800 extras, including several schoolchildren dressed as Hitler Youth, according to a handwritten village account kept at town hall. "The stage set was so credible that an accidental tourist would have made the sign of a cross here," the chronicle says.

'Soviet arrival was horrible'

But this credibility almost led to a tragedy in the town on the day the Soviet-led armies invaded Czechoslovakia. Soviet troops crushed the Prague Spring movement, killing 50 people nationwide on the first day alone. "The arrival of the Soviet army in Davle was horrible. A helicopter was circling overhead and the soldiers were terribly scared. This could have resulted in a tragedy," said Dvorak. "Someone told them that Davle had been invaded by the US army and that they should liberate us. They had no idea why our people were giving them the finger. They were terribly nervous, the tension was palpable."

The shooting of "The Bridge at Remagen" was immediately interrupted and the whole film crew rushed back towards the West by taxi, leaving behind all the Sherman and Tiger tanks and other material. In the autumn of 1968, the film crew were allowed to come back briefly to take a few necessary shots. — AFP

Grammy-award winning singer Albita lights up Cuban version of Carmen

Grammy-award winning singer Albita Rodriguez is such a celebrated interpreter of Cuban music that when a new version of the opera Carmen was produced set in revolutionary Havana a role was created especially for her. Albita plays Senora in Carmen La Cubana, a production of Georges Bizet's 19th century opera playing in London this month as part

of a world tour that started in Paris in 2016. "It is very touching and very exciting and I also feel a great responsibility, I somewhat carry the story. I am telling the story and recreating it," she told Reuters about her part.

"There is mambo, chachacha, guajira, danzon, Afro-Cuban santer'a music. It (the opera) goes through almost all the genres

of Cuban music and the truth is that it's a wonderful job, she said. Carmen is just the latest act in a distinguished career. Rodriguez, known as Albita, was born in Havana in 1962 to parents who were popular Cuban folk singers. She gained fame in Cuba but her career exploded when she arrived in Miami in 1993. "I left because I am against ... the communist dictatorship

in Cuba But I believe a lot in Cuban culture, since I was a child I believe in music and I have invested in it because I feel proud of my culture and of my country," she said. Since then, she has performed around the world, befriended stars such as Madonna and Gianni Versace, and released eight albums, two of which have won Grammys.

SUSHI, SAKE AND SOY: ROBUCHON'S LOVE AFFAIR WITH JAPAN

Foie gras paired with wasabi, Japanese-style open kitchens and a fierce work ethic: Joel Robuchon, hailed as “chef of the century” on his death this week, drew great inspiration from Japan, where 10 establishments now bear his name. The world’s most-starred Michelin chef developed an immediate love for sushi, sake and Japan itself after arriving for the first time in 1976, his luggage bulging with “forbidden or unknown produce like shallots, tarragon and chives,” he once recalled. Yosuke Suga, who worked with the famously perfectionist Robuchon for 17 years, told AFP that he would often talk fondly of his first impressions of Japan.



In this file photo French chef Joel Robuchon poses at Yoshi, his first ever Japanese restaurant, in Monaco. — AFP photos

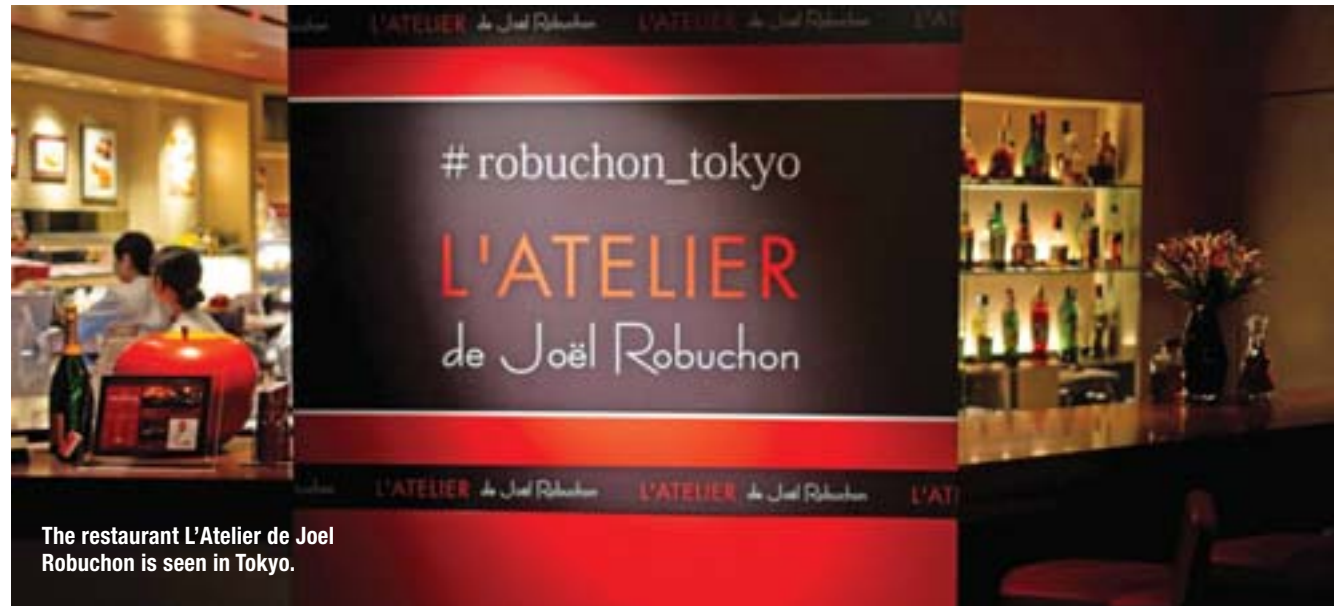
“He arrived at Narita airport and saw how (the handrails) of the escalator were cleaned meticulously. And he said to himself, ‘Japan is somewhere I can work,’” said Suga, now 41 and running his own restaurant. Kenichiro Sekiya, head chef at Robuchon’s “L’Atelier” restaurant in Tokyo, says the French master quickly became inspired by Japanese ingredients and surprised his hosts with the way he used them.

“He used wasabi, soy sauce, yuzu citrus and shichimi (a blend of seven spices with chili) to give accents to various food,” said Sekiya, 38, recalling his amazement when Robuchon added wasabi cream to foie gras terrine. “Japanese have fixed ideas for the spices so it’s hard to break them. But Robuchon did his own interpretation and used them in his own way, which Japanese wouldn’t normally do,” he said.

And one of Robuchon’s most famous innovations—the concept of the “Atelier” (or “workshop”), where customers dine in close proximity to the chefs, perched on high stools at a bar counter—was also inspired by Japan. “He really wanted a connection with customers over a counter. Sushi chefs in Japan make sushi in front of customers and communicate with them,” said Kazutoshi Narita, a pastry chef who worked for 10 years at Robuchon restaurants in Tokyo, New York and Taipei.

In 2003, Robuchon opened his first Atelier restaurant in the central Tokyo district of Roppongi and his photo still overlooks the chefs there, dressed all in black as they prepare meals in full sight of the diners. He would fly to Tokyo at least three times a year to oversee his restaurant empire and would rarely miss the opportunity to enjoy his beloved sushi at Sukiyabashi Jiro, where US president Barack Obama dined with Japanese PM Shinzo Abe.

Sekiya said Robuchon, who at one time held 32 Michelin stars, at first underestimated how hard it was to make sushi. “Apparently sushi was just sliced fish placed on rice to him at first,” he said. “I heard he became fascinated by sushi after learning that it was actually something more delicate.” Robuchon also fell in love with sake, a fermented drink made of rice, and recently opened a shop to promote the drink in Paris.



The restaurant L’Atelier de Joel Robuchon is seen in Tokyo.

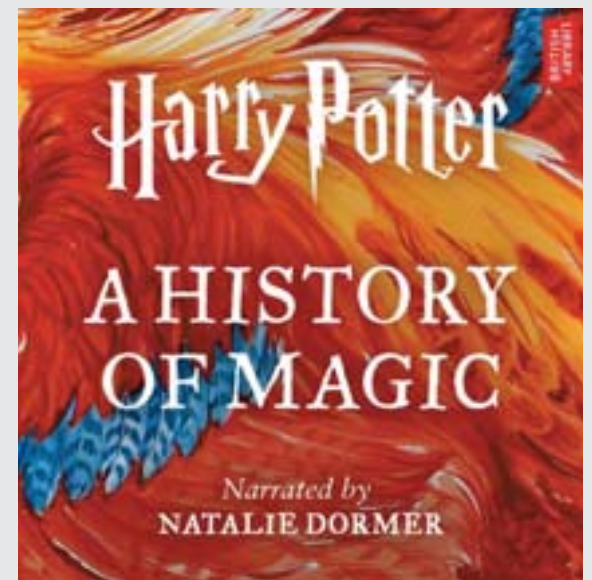


In this file photo taken on February 10, 2009, French chef Joel Robuchon speaks at the World Summit of Gastronomy in Tokyo.

Drinks and camembert

Like most chefs, Robuchon was known to drive his staff hard and the famous Japanese work ethic appealed to him. “He was very demanding in terms of quality but we liked that a lot. We respected that and were happy to work with him. We’re maybe a bit masochistic,” joked Suga. After his death from pancreatic cancer in Geneva on Monday, Narita went to Robuchon’s three-starred chateau restaurant in the trendy Ebisu district to honor his memory in his own way—with champagne and cheese. “Chefs at Robuchon restaurants used to get together at the kitchen counter for drinks and camembert after work,” said Narita. “That was my most peaceful moment with him. It was a moment in which I felt a sense of achievement.” And Robuchon leaves more than just recipes and inspiration in Japan—his 30-year-old half-Japanese son now runs a wine business in the southern city of Fukuoka. — AFP

Audiobook this fall reveals Rowling’s magical influences



This cover image released by Audible shows “Harry Potter: A History of Magic,” an audiobook narrated by Natalie Dormer that will go on for sale on Oct 4. —AP

An audiobook coming out this fall will reveal some influences behind the wizardry of Harry Potter. The audio producer and seller Audible Inc. announced yesterday that “Harry Potter: A History of Magic” will go on sale Oct 4 Narrated by Natalie Dormer of “Game of Thrones” fame, the book will feature “hidden stories” about magic and tell of the manuscripts, myths and other artifacts that J.K. Rowling drew upon for her blockbuster fantasy series. The audio work will be published by Rowling’s Pottermore Publishing and can be pre-ordered at www.audible.com/historyofmagic. It also serves as a companion to a Potter exhibition that ran last year at the British Museum and will be seen this fall at the New-York Historical Society. — AP

Ask a Designer: Closet organization that lasts

Most people don't start out with a messy closet. Even when a closet is carefully organized at the beginning, however, it might not take long for order to turn to chaos. "It's common for clients to struggle with keeping the momentum going," says interior designer Caitlin Murray.

But there are planning and design strategies to help closets stay as organized as they were on day one. We've asked Murray, founder of the Los Angeles-based Black Lacquer Design, and two other experts - Delaware-based home designer and builder Marnie Oursler, and Elena Eskandari, an interior design specialist with Case Design/Remodeling in the Washington, DC, area - for advice on planning and living with efficient and attractive closet space.

Know your stuff and yourself

The same closet design doesn't work for everyone, so analyze the types of items you need to store. If you'll be hanging a lot of clothes, are they long or short? You may want two levels of hanging space positioned one above the other to maximize storage, says Oursler. Have a lot of shoes? Consider a row of built-in shoe cubbies along the floor. Then choose a system you'll actually stick with. If you plan to put everything on hangers but that's an extra step that you'll probably avoid, then you'll end up with piles of clothes in your bedroom.

While organizing, pare down: Even a well-planned closet may not stay organized if it's very full. What do you really like and really wear? If you haven't worn something in a while, Eskandari says, chances are you don't need to keep it. Murray agrees: "You really limit what things you'll actually utilize when you're dealing with a cluttered closet. If you can't see anything or find anything, it might as well not even be there."

Small, visible compartments

"I think the success of any (closet) organization is how you divide stuff and compartmentalize it," Eskandari says. She suggests separate spaces for everything, with more shelves fairly close together rather than a few spaced far apart. "How many sweaters can you fold without them falling over?" she asks. She's also a fan of shelf dividers to keep one type of clothing or pantry item from another. If you have compartments for everything, she says, "then everything is going to have its home."

These designers acknowledge that built-in shelving and compartments can be expensive, but they say it's often worth the investment for a really efficient master bedroom closet or kitchen pantry. Oursler notes that a closet with lots of built-ins may allow you to eliminate dressers and other storage pieces from your bedroom. "If we can put that storage in the closet," she says, the bedroom will feel larger and more peaceful, and may even have space for a sitting area. As you plan these areas, focus on what you use most. "Store the items you reach for most often in the places where you have the easiest access, so you're not constantly pushing everything around to find one thing," says Murray. And use transparent storage (glass-faced cabinets or clear acrylic drawers are great if you're doing built-ins, or clear bins on shelves) to make access even easier.

Keep it simple for kids

"Kids have what I call a 'rule of two moves.' If it takes them more than that to put something away, it's not going to go anywhere," says Eskandari. "Don't put as many hangers into childrens' closets. They just won't use them." Oursler agrees that kids often do better with bins or baskets on shelves and simple cubbies for shoes. If you'd rather your kids hang things up, hooks are more likely to get used than hangers. "Don't overcomplicate things for kids or teenagers," says Eskandari.

Great lighting, fun style

Murray recommends including plenty of light (natural light when possible) and painting closets "in a clean, bright paint, which not only makes any space feel a bit bigger but it also makes the



Photo provided by Case Design shows a closet designed by Elena Eskandari, an interior designer specialist at Case Design. —AP photos



Photo provided by Marnie Homes shows a bathroom and bedroom area designed by Marnie Oursler.

closet that much more functional." Eskandari agrees: You can improve your closet's lighting with minimal expense, she says. Being able to see what you've got will help you use and enjoy those items more often.

Aim for several different light sources, she says, rather than one overhead light. And cheer up the space with bold paint colors and wall coverings. Your master-bedroom closet is a space you visit at the start and end of every day. So make it fun. As Murray says, closets will "feel that much more special and boutique" if you add items like "wallpaper, a dramatic chandelier and a luxe rug." —AP



Photo provided by Case Design shows a closet designed by Elena Eskandari, an interior designer specialist at Case Design.

Skin bleaching in Africa: An 'addiction' with risks



Asif Khalifa applies a mask on Himesh Dhulab as part of a facial which used skin lightening products at the Pari Hair Salon in the Fordsburg suburb of Johannesburg. — AFP photos



Sheila Dhulab has a facial done with skin lightening products for the first time at the Pari Hair Salon in the Fordsburg suburb of Johannesburg.



A beautician displays capsules and cream used for skin lightening at a beauty shop, in Nairobi.

Dr Isima Sobande was in medical school when she first heard of mothers who bleached the skin of their babies. She dismissed it as an urban myth. But it wasn't long before she saw it with her own eyes. At a health center in Lagos, a mother brought in a two-month-old infant who was crying in pain. "He had very large boils all over his body," the soft-spoken 27-year-old Nigerian told AFP. "It seemed like they weren't normal." The baby's mother explained that she had mixed a steroid cream with shea butter and slathered his skin with it in order to make it whiter. "I was very appalled. It was distressing," said Sobande.

Shocked, the young doctor now takes a different view on skin bleaching, also called lightening or whitening. For many Nigerians, it is a "standard procedure," a gateway to beauty and success, she said. "It's a mindset that has eaten into society. For a lot of people, it's the path to getting a good job, having a relationship."

Africa risk

Skin lightening is popular in many parts of the world, including South Asia and the Middle East. But medical experts say that in Africa—a continent where regulations are often lax or scorned—the widening phenomenon is laden with health risks. Cultural watchdogs, for their part, see it as the toxic legacy of colonialism. Africa is experiencing a "massive trend of increased use (of skin bleaching), particularly in teenagers and young adults," said Lester Davids, a physiology professor at the University of Pretoria in South Africa.

"The older generation used creams—the new generation uses pills and injectables. The horror is that we do not know what these things do in high concentrations over time in the body." Where statistics about Africa's skin-bleaching industry exist, they are often old or unreliable. But evidence from the range of products, suppliers and services points to a continent-wide market that may number tens of millions of people and possibly more. In Nigeria alone, 77 per cent of women—by extrapolation, more than 60 million people—are using lightening products on a "regular basis", the World Health Organization (WHO) said in 2011.



Elizabeth Kobiti, a beauty salon owner, mixes a skin lightening cream in Lagos.



Bootleg creams

Experts say the African market is rapidly expanding as companies seek to cash in on the continent's booming youth population. "More clients want insight on the lightening market," said Rubab Abdoolla, a beauty analyst at market researchers Euromonitor International. The rich tend to opt for pricier registered products which are available in standard doses.

Others are likely to buy creams, often bootleg concoctions mixed in the back streets, that may be dangerous and are blatantly sold in defiance of official bans or constraints. Ingredients may include hydroquinone, steroids, mercury and lead—the same element that, at high doses, poisoned Elizabethan courtiers who powdered their faces ivory white. "These chemicals damage respiratory, kidney and reproductive systems," an official from the Nigerian drug control agency warned. "They cause cancer, affect the nervous system, deform unborn babies."

In spite of the risks, authorities are struggling to control the bleaching innovations, which include a compound called glutathione, taken as injections or pills. Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya have all banned skin bleaching products with high amounts of hydroquinone and mercury, with the province of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa urging people to "reject all colonial notions of beauty". In July, Ghana's Food and Drugs Authority issued a statement telling pregnant women not to take glutathione pills to



Shopkeeper Ruth Dossouvi applies a skin-lightening cream at her shop in Lome.



A shop owner arranges his products most of which are used for skin lightening in the Fordsburg suburb of Johannesburg.

searcher at North Carolina Central University. “We’re seeing folks attempt to be perceived as having more value because of their complexion.” Recent black movements are trying to challenge that perception.

#Melaninpoppin, a hashtag celebrating black skin, and the smash-hit movie “Black Panther,” which featured an almost all-black cast wearing African-inspired outfits and natural hair, are held up as testaments to a shift away from longstanding Eurocentric standards of beauty. But whether the tide of opinion is turning in Africa itself is another question. “The truth for me was that my beauty was more accepted abroad than at home,” said Ajuma Nasenyana, a model from northern Kenya, who has walked for Victoria’s Secret and Vivienne Westwood. “In the African industry the lighter your skin tone the more beautiful you are. Hopefully the industry is changing and starting to appreciate darker skin.” Sobande, the doctor, said, “We’re living in a more positive environment than a few years before. “But it’s going to take a lot of effort to change the mindset.” — AFP



Edmund Delle, dermatologist and founder of Rabito Clinic, at his clinic in Accra holds a picture of a woman with Exogenous Ochronosis, a cutaneous disorder due to a long-term application of hydroquinone skin-lightening beauty products.



Aranmolate Ayobami, plastic surgeon at the Grandville Medical and Laser clinic in Lagos, explains glutathione injections used for skin lightening.



A beautician applies a skin toning treatment on a woman at a beauty salon in Lagos.

bleach their unborn babies saying that there may be “serious toxic side effects” such as “asthma, renal failure and chest pains.”

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) stresses that it has not given approval for any of the injections on the market today. “These products are potentially unsafe and ineffective, and might contain unknown harmful ingredients or contaminants.”

‘Addiction’

Those who start using skin lightening say they invariably stay with the practice. “Before you know it, it has become some sort of an addiction where you want to maintain that look,” said Dabota Lawson, a Lagos socialite and cosmetics entrepreneur. “Just like with plastic surgery, it begins to feel like it’s never enough.” In Lagos, the creams are assembled by a legion of cosmetologists and sold at a price anywhere from 5,000 naira to 20,000 naira (\$14-55, 12-47 euros), a prohibitive amount in a country where the minimum wage is just 18,000 naira (\$50, 42 euros).

Instagram skincare star Pela Okiemute’s “Russian White” body cream claims to give “firmness, intense beauty and a mixed race complexion”. His “Cleopatra Royal” cream, whose label features Elizabeth Taylor in her famous role as the Egyptian queen, promises to “lighten and radiate”. Customers should start seeing results in two weeks, says Okiemute, explaining that his creams, which include collagen, kojic acid and “anti-ageing” snail slime

are safe, though he declined to divulge his formula.

“We have a lot of customers who have used a lot of wrong products, they come to us and we give solutions,” he says. He flicked through his phone to show before-and-after photos of a client who had a problem with dark knuckles, a telltale sign of a skin bleacher. Intravenous injections and pills of glutathione—an antioxidant naturally found in the body that has a lightening side effect—are the new frontiers of skin bleaching.

At his clinic on the outskirts of Lagos, beside an abandoned Chinese restaurant, plastic surgeon Aranmolate Ayobami charges clients 150,000 naira (\$415, 350 euros) for a five-week course of glutathione injections. Known as the “Buttmaster” for helping patients seeking an hourglass figure, Ayobami buys the injections from companies he trusts in the United Arab Emirates or the United States. He only gives certain dosages for a limited amount of time, he said. But sometimes clients will bring in their own cheaper product that they bought online and urge him to inject them. “We try to discourage that,” he said.

#Melaninpoppin

If many millions of Africans lighten their skin without regret, others are dismayed.

“Skin bleaching is one manifestation of folks trying to get power and privilege aligned with whiteness,” said Yaba Blay, a re-



A beautician displays products used for skin lightening at a beauty shop, in Nairobi.



Nigerian model turned business woman Dabota Lawson poses in her office at Dabota Cosmetics.

COOKING ON DEADLINE: BURGERS WITH PIMENTO CHEESE SPREAD

By Katie Workman

If pimento cheese is already part of your life, then you are blessed for sure. If not, get ready for life to get a little bit better. And get ready for one of the best burgers of your life. It's dangerous ground for a Yankee like me to start messing around with a Southern recipe like pimento cheese. This may well not be how you (or your mom or grandma) make it. But I've done a bit of research now, and a bit of testing, and I humbly submit this version for your consideration.

Don't use pre-grated cheese for this - freshly grated cheese tastes better and makes the mixture adhere together better. Talented Southern chef Griff Day shared his secret ingredient with me: He uses a splash of vinegar in his pimento cheese, and that little trick really seems to add some depth and extra flavor to my version as well. If you don't have smoked paprika on hand, you can sub in regular paprika, or just skip it. Make this at least one day ahead to allow the flavors to meld. Serve leftovers (there will be leftovers, and you will not be sorry about that) with crackers. Hey, by the way - I would still like to hear how you or your mom or dad or Aunt Matilda makes their pimento cheese. Seriously - I have yet to meet a version of this dish that I don't love!

BURGERS WITH PIMENTO CHEESE SPREAD

Ingredients:

Servings: 6

Start to finish: 45 minutes (this doesn't include the minimum one day of refrigeration for the pimento cheese)

Pimento Cheese Spread:

1/2 cup mayonnaise

3 ounces cream cheese, softened

2 tablespoons minced red onion

1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

1 teaspoon vinegar

1/2 teaspoon Sriracha or other hot sauce, or to taste

1/4 teaspoon smoked paprika

Large pinch cayenne pepper

1/2 pound grated sharp cheddar cheese

1 7-ounce jar pimentos, drained and minced

Salt to taste

Burgers:

1-1/2 pounds ground chuck (about 80/20)

1 teaspoon salt, or to taste

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper, or to taste

6 hamburger buns, to serve, toasted if desired

Sliced tomatoes, onions and lettuce to serve (optional)

Preparation:

In a mixing bowl, combine the mayonnaise, cream cheese, onion, Worcestershire sauce, vinegar, Sriracha, smoked paprika and cayenne. Stir in the cheddar cheese and pimentos, season with salt to taste, and add more hot sauce if desired. Pack into a container and refrigerate for at least one day, and up to seven.

Place the ground beef in a large bowl. Season with salt and pepper and use your hands to mix in the seasonings. Form all of the meat into six equal-size patties, making the edges as neat as you can. Use your fingers to make an indentation in the middle of each patty about 1 to 1-1/2 inches wide and about 1/2-inch deep. The burgers will swell a bit during cooking, and therefore end up flat, not rounded (which would make any toppings slide off).

Preheat a grill to medium-high. Grill the burgers for about 4 minutes on each side, or until they are cooked as you like them. The FDA recommends an internal temperature of 160 degrees F

for cooked ground meat, but you may decide differently. Place each burger on the bottom of a bun, top the burger with a generous spoonful (about a heaping tablespoon) of Pimento Cheese, and let everyone top with the tomatoes, onions and lettuce as they please.

Nutrition information per serving: 535 calories; 331 calories from fat; 37 g fat (14 g saturated; 1 g trans fats); 102 mg cholesterol; 742 mg sodium; 24 g carbohydrate; 1 g fiber; 4 g sugar; 26 g protein.



The ultimate 7-layer dip embracing bold Southwestern flavors

By America's Test Kitchen

To create the ultimate version of this appealing dip with bold Southwestern flavors and a simple, no-fuss technique, we distilled every layer down to its essential flavors and designed our recipe to emphasize those elements. We replaced the usual refried beans with canned black beans that we processed with garlic, chili powder, and lime juice. To keep the sour cream layer from watering down our dip, we combined it with cheese to give it more structure.

We made the salsa and guacamole layers quick and simple to ensure that they would come together easily and stay fresh and vibrant. This recipe is usually served in a clear dish so you can see the layers. For a crowd, double the recipe and serve in a 13 by 9-inch glass baking dish. If you don't have time to make fresh guacamole as called for, simply mash three avocados with 3 tablespoons lime juice and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Serve with tortilla chips.

ULTIMATE SEVEN-LAYER DIP

Ingredients:

Servings: 8-10

Start to finish: 45 minutes

4 large tomatoes, cored, seeded, and chopped fine
2 jalapeno chilis, stemmed, seeded, and minced
3 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro
6 scallions (2 minced; 4, green parts only, sliced thin)
2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons lime juice (2 limes)
1 (15-ounce) can black beans, drained but not rinsed
2 garlic cloves, minced
3/4 teaspoon chili powder
1 1/2 cups sour cream
1 pound pepper Jack cheese, shredded (4 cups)
1 recipe (3 cups) Guacamole (recipe follows)

Preparation:

Toss tomatoes, jalapenos, cilantro, minced scallions, 2 tablespoons lime juice, and 1/8 teaspoon salt in bowl. Let stand until tomatoes begin to soften, about 30 minutes. Strain through fine-mesh strainer, discard liquid, and return to bowl.

Meanwhile, pulse black beans, garlic, remaining 2 teaspoons lime juice, chili powder, and 1/8 teaspoon salt in food processor until mixture resembles chunky paste, about 15 pulses. Spread bean mixture evenly over bottom of 8-inch square baking dish or 1-quart glass bowl.

Wipe out food processor, add sour cream and 2 1/2 cups pepper Jack, and pulse until smooth, about 15 pulses. Spread sour cream mixture evenly over bean layer. Top evenly with remaining 1 1/2 cups pepper Jack, followed by guacamole and, finally, drained tomato mixture. Sprinkle with sliced scallion greens before serving.

Guacamole:

3 ripe avocados
1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
1 jalapeno chili, stemmed, seeded, and minced
2 tablespoons finely chopped onion
2 tablespoons lime juice
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin

Preparation:

Halve 1 avocado, remove pit, and scoop flesh into medium bowl. Add cilantro, jalapeno, onion, lime juice, garlic, 3/4 teaspoon salt, and cumin and mash with potato masher (or fork)



until mostly smooth. Halve and pit remaining two avocados. Carefully make 1/2-inch crosshatch incisions in flesh with butter knife, cutting down to but not through skin. Insert spoon between skin and flesh, gently scoop out avocado cubes, and add to mashed mixture. Gently mash until mixture is well combined but still coarse. Season with salt to taste. Serve.

Nutrition information per serving: 480 calories; 322 calories from fat; 36 g fat (17 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 69 mg cholesterol; 741 mg sodium; 23 g carbohydrate; 11 g fiber; 5 g sugar; 21 g protein.

Top 10 things to do in *Guangzhou, China*



Ultra-modern Zhujiang New Town

China's third-biggest city, Guangzhou is the beating heart of the megalopolis that is the Pearl River Delta. This location along the South China Sea has long made Guangzhou one of China's most important trading ports with a colonial background and culturally diverse society. But as the region's population has swelled (around 130 million now call the Pearl River Delta home), so has Guangzhou's profile. Today, the capital of Guangdong province, formerly known as Canton, has found firm footing as a booming metropolis full of cutting-edge architecture, tasty Cantonese food and plenty of interesting pockets to explore. Interestingly, Guangzhou is also one of the only cities in China where Mandarin and Cantonese are spoken almost interchangeably. Here are 10 things you can't miss in Guangzhou.

Lifestyle | Travel

Guangzhou Opera House

The most striking piece of architecture in town is the eye-popping Guangzhou Opera House, designed by Zaha Hadid. The performance space has Hadid's signature flowing curves, which according to the architect were inspired by two rocks washed away from the Pearl River. The opera house, which opened in 2010, is just as futuristic looking on the inside as it is on the outside: performances span everything from classical scores to Cantonese operas.

Cantonese food

Guangzhou, long the spiritual home of Cantonese food, is also one of China's tastiest cities - a status that's about to become official with the launch of a Michelin Guide to the city later this year. As you would expect from a cosmopolitan centre, Guangzhou has its fair share of premium restaurants, but there's a pulsing local food scene, too. Explore it with Eating Adventures, which runs half-day foodie tours around Liwan, the city's traditional quarter. The highlight is the Huangsha Seafood Market, one of the biggest fish markets in southern China, where restaurants in the market building will cook the seafood you've just bought downstairs.

Xiaobei

A high level of migration from Africa has made Guangzhou one of China's most diverse cities. The Xiaobei neighborhood, which coalesces around Baohan Straight Street, is home to a large concentration of African residents, as well as Uyghurs from north-western China. It's an interesting neighborhood to explore - alongside wholesale markets, you can find some of the city's best Uyghur food (think hand-pulled noodles and charcoal-roasted lamb) in eateries.

Liwan

The city's traditional heart is Liwan, the old quarter, where the houses aren't more than a few storeys tall and Cantonese is still the dominant language. Visit the Qingping Chinese Medicine Market and wander through the streets to find hawkers sitting

The leafy heritage streets of Shamian Island, perfect for a stroll



on plastic chairs, sometimes flogging handfuls of insects and often playing drawn-out games of mahjong. Shangxiajiu Pedestrian Street, the first of its kind in Guangzhou, comes with an odd mix of ear-splitting music and traditional shophouses with a faintly European flair.

Xiaogang Park

Daily life in China is lived out in public spaces like parks. Sprawling Xiaogang Park, in southern Guangzhou, is the ideal place for a lazy weekend stroll - particularly around the lake at its centre. There's an excellent vegetarian restaurant, Bingsheng Zen Tea

House, right by the entrance, which is perfect for a long lunch.

Canton Tower

The city's tallest structure, the slender Canton Tower, has become the de facto landmark of modern Guangzhou - recognizable for its twisty shape that lights up in a rainbow of colours at night. The viewing platform, at 488m up, offers a breathtaking panorama across Guangzhou and the ultra-modern Zhujiang New Town neighborhood. Kick the experience up a gear by taking a bubble tram: these clear plexiglass cabins wind slowly around the top of the tower on a track.

An alleyway in Liwan, the traditional heart of Guangzhou



Lifestyle | Travel



Scallops at Huangsha Seafood Market

Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall

At the southern end of Yuexiu Park is the imposing Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall, which commemorates the first leader of modern China. The eponymous doctor, who was born in northern Guangdong in 1866, is immortalised in bronze outside the commanding octagon-shaped hall, which seats more than 3000 people for performances. Also on the Sun trail, a few stops up on metro line 2, you can visit the Sun Yatsen Memorial Museum at the residence where Sun lived during the 1920s.

Shamian Island

This 300-sq-metre island, a former European concession, is one of the prettiest sections of Guangzhou. There are cobbled streets, banyan tree-flanked avenues and wrought-iron signposts - a total contrast to the rest of the city. The Starbucks here, in an old colonial mansion, must rank as one of the most charming branches in the world, while the lobby of the five-star White Swan Hotel is worth a look for its over-the-top pond and mini-waterfall.

Shopping

If you want a snapshot of a very modern Guangzhou, visit Beijing Road - a buzzy, busy and booming pedestrian street packed with hawker stalls and what feels like the entire city population at all points of the day. A more refined shopping experience can be found in Tianhe, a fast-gentrifying business district that's popular with Hong Kong weekenders (it's handily near the main Guangzhou East train station). The Taikoo Hui shopping centre is a far calmer retail experience, name-checking over 180 big brands. For browsing antiques of the genuine and not-so-genuine variety, hit up Xiguan Antique Street.

Dim sum

The tradition of yum cha (literally 'to take tea') is taken very seriously in Guangzhou, and there are numerous restaurants claiming to have the best selection of traditional dim sum (the small dishes eaten at yum cha). Some claim the best spot in town is Liwan's Dian Dou De (587 Longjin Zhonglu) - also on the Eating Adventures tour - which serves (arguably) the best egg tarts you'll find outside of Portugal. For a more formalized affair, there's the Lai Wan Market, a dim sum restaurant (with tables tucked into traditional sampans) inside the concrete heifer that is the Garden Hotel. Lastly, there's traditional 'garden restaurant' Panxi, a warren of banquet halls set around a gorgeous garden, serving steaming baskets of classic dumplings and bao buns. (www.lonelyplanet.com)



Dim sum: siu mai at Yu Yue Heen Restaurant

The Canton Tower as seen from the Four Seasons Hotel, IFC



Comic

WORD SEARCH

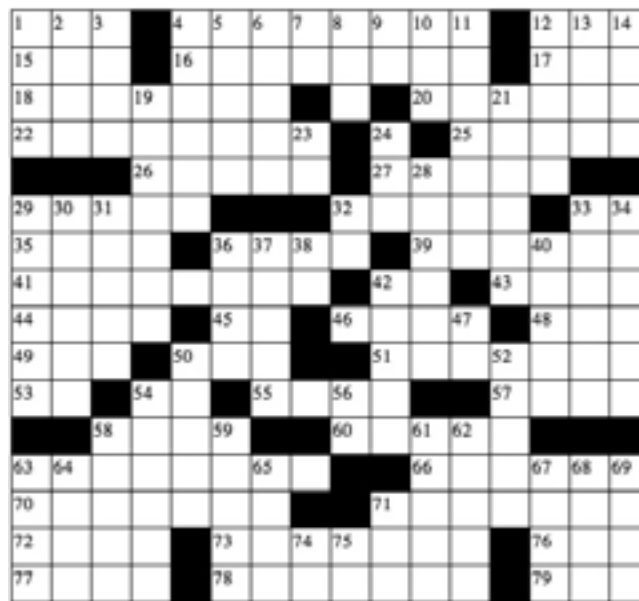
60's Songs

Find and circle all of the 1960's song titles that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the title of an additional 1960's song.

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

- | | | | |
|-------------|----------------|------------|--------------|
| BABY LOVE | ELENORE | MEMPHIS | TEEN ANGEL |
| BLUE MOON | FINGERTIPS | MY GIRL | THE BOXER |
| BLUE VELVET | FIRE | MY GUY | THE TWIST |
| BUS STOP | GALVESTON | PEOPLE | THESE EYES |
| CARA MIA | GOOD LOVIN' | PUPPY LOVE | VALLERJ |
| CHAIN GANG | GROOVIN' | RESPECT | VOLARE |
| CHERISH | HAIR | RUNAWAY | WHITE RABBIT |
| CRAZY | HEATWAVE | SHERRY | WILD THING |
| CRYING | HEY JUDE | SOUL MAN | WINDY |
| DIZZY | HOLIDAY | SPOOKY | WIPEOUT |
| DOWNTOWN | ITC-HYCOO PARK | STAY | WORDS |
| EL PASO | LAST KISS | SURF CITY | YESTERDAY |

CROSSWORD 1982



ACROSS

- Relating to a recently developed fashion or style.
- Any of various usually long-haired breeds of dog reared to herd and guard sheep.
- The portion of the vertebrate nervous system consisting of the brain and spinal cord.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- (biology) Relating to cells.
- The syllable naming the sixth (sub-median) note of a major or minor scale in solmization.
- Eye disease consisting of an opaque white spot on the cornea.
- The face or front of a building.
- A person addicted to luxury and pleasures of the senses.
- Submerged aquatic plant having narrow leaves and small flowers.
- The cardinal number that is the sum of eight and one.
- One of the 150 lyrical poems and prayers that comprise the Book of Psalms in the Old Testament.
- A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
- Kamarupan languages spoken in northeastern India and western Burma.
- The capital of the Bahamas.
- A nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (trade name Lodine).
- Any physical damage to the body caused by violence or accident or fracture etc..
- Tropical Asian starlings.
- Being ten more than one hundred

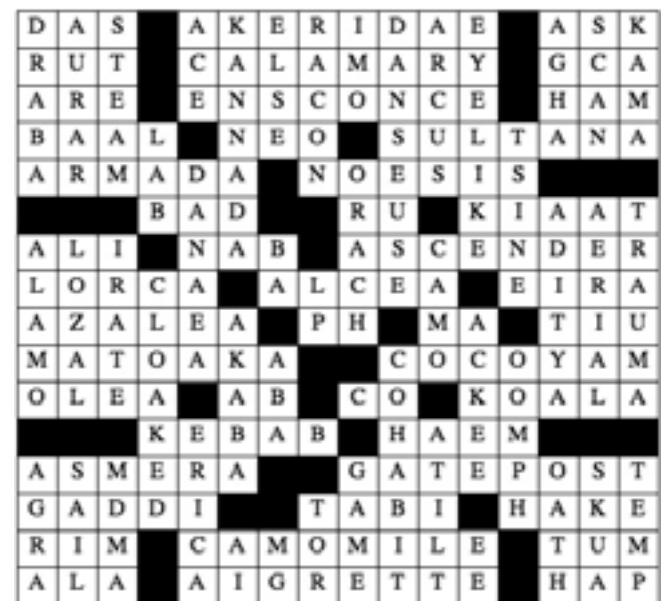
DOWN

- A master's degree in library science.
- Be obedient to.
- Material used to daub walls.
- A boy or man.
- Japanese ornamental tree with fragrant white or pink blossoms and small yellow fruits.
- Old World vine with lobed evergreen leaves and black berrylike fruits.
- Instructed and encouraged in moral, intellectual, and spiritual improvement.
- A ductile gray metallic element of the lanthanide series.
- According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
- Avatar of Vishnu.
- A unit of magnetic flux density equal to one weber per square meter.
- A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
- A large building at an airport where aircraft can be stored and maintained.
- A native or inhabitant of Rio de Janeiro.
- In bed.
- Resembling an eel in being long and thin and sinuous.
- Nocturnal mouse-like mammal with forelimbs modified to form membranous wings and anatomical adaptations for echolocation by which they navigate.
- An informal term for a father.
- Harmed or injured or spoiled.
- A unit of surface area equal to 100 square meters.

- The scum formed by oxidation at the surface of molten metals.
- A reddish-brown chloride of heme.
- Fill with high spirits.
- Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).
- (British) The dessert course of a meal ('pudd' is used informally).
- A metric unit of volume equal to one-tenth of a liter.
- An awkward stupid person.
- A city in southeastern Spain.
- An assertion of a right (as to money or property).
- A quantity of no importance.
- (biology) Shed at an early stage of development.
- A Dravidian language spoken in southern India.
- A woman's large folded hooped hood.
- A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
- A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
- In the Arabian Nights a hero who tells of the fantastic adventures he had in his voyages.
- (linguistics) Relating to the dative case.
- Intense feelings of suffering.
- A very light colorless element that is one of the six inert gasses.
- Living quarters reserved for wives and concubines and female relatives in a Muslim household.
- Guinea fowl.
- Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
- An indehiscent fruit derived from a

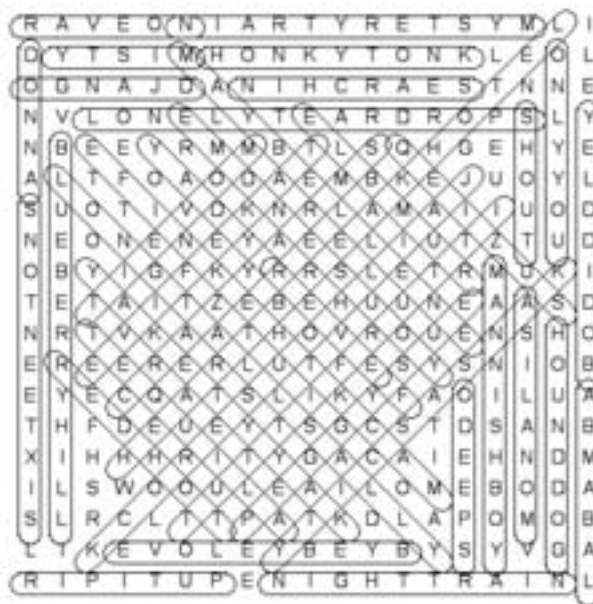
- single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
- Date used in reckoning dates before the supposed year Christ was born.
- Silkworm moths.
- 100 thebe equal 1 pula.
- The ratio of the circumference to the diameter of a circle.
- The visible part of a television transmission.
- The basic monetary unit in many countries.
- The capital of the Mexican state of Yucatan.
- A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
- Having the head uncovered.
- (architecture) Forming or resembling an arch.
- Building material used as siding or roofing.
- Closed with a lace.
- A metabolic acid found in yeast and liver cells.
- The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
- An amino acid that is found in the central nervous system.
- Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
- A network of intersecting blood vessels or intersecting nerves or intersecting lymph vessels.
- Above average in size or number or quantity or magnitude or extent.
- A unit of luminous flux equal to the amount of light given out through a solid angle of 1 steradian by a point source of 1 candela intensity radiating uniformly in all directions.
- A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.

Yesterday's Solution



Yesterday's Solution

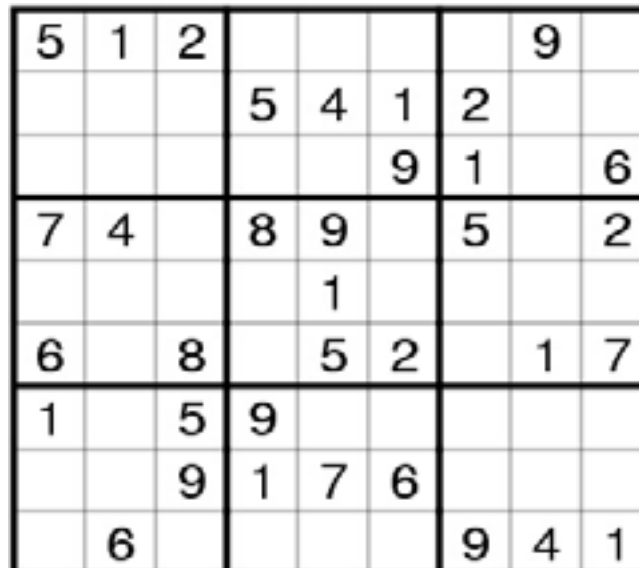
1950's Songs



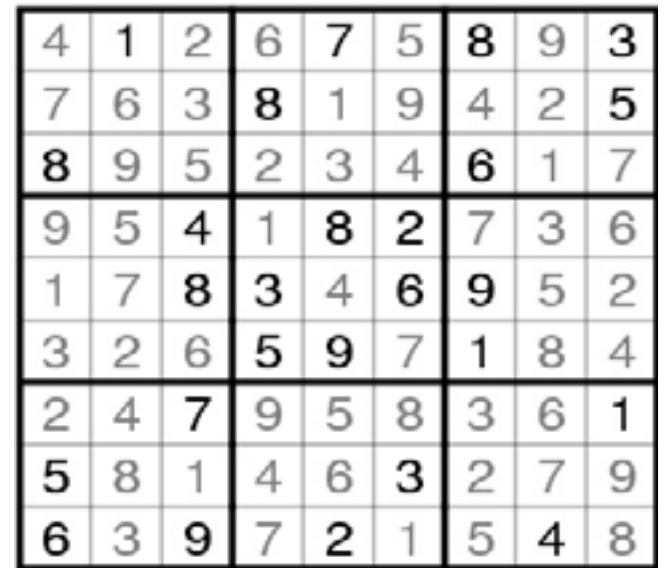
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|------------------|------------------|---------------|--------------|
| BLUEBERRY HILL | HOUND DOG | MONA LISA | SEARCHIN' |
| BO DIDDLEY | JAILHOUSE ROCK | MOVE IT | SHOUT |
| BYE BYE LOVE | KANSAS CITY | MYSTERY TRAIN | SIXTEEN TONS |
| CRAZY ARMS | LA BAMBA | NIGHT TRAIN | SPEEDO |
| DJANGO | LONELY TEARDROPS | ONLY YOU | SUZIE Q |
| DONNA | LONG TALL SALLY | PEGGY SUE | TAKE FIVE |
| EVERYDAY | MACK THE KNIFE | RAVE ON | TEQUILA |
| FEVER | MANNISH BOY | RED HOT | TUTTI FRUTTI |
| HEARTBREAK HOTEL | MAYBELLENE | RIP IT UP | YAKETY YAK |
| HONKY TONK | MISTY | RUMBLE | YOU SEND ME |

The hidden sentence is: I'LL NEVER GET OUT OF THIS WORLD ALIVE

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



TV Listings



01:45 Now You See Me 2
04:10 Armageddon America
06:00 The Veil
07:45 Now You See Me 2
10:10 Dangerous Lessons
11:55 Time Trap
13:35 Creed
16:00 Nerve
17:45 The Edge
19:50 Kings Of Egypt
22:00 The Delta Force



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



00:00 Homicide Hunter
01:00 Homicide Hunter
01:55 Crimes That Shook Australia
02:50 The Eleven
03:45 Crimes That Shook Britain
04:30 Crimes That Shook Britain
05:15 Crimes That Shook Australia
06:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
07:00 It Takes A Killer
07:20 The First 48
08:05 The Eleven
08:50 Britain's Biggest Heists
09:35 Britain's Biggest Heists
10:30 Crimes That Shook Australia
11:25 Crimes That Shook Australia
12:20 Homicide: Hours To Kill
13:15 Cold Case Files
14:10 The Eleven
15:05 It Takes A Killer
15:35 It Takes A Killer
16:00 It Takes A Killer
16:30 Live PD: Police Patrol
17:00 The First 48
18:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
19:00 It Takes A Killer
19:30 It Takes A Killer
20:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
22:00 The Eleven
23:00 The First 48



00:05 Tosh.0
00:30 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
00:55 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
01:20 South Park
01:45 Inside Amy Schumer
02:10 Tosh.0
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 Lip Sync Battle
04:40 Lip Sync Battle
05:05 I Used To Be Fat
05:55 Disaster Date
06:20 Disaster Date
06:45 Disaster Date
07:10 Coaching Bad
08:00 I Used To Be Fat
08:50 Bondi Ink.
09:45 House Of Food
10:35 Snack Off
11:00 Snack Off
11:25 Ridiculousness Arabia
11:50 Ridiculousness Arabia
12:15 Ridiculousness Arabia
12:40 Impractical Jokers
13:05 Impractical Jokers
13:30 Impractical Jokers
13:55 Idiotsitter
14:20 Idiotsitter
14:45 Idiotsitter
15:10 The It Crowd Special
16:00 The It Crowd
16:28 The It Crowd
16:55 The It Crowd
17:20 Friends
17:45 Friends
18:10 Friends
18:35 Friends
19:00 Friends
19:25 Detroiters
19:50 Detroiters
20:12 Detroiters
20:35 Detroiters
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 Martha And Snoop Potluck Dinner Party
21:55 This Is Not Happening
22:20 DL Hugley: Shocked And Appalled
23:10 Tosh.0
23:35 Tosh.0



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 Evil Online
05:20 Evil Online
06:10 I Almost Got Away With It
07:00 California Investigator
07:25 The Perfect Murder
08:15 Evil Online
09:10 Evil Online

10:05 Shadow Of Doubt
11:00 Disappeared
11:55 The Perfect Murder
12:50 I Almost Got Away With It
13:45 Evil Online
14:40 Shadow Of Doubt
15:35 Who Killed Jane Doe?
16:30 The Perfect Murder
17:25 Evil Online
18:20 I Almost Got Away With It
19:15 Evil Online
20:10 Shadow Of Doubt
21:05 Married With Secrets
22:00 Evil Online
22:55 Forbidden: Dying For Love
23:50 Death On A Submarine



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
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
05:25 Binny And The Ghost
05:40 Rolling With The Ronks
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 Bizaardvark
07:45 K.C. Undercover
08:10 Bunk'd
08:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
09:25 Tangled: The Series
10:15 Bizaardvark
11:05 Liv And Maddie
11:55 K.C. Undercover
12:45 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
13:10 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 A.N.T. Farm
15:35 Bizaardvark
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
17:40 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
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
03:55 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 The Lion Guard
07:25 Muppet Babies Show And Tell S1
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 Sofia The First
09:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
09:55 Chip And Dale's Nutty Tales
Shorts
10:00 Vampirina
12:15 Sofia The First
12:40 Sofia The First
13:10 Vampirina
13:35 PJ Masks
14:00 Muppet Babies Show And Tell S1
14:05 A Goofy Fairy Tale
14:50 PJ Masks Shorts
15:00 Sofia The First
17:00 Vampirina
17:30 Claude
17:45 Puppy Dog Pals
18:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
18:25 Chip And Dale's Nutty Tales
Shorts
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
03:20 Boyster
03:45 Dude That's My Ghost
04:10 Dude That's My Ghost
04:35 Counterfeit Cat
05:00 Guardians Of The Galaxy
05:29 Marvel's Avengers Assemble
06:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
06:29 Lab Rats
07:00 DuckTales
07:31 Big City Greens
07:45 Furiki Wheels
08:00 Phineas And Ferb
08:29 Phineas And Ferb
09:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
09:29 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
10:00 Gravity Falls
10:29 Gravity Falls
11:00 Lab Rats
11:29 Lab Rats
12:00 Phineas And Ferb
12:29 Phineas And Ferb
13:00 DuckTales
13:29 DuckTales
14:00 DuckTales
14:29 DuckTales
15:00 Furiki Wheels
15:29 Lab Rats Elite Force

16:00 Supa Strikas
16:29 Milo Murphy's Law
17:00 Big City Greens
17:29 Big Hero 6 The Series
18:00 Lab Rats
18:29 Lab Rats
19:00 Disney 11
19:29 Mech-X4
20:00 DuckTales
20:29 Big Hero 6 The Series
21:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
21:29 Star Wars Rebels
22:00 Phineas And Ferb
22:15 Furiki Wheels
22:30 Big City Greens
22:45 DuckTales
22:50 Dude That's My Ghost
23:15 Dude That's My Ghost
23:40 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja



00:50 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
01:50 E! News
02:50 WAGS
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 Mariah's World
07:00 So Cosmo
08:00 E! News: Daily Pop
09:00 Botched
11:45 Celebrity Style Story
12:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
13:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
15:15 E! News: Daily Pop
16:15 Botched
19:00 E! News
20:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
23:00 Very Cavallari



00:15 The Middle
01:05 The Drew Carey Show
01:30 Seinfeld
01:55 My Boys
02:20 Til Death
02:45 The Michael J. Fox Show
03:10 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 Fresh Off The Boat
07:20 Late Night With Seth Meyers
08:10 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
09:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
09:50 Baskets
10:15 Alex, Inc.
10:40 Mom
11:05 The Michael J. Fox Show
11:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
12:20 The Mindy Project
12:45 Fresh Off The Boat
13:10 The Middle
14:00 The Drew Carey Show
14:25 Seinfeld
14:50 Mom
15:15 Baskets
15:40 Alex, Inc.
16:05 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
17:00 The Mindy Project
17:30 Fresh Off The Boat
18:00 The Middle
19:00 Seinfeld
20:00 Baskets
20:30 Alex, Inc.
21:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
22:00 Vice Principals
22:30 Crashing
23:05 You're The Worst
23:35 Late Night With Seth Meyers



01:15 Oz The Great And Powerful
03:45 The Lion King
05:30 Confessions Of A Teenage Drama Queen
07:15 Oz The Great And Powerful

09:45 Tarzan II
11:15 Confessions Of A Teenage Drama Queen
13:00 The Lion King 2: Simba's Pride
14:45 Kronk's New Groove
16:15 The Chronicles Of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch...
18:45 The Chronicles Of Narnia: Prince Caspian
21:30 The Lion King 2: Simba's Pride
23:15 Kronk's New Groove



00:15 Everybody Wants Some
02:15 Lies & Alibis
04:00 The Tiger Hunter
05:45 Angels In The Snow
07:30 Don Verdean
09:15 The Tiger Hunter
11:00 Angels In The Snow
12:45 Don Verdean
14:30 UHF
16:30 Tyler Perry's Boo: A Madea Halloween
18:30 Roxanne
20:30 Rock The Kasbah
22:30 Jackass 3.5



00:40 Free Birds
02:05 Freddy Frogface
03:30 Back To The Sea
05:10 Mia And The Migoo
06:45 The Wheelers
08:10 The Wish Fish
09:35 Caroline And The Magic Potion
11:00 Gamba
12:40 Freddy Frogface
14:05 Papelucho & The Martian
15:30 Legend Of The Sea
16:55 Caroline And The Magic Potion
18:20 Rh+ The Vampire Of Seville
19:45 Deep
21:25 Legend Of The Sea
22:50 The Wish Fish



01:45 My Sister
03:45 Quiz Show
06:00 My All American
08:00 Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation
10:20 Hotel For Dogs
12:10 Kubo And The Two Strings
14:00 Groundhog Day
15:50 Here Comes The Boom
17:40 The Avengers
20:10 The Legend Of Tarzan
22:00 Tropic Thunder



00:05 Food Factory
00:30 Extreme Engineering
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 Extreme Engineering
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 Extreme Engineering
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 Extreme Engineering
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

Stars



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You could find that others seek you out for advice. You are looked upon as a role model in the eyes of many. You are strong, and your determination and dedication are easily noticed by others in your life. You are very understanding and will be able to help someone with a very personal issue they choose to share with you. You will easily be able to cut through the red tape and get to the root of the issue with ease. Being able to offer a quick solution may leave you with a sense of pride knowing you are able to help others and be the friend you wish others would be to you. You are a rock to many, Aries. Never stop being you.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Today you may find you are being looked to for advice and counsel. Someone come to you with a very private and emotional problem. You should be able to quickly cut through the red tape and get to the root of things. You are a great friend and you will be able to truly help this person. You may feel a desire to care for others and in return have others care for you. This need seems to be strong today. You tend to be there for everyone and this is a time things are weighing you down and you feel the need to have someone to turn to for support. Do not let this make you feel as if you are weak. Everyone needs someone now and then. This is your time. You feel as though you have been carrying the weight of the world on your shoulders. Open up and share your feelings with someone close to you. You may be surprised how eager they are to help.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

An easy and calm day can be expected. It seems as if everything is running smooth. You may find yourself in a position to have an interaction with authority figures or older people you admire. It seems as if you are working with the flow. You may have a desire to be the center of attention. As this feeling comes over you, it could find you putting extra effort forth in the workplace. You may be challenging yourself to accomplish massive amounts of work. Take your time and hold back a bit to prevent finding yourself burned out. This is a very productive time for you.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may find your need to be needed wasn't such a good wish after all. Today may bring out all the needy friends in your life. It seems as if everyone needs something from you and they need it now. Your first reaction may be frustration. Just remember at one time this was a desire of your heart. Never did you expect that everyone would come at once. Prioritize your day and remember it is ok to say no. There is only one of you. Take time to catch a short break this afternoon to avoid burning out. From now on, Cancer, be careful what you wish for.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Making memories has always been a focus for you. You want to be able to look back and reflect on times passed and experiences you have had. You are one of the last true romantics. You are talented and giving and have a great desire to be appreciated for these gifts. You may find expressing yourself in an artistic manner will bring the attention and appreciation you desire. You may find what seems as a small gesture to you is a huge reward to someone you care about. This is one of the times you will be able to look back at with fond memories.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You may find that you are entering a phase where your needs and focus seem to change. You find yourself in a very loving mood. This may be nothing more than a newfound love for life. You may also find yourself taking a close relationship to a new level. You have a deep desire to express yourself to others. You desire to let those near to you know who you are and how you feel about them. You find yourself very creative. This creativity may involve new ways to express yourself or you may find that you find great peace when sitting down and writing or picking up a paint brush. Enjoy this phase, Virgo, and use your talents to the fullest.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Things may seem too good to be true. In an almost magical sense it seems that all of your dreams are coming true. Goals seem attainable now. Everything seems to be falling in your lap. You are being smiled upon and you have a new love for life. This is the result of your hard work and dedication. You may find that karma has a way of repaying your good deeds and there seems to be no other explanation for this vast array of good fortune. This is a great time to get all of your affairs in order and continue to dream big, Libra. You seem able to make all the right choices and surround yourself with all the right people now. This may benefit you financially.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may be facing a very emotional issue in your life today. It may seem your desire to be respected by others is very strong. You may find yourself even demanding this from others today. You may find yourself becoming very organized and structured. A strong will takes hold. You may discover you may not only have a knack for organizing things, but you have one for organizing people as well. This makes you a great leader and this quality could be acknowledged in the workplace today. Scorpio, your ability to work with haste and little emotion makes you a natural in a position of leadership or management.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You have a lot of energy today. You may be tempted to turn it on yourself with negative conversations about you. That's counter-productive. Focus your energy on someone else you have positive feelings about, and both of you will benefit. Every encounter is an opportunity to affirm and encourage. The results may surprise you, Sagittarius. You have a lot of energy today. You may be tempted to turn it on yourself with negative conversations about you. That's counter-productive. Focus your energy on someone else you have positive feelings about, and both of you will benefit. Every encounter is an opportunity to affirm and encourage.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Today finds you more materialistic than usual. "Things" never have much importance to you. You know in the end it is not going to be what you have, but who you are that matters. Today finds you having unfamiliar desires. You actually may be feeling a need to reward yourself for all of the hard work you do. You make sacrifices daily to take care of and provide for others. Do not feel bad about doing things for yourself. Spoil yourself, Capricorn. That new pair of shoes may be calling your name.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may find this to be a frustrating day. Emotionally you may feel blocked by someone or by your own living situation. You may feel as if you no longer have the support of some that have been a part of your life for ages. Arguments could be easy to find. You may crave to be the center of attention. You are a giving person and you crave attention and gratification for all you give of yourself. You may find that you are able to express yourself in a creative manner. Creations and artistic expression that you make today may bring great reward in the future.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Let your light shine. This is a day you feel as if you need all eyes on you. Being the center of attention is what you crave. A very romantic, creative, and expansive time could be beginning in your life. You may find yourself getting in touch with a more mystical and spiritual side of yourself. The feelings you feel are deeper. The beauty you see is more beautiful. Life truly takes on a greater meaning now.

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 | Niger | 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

Beekeeping in Yemen becomes dangerous profession in war

Yemen exported 50,000 tons of honey per year before the war

SANAA: Yemen's beekeepers risk air strikes and land mines as they traverse the country's valleys, transporting their hives on pick-up trucks to produce some of the world's finest honey. The impoverished Arab state, known for its Sidr honey made from the jujube tree, has endured three years of war that have pushed it to the verge of famine and shattered the economy.

"Before the war...we produced large quantities of honey. [But now] honey farmers who move their private farms at night sometimes get hit by mistake," said Faris al-Howry, who owns one of the main honey stores in the capital Sanaa. "It's happened with two or three farmers we know where their farms were bombed [in air strikes]."

A Saudi-led coalition which intervened in 2015 to restore the internationally recognized government has conducted thousands of air strikes in its battle against the Iranian-aligned Houthi movement which controls the most populous areas of Yemen, including Sanaa. Some air strikes have hit civilian targets, although the coalition denies doing so intentionally. Houthi fighters have also placed landmines in territory under their control.

Yemen exported 50,000 tons of honey per year before the war but exports have since fallen by more than 50 percent, according to the Federation of Yemeni Beekeepers, which says

there are around 100,000 people working in honey farms in Yemen. "Breeders must now be mindful that when they're trying to move from location to location, they could be targeted or bombed by mistake," said Abdullah Abdullah Yareem, head of the Yemeni Organization for Honey and Agriculture Development.

He was speaking at a honey farm in al-Mahwit governorate where men tended to wooden hive boxes as bees flitted between sunflowers in a field. He added it has also become costlier to export honey due to stringent measures imposed on maritime flows by the Saudi-backed coalition, which accuses the Houthis of smuggling Iranian-made weapons, a charge denied by the group and Tehran. There is only one outlet - to Saudi Arabia, so all exports must flow through there, said Abdullah.

"This has created a problem that raised transportation costs making the product reach the consumer at a very high price." Howry said business is bad as few people could afford luxuries. The price of honey in Yemen ranges from \$100 for 1 kilo of Sidr to \$68 for less premium types. Outside of Yemen the honey sell for around \$180 dollars per kilo. "Sales are down 75 percent...There is no income, no salaries and no spending," he said in the store, where boxes of honeycomb are on display on the counter.— Reuters



SANAA: A vendor pours honey at his shop in Sanaa, Yemen. — Reuters

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



Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368

Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St.1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B

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
A rare Subspecialty in Microscopic Ear Surgery, Cochlear implant & Ear diseases

- ◆ Diagnosis/ Treatment of General Ears, Nose, and Throat conditions in adults & pediatrics
- ◆ Minimally invasive Endoscopic sinus surgery including Balloon sinuplasty
- ◆ Minimally invasive Microscopic & Endoscopic Ear surgery
- ◆ Diagnosis & treatment of Otolaryngology and Audiology (Hearing loss, Tinnitus & balance disorders)
- ◆ Facial Plastic and reconstructive surgeries (Rhinoplasty, Otoplasty, Fillers & Botox injections)
- ◆ Diagnosis & treatment of snoring & obstructive sleep apnea in clinic without surgery
- ◆ Diagnosis & Treatment of voice and swallowing disorders.
- ◆ Diagnosis & Treatment of Head and Neck benign & malignant tumors.

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DR. FAHAD S BUHAIMED
Consultant Cosmetic Dermatologist & Hair Transplant, NY

ACADEMIC CERTIFICATES:

- ◆ Dermatology board certified.
- ◆ Fellowship training program in cosmetic dermatology and hair transplant, New York, USA.
- ◆ Member of American cosmetic dermatology society.
- ◆ Reference reviewer of International Journal of Dermatology.

SPECIALIZED IN:

- ◆ Dermatology & Cosmetic Treatments.
- ◆ Laser Treatments.
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DR KHALED ALMERRI
Consultant interventional Cardiology
Department: Heart & Vascular Center

Specialized in:

- 1- Diagnostic and therapeutic cardiac catheterization (Angiography and Angioplasty). Aortic valve implantation.
- 2- Diagnosis and treatment of coronary artery diseases
- 3- Diagnosis and treatment of heart failure, cardiomyopathies and valvular diseases.
- 4- Diagnosis and treatment of high blood pressure and high cholesterol.
- 5- Diagnosis and treatment of syncope, palpitations and cardiac arrhythmias.
- 6- Non-invasive diagnostic procedures echocardiography, exercise stress test, and 24 hour blood pressure and Holter monitoring

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Otorhinolaryngology (E.N.T)
Dr Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj
ENT Specialist

- ◆ Laryngology Fellowship - Canada
- ◆ Fellow of the European Board Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the British Laryngological Association
- ◆ Member of the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the European Laryngological Society

Specialized in:

- ◆ Management of benign and malignant vocal cord lesions.
- ◆ Vocal cord augmentation.
- ◆ Treatment of spasmodic dysphonia.
- ◆ Adenotonsillectomy using latest techniques.
- ◆ Thyroid surgery.
- ◆ Surgery for the deviated nasal septum.
- ◆ Endoscopic sinus surgery.
- ◆ Treatment of allergic rhinitis.
- ◆ Treatment of snoring.
- ◆ Treatment of vertigo.

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Scope of Clinical Practice:

- ◆ General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- ◆ Single Port Surgery
- ◆ Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, Including Colorectal Cancer
- ◆ Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abscess
- ◆ Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- ◆ VAAFT Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistuloscope)
- ◆ Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- ◆ Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- ◆ Stomach Balloon insertion & removal
- ◆ Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- ◆ Gallstones & Abdominal Hernias Surgery
- ◆ 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

- Consultant Interventional and conventional cardiologist.
- Specialised in the Diagnosis and treatment of all adult cardiac diseases, including those cases that need urgent intervention in Cath lab (primary angioplasty).

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- ◆ Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
- ◆ Cholecystectomy & laparoscopic appendectomy
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Airlines

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| 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 |

STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Very hot with moderate to fresh north westerly wind, with speed of 20 - 45 km/h causing rising dust over open areas and some high clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 35 km/h.

| WEATHER WARNING | | | No Current Warnings | | |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------------|--|--|
| STATION | MAX. EXP. | MIN. REC. | SFC. CHART 09/08/2018 0000 UTC | | |
| KUWAIT CITY | 47 °C | 35 °C | | | |
| KUWAIT AIRPORT | 48 °C | 32 °C | | | |
| ABDALY | 48 °C | 30 °C | | | |
| BUBYAN | -- °C | -- °C | | | |
| JAHRA | 48 °C | 33 °C | | | |
| FAILAKA ISLAND | 45 °C | 29 °C | | | |
| SALMIYAH | 42 °C | 34 °C | | | |
| AHMADI | 44 °C | 35 °C | | | |
| NUWAISIB | 47 °C | 31 °C | | | |
| WAFRA | 46 °C | 29 °C | | | |
| SALMY | 46 °C | 27 °C | | | |

4 DAYS FORECAST

| DAY | DATE | WEATHER | Temperatures | | Wind Direction | Wind Speed |
|----------|-------|---|--------------|-------|----------------|--------------|
| | | | MAX. | MIN. | | |
| Friday | 08/10 | Very hot | 48 °C | 32 °C | NW | 15 - 38 km/h |
| Saturday | 08/11 | Very hot and some high clouds will appear | 48 °C | 31 °C | NW-VRB | 15 - 35 km/h |
| Sunday | 08/12 | Very hot | 49 °C | 33 °C | NW | 15 - 38 km/h |
| Monday | 08/13 | Very hot and rising dust over open areas | 49 °C | 35 °C | NW | 20 - 45 km/h |

PRAYER TIMES

| | |
|---------|-------|
| Fajr | 03:46 |
| Sunrise | 05:13 |
| Zuhr | 11:54 |
| Asr | 15:29 |
| Sunset | 18:34 |
| Isha | 19:58 |

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| MAX. Temp. | 47 °C |
| MIN. Temp. | 35 °C |
| MAX. RH | 25 % |
| MIN. RH | 09 % |
| MAX. Wind | N 64 km/h |
| TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR. | 0 mm |

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Aradhna Shailender D/o. Shailender Mukund, holder of Indian Passport No. Z3201847 and Civil ID No. 289040202301 has changed my name to Aradhna Shailender Singh, hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5413) 9-8-2018

I, Celine Peter Caido D/O Charles Pereira holder of Indian Passport No: S5770664 & Civil ID No: 259102400921 has changed my name to Celine Christina Pereira hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5412) 8-8-2018

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EMERGENCY

112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is

1889988

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

FRIDAY, AUGUST 10, 2018

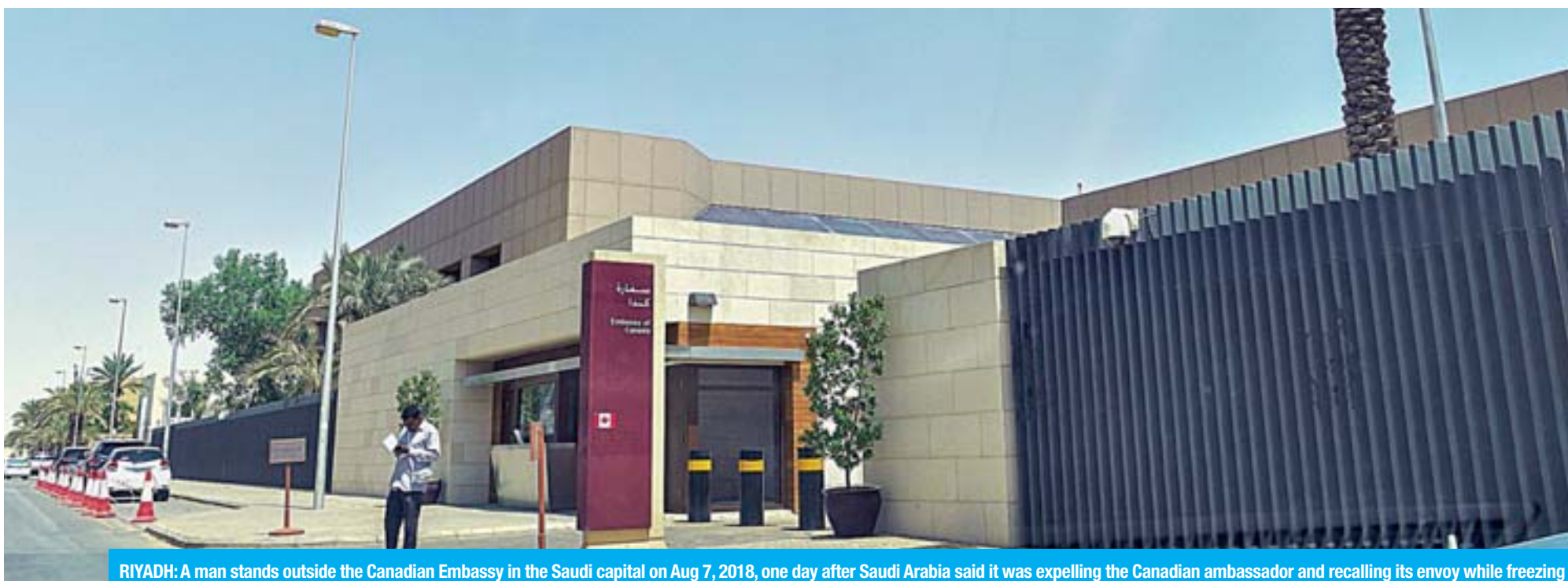
38 US sanctions whack Russia's rouble, Turkey's lira free-falls



39 Afghans return home in record numbers as Iran currency plunges



40 EU touts US LNG imports to woo Trump on trade



RIYADH: A man stands outside the Canadian Embassy in the Saudi capital on Aug 7, 2018, one day after Saudi Arabia said it was expelling the Canadian ambassador and recalling its envoy while freezing all new trade, in retaliation for Ottawa's vigorous calls for the release of jailed activists. —AFP

Saudi reassures Canada on oil supply

Saudi Arabia expels Canada's envoy, blocks grain imports

RIYADH: A row over human rights in Saudi Arabia will not have any impact on Saudi oil supplies to Canada, its energy minister said yesterday, reassuring customers after Riyadh froze new trade with Canada and ruled out mediation efforts. Saudi Arabia, angered by Canada's demand last week that jailed activists in the kingdom be freed immediately, expelled the Canadian ambassador, blocked imports of Canadian grain and ended state-backed educational and medical programs in Canada.

The dispute has threatened to undermine Riyadh's foreign investment drive, a campaign already unsettled by a series of assertive political and diplomatic initiatives by the top oil exporter. Saudi Arabia has a "firm and long-standing policy" that petroleum supplies are not influenced by political considerations, Khalid al-Falih said in a statement. "The current diplomatic crisis between Saudi Arabia and Canada will not, in any way, impact Saudi Aramco's relations with its customers in Canada."

The Financial Times said on Wednesday the Saudi central bank and state pension funds had told their

overseas asset managers to sell their Canadian equities, bonds and cash holdings. A banking source said the Saudi central bank had asked for their bank's exposure to Canadian assets, but there were no instructions to sell them. Canadian lender CIBC estimates Canadian dollar-denominated FX reserves held by Saudi Arabia at roughly C\$10 billion to C\$25 billion, or less than a tenth of daily volume in the currency.

Riyadh's Center for International Communication (CIC) posted a tweet late on Wednesday saying "neither the government nor the Central Bank or the state pension fund has issued any instructions regarding the sale of Canadian assets". But it promptly deleted the post without providing an explanation. CIC did not respond to a request for comment. "From a mutual funds perspective, I don't think there's any significant investment in Canada from Saudi Arabia," said a banker based in Riyadh. "The footprint is light and very small compared to in the United States." Eurasia Group said easing the crisis needed time. It said in a note: "The new Saudi leadership is leveraging economic and po-

litical tools to send a message to its partners that intervention in its domestic affairs will not be tolerated."

Olive branch

Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir on Wednesday ruled out any mediation efforts and said the kingdom was considering taking more measures against Canada for interfering in Saudi Arabia's domestic affairs. He did not elaborate. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau later appeared to extend an olive branch, saying he would keep pressing Saudi Arabia on civil liberties but also saying the Gulf Arab state had made some progress on human rights.

Saudi Arabia has in recent months detained several women's rights activists, some of whom had campaigned for the right to drive and an end to the kingdom's male guardianship system, the latest to be swept up in a government crackdown on dissent. Since rising to power in 2015, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has courted Western allies to support his reform plans to modernize and open up the kingdom, of-

fering billions of dollars in arms sales and promising to fight radicalism in the kingdom. The 32-year-old de facto ruler has launched a campaign of social and economic change, but has not eased the absolute monarchy's total ban on political activism. He has taken a more aggressive stance toward arch-rival Iran, began a three-year war in Yemen and led a boycott of fellow Gulf Arab state Qatar. The latest dispute with Canada is a sign that the prince is willing to risk riling international investors in order to remain in control of the process of change, RBC Capital Markets' Helima Croft wrote in a research note.

"Western governments expressing concerns about human rights issues in the kingdom is nothing new and Saudi authorities have long pushed back against what they characterize as inappropriate interference in their internal affairs," she said. But Prince Mohammed is more willing than predecessors to throw caution to the wind, she added, and may be extra sensitive to outside criticism in light of recent challenges implementing his ambitious economic reform agenda.—Reuters

Business

US sanctions whack Russia's rouble, Turkey's lira free-falls

NZ dollar dives as central bank stays loose

LONDON: Alarm bells were ringing yesterday as harsh new US sanctions drove Russia's rouble. Turkey's lira plunged as worries mounted that Ankara was sliding towards a full-blown economic crisis. A rally in Chinese stocks had helped Asia offset the latest escalation in the Sino-US trade war overnight after Beijing matched the latest US sanctions, but too much was going on nearby for Europe to remain unscathed.

London's FTSE, Frankfurt's DAX and Paris' CAC40 were down 0.7 percent, 0.3 percent and 0.4 percent respectively, while German government bonds rose in broad grab for safety. Wall Street futures pointed to a steady start to New York trading but that was deceptive. The main fireworks were in the currency markets. The Russian rouble sank after Washington said it would impose fresh sanctions because it had determined that Moscow had used a nerve agent against a former Russian agent and his daughter in Britain, something the Kremlin denies.

There were also reports of a new US Senate bill that, if passed, would impose even more widespread punishments for meddling in US elections. The rouble duly slid to its lowest since late 2016, 66.1 roubles to the dollar and left the Russian currency down almost 4 percent lighter than it had been 24 hours previously. "I'm surprised that the market, in retrospect, was quite complacent about this risk," said North Asset Management portfolio manager Peter Kisler, though he was relieved the new sanctions hadn't flagged a ban on Russian sovereign debt or

banks for the time being. Turkey's lira, bond and stocks markets were taking even more of a pounding after meetings between officials in Washington looked to have made little progress in mending a row over Ankara's jailing of an



Turkey may need to approach IMF

American pastor. The lira touched a record low of 5.44 against the dollar, weakening some 2.5 percent from Wednesday's close. There was widespread selling in the country's bond markets and Istanbul stocks dropped 1 percent too.

"We think Turkey may need to approach the IMF or seek other external support. Otherwise, capital-control measures seem to be a distinct possibility," said fund manager Lombard Odier's chief investment strategist Salman Ahmed.

China rally

Asia had been much brighter. Shanghai blue chips closed up 2.5 percent after talk of possible government support for home-grown technology companies, the latest in a series of growth-boosting measures rolled out by Beijing as the trade dispute worsens. Hopes for more Chinese



TOKYO: Share prices on the Tokyo Stock Exchange, bottom left, and a chart, right, of the bourse's three-month movement are displayed in Tokyo. — AFP

infrastructure spending underpinned industrial resources, including iron ore and copper. The gains in Chinese stocks helped MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares reverse early losses to gain 0.5 percent, though Japan's Nikkei slipped 0.2 percent, in part because core machinery orders fell.

Shares in Mazda Motor Corp, Suzuki Motor Corp and Yamaha Motor Co also fell on news they conducted improper fuel economy and emissions tests on their vehicles. Japan will try to avert steep tariffs on its car exports and fend off US demands for a free-trade agreement at talks in Washington later. —Reuters

Oil market balance of power shifts

LONDON: The shift in oil market power away from OPEC towards a bilateral relationship between Saudi Arabia and Russia is the culmination of structural changes in oil production over the last 20 years. These shifts are deeply structural and have little to do with the personality or negotiating skills of individual oil ministers, which arguably attract far too much attention from commentators and journalists.

Most of these changes can be traced back for 20 years or more, though some of them have recently accelerated, such as the recent slump in output from Venezuela and Libya. To the extent that production is an important component of market power, the very different fortunes of OPEC countries have significantly redistributed power within the organization. The result is that the focus of decision-making has shifted from intra-OPEC negotiations to extra-OPEC negotiations with Russia

Intra-opec competition

OPEC was founded in 1960 to reduce harmful competition over taxes, royalties and oil ownership between its original members as they tried to attract investment from the international oil companies. "The principal aim of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries shall be the coordination and unification of the petroleum policies of Member Countries", according to OPEC's founding statute.

The five founding members (Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait and Venezuela) accounted for a significant share of the world's undeveloped oil reserves and were among the fastest-growing producers. OPEC's initial focus was on creating a united front in negotiations with the international oil companies to secure a greater share of revenues from the sale of oil. The addition of Libya (1962), United Arab Emirates (1967), Algeria (1969) and Nigeria (1971) added other major reserve holders and rapidly growing producers to cement OPEC's negotiating power.

OPEC's practical focus has shifted over time from taxes and royalty rates (1960s) to equity ownership of reserves (1970s), prices (1970s onwards) and production allocations (1980s onwards). The organization's market power arguably peaked in 1973, when members accounted for just over half of all oil production worldwide, before sliding to around a quarter in 1985, and partially recovering in the years since then.

In the early years, OPEC was dominated by an internal balance of power between Saudi Arabia, Iran and Venezuela, with other countries playing a more peripheral though occasionally disruptive role. In 1970, these three countries were producing roughly the same amount, about 3.8 million barrels per day each. By 1973, Saudi Arabia had already pulled significantly ahead (7.7 million bpd) of both Iran (5.9 million bpd) and Venezuela (3.5 million bpd), a gap that has widened in the subsequent decades.

OPEC members can be broadly divided into winners and losers since 1973, based on whether they increased output by 2017. The biggest winners have been Saudi Arabia (+4.3 million bpd), Iraq (+2.5 million bpd), United Arab Emirates (+2.4 million bpd), Angola (+1.5 million bpd) and Qatar (+1.3 million bpd). — Reuters

China's factory-gate inflation tops forecasts in July

BEIJING: China's factory price inflation slowed slightly in July but beat expectations as US tariffs came into force, while consumer prices were boosted by a pick-up in spending on travel. The figures are the first to be released since the United States imposed the first of its threatened levies on billions of dollars in Chinese goods as part of an escalating trade war. The producer price index rose 4.6 percent on year in July, according to the National Bureau of Statistics, compared with 4.7 percent in June and beating the 4.5 percent forecast in a Bloomberg News survey.

Factory price inflation decelerated in key sectors including extraction of petroleum and natural gas, processing of petroleum, coal and other fuel, and manufacture and processing of ferrous metals, NBS analyst Sheng Guoqing said in a statement. The consumer price index (CPI), an important barometer of retail inflation, rose 2.1 percent on year, from 1.9 percent in June and slightly higher than the 2.0 percent forecast. A rise in demand for travel during the summer season boosted plane ticket and hotel prices, which is the "main reason for CPI increase", Sheng said. "Broader price pressures appear to be easing, a trend that is likely to continue in the coming quarters despite the impact of tariffs and a weaker currency," Julian Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics wrote in a research note. —AFP

Business

Afghans return home in record numbers as Iran currency plunges

Jobless Afghans cross border in search of work

HERAT, Afghanistan: Migrant workers squeezed into battered taxis pull into the Four Seasons of Freedom hotel in western Afghanistan, part of a wave of Afghans forced to leave Iran after a currency implosion wiped out their earnings. A record 442,344 Afghans have voluntarily returned or been deported from Iran this year as looming US sanctions—which began to be reimposed this week—fueled a run on the rial and spurred inflation.

Iran's currency has lost around half of its value against the dollar since US President Donald Trump abandoned a landmark 2015 nuclear deal in May, triggering a reimposition of tough penalties on the Islamic republic. That has devastated not only the savings of Iranian households, but also the remittances of undocumented Afghans. Desperate and jobless Afghans have crossed the porous border with Iran for years in search of work to support their struggling families back home.

Many of those families are farmers now suffering through Afghanistan's worst drought in living memory, compounding the misery caused by 17 years of conflict and underscoring their reliance on the remittances. Abdul Mussawir, who went to Iran three years ago, used to earn the equivalent of 18,000 afghanis per month working in an auto factory in the central city of Isfahan. Mussawir, 22, sent

money to his parents and nine younger siblings in Parwan province, supplementing the meager income of his taxi driver father.

But as the run on the rial gathered pace, his monthly earnings shrivelled to the equivalent of 6,000 afghanis. "I was sending almost all the money I was earning to support my family... (but) it wasn't enough," said Mussawir, wearing a shirt emblazoned with "Keep Karma + Carry On". After taking a taxi from the border to the Four Seasons of Freedom hotel in Herat city, a distance of roughly 140 kilometers, Mussawir hoped to find better paid work in his conflict-torn country.

"It doesn't make sense to come back here but I have to," he said, a look of resignation etched on his face.

No job, no future

The 442,344 Afghans who returned from Iran in the first seven months of 2018 was more than double the number for the same period of 2017, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM). "The number of Afghan returnees from Iran in 2018 has been unprecedented," IOM spokeswoman Eva Schwoerer said in Herat. The figure included 191,056 "spontaneous", or voluntary, returns. The remaining 251,288 were deported as Iran toughens its border controls.

Iran toughens its border controls



Philippines boosts rates despite economic growth slowdown

MANILA: The Philippine central bank hiked its key interest rates by a decade-high 50 basis points yesterday as it moved to curb inflation, while downplaying the impact its action would have on slowing economic growth. The monetary authority acted hours after the government announced a 6.0 percent growth in the second quarter, a sharp slowing that ended a run of 10 consecutive quarters in which the economy grew at least 6.5 percent.

It blamed the lower-than-expected figures on policy decisions, including the shutdown of holiday island Boracay, which pumps roughly \$1 billion into the nation's economy per year. But with prices increasing at a five-year high of 5.7 percent in July, central bank governor Nestor Espenilla said inflation was the priority, while stressing the gross domestic product growth rate was "pretty decent" and economic expansion was not at risk.

"Favorable conditions arising from sustained domestic growth also suggest that the economy

can accommodate a further tightening of monetary policy settings," Espenilla said. The central bank on Thursday raised its inflation forecasts to 4.9 percent this year and 3.7 percent in 2019, up from 4.5 percent and 3.3 percent respectively. Following two 25-percentage-point rate rises earlier this year, Thursday's increase was the largest made by the Philippine central bank since July 2008, when it effected the same increase to combat double-digit inflation. The monetary authority's overnight repurchase facility rose to 4.0 effective Friday, while interest rates on overnight lending and deposit facilities were also raised.

The move followed similarly aggressive steps taken by central banks in developing countries to curb the fallout from rising US interest rates and a stronger dollar. Earlier on Thursday Manila announced slower economic growth in the second quarter, which fell well short of expectations. Forecasts in a Bloomberg News survey put growth at 6.6 percent.

Gravely concerned

"The slowdown is partly due to policy decisions undertaken that are expected to promote sustainable and resilient development," Economic Planning Secretary Ernesto Pernia said, referring to Boracay. The island was shuttered in April for a six-month clean up on the orders of President Rodrigo Duterte, who branded the resort a "cesspool" sullied by tourism-related businesses flushing sewage into the sea. Despite the lower-than-expected figures, the Philippines



HERAT: In this photo, Afghan returnees from Iran carry their backpacks as they arrive in the Afghan province of Herat. —AFP

Among those kicked out was 17-year-old Aleem Mohmini, who spent three months working on a tomato farm near the southern city of Shiraz before Iranian police caught him. As he sat with other minors in the IOM's transit centre for returnees in Herat, Mohmini pondered his future in a country where unemployment is rampant. "I don't know what I should do. There's no one in my family to earn money," said Mohmini, who was the breadwinner for his household in the northern province of Baghlan.

The IOM expects the flood of returnees to Afghanistan to continue as US sanctions targeting Iran's access to US banknotes, key industries and oil sales exacerbate the country's economic woes. The influx is having "direct and immediate effects" on the Afghan economy, the IOM said in its latest report. It is pushing down wages for casual laborers in cities and fuelling the displacement of drought-stricken Afghan farmers, many of whom have long relied on income from relatives working in Iran. —AFP



MANILA: A customer hands over a peso bill as he buys vegetable at a market in Manila. —AFP

remains one of the best-performing economies in Asia behind Vietnam's 6.8 percent and China's 6.7 percent for the quarter.

In addition to the slower second quarter numbers, Pernia said GDP for the first three months of 2018 was also adjusted downward to 6.6 percent, from 6.8 percent. He said this meant the economy only grew 6.3 percent in the first half, well below the 7-8 percent full-year target. Agriculture's anemic 0.2 percent growth did not help, while mining also slowed due to the closure of several pits and higher mineral taxes. "We are also gravely concerned about the almost stagnant output of the agriculture sector," Pernia said, noting a "gross deficiency in the domestic production of food" had helped fuel inflation. —AFP

Mexico seeks NAFTA progress in Washington

MEXICO CITY: Mexico's North American Free Trade Agreement negotiators looked to move toward settling the most complicated issues at hand Wednesday as they resumed talks with US officials in Washington. Foreign minister Luis Videgaray, economics minister Idefonso Guajardo and his successor Jesus Seade met with their US counterparts for the third week running—and said talks would continue Thursday morning. US and Mexican officials have said they aim to conclude discussions this month.

"We are definitely going to keep on working covering all the items that we have to cover, and we added a list of things that we will be talking tomorrow," said Guajardo. "We go from less complex things to more complex things," he said. When pressed on the thornier topics facing negotiators—such as the so-called "sunset" clause backed by US President Donald Trump, and changes to the auto industry—Guajardo added that "nothing is agreed on until everything is agreed on." —AFP

Business

EU touts US LNG imports to woo Trump on trade

EU to build more terminals to handle American LNG

BRUSSELS: The European Union said it was delivering on a deal with US President Donald Trump to buy more US liquefied natural gas (LNG) yesterday but called on Washington to do more to make its prices competitive. In talks to urge Trump to drop hefty new tariffs last month, the EU's chief executive Jean-Claude Juncker agreed to work to increase imports of US soybeans and LNG to the bloc.

The EU has long worked to diversify away from relying on Russia for almost 40 percent of its gas needs by developing LNG infrastructure to access other suppliers like the United States.

Whether US LNG imports can win market share away from Russia, however, will depend on market forces, EU officials are quick to stress. "The growing exports of US liquefied natural gas, if priced competitively, could play an increasing and strategic role in EU gas supply," Juncker said in a statement.

"But the US needs to play its role in doing away with red tape restrictions," he said, re-

ferring to US rules that require regulatory approval for LNG exports to Europe. Since the arrival of the first US LNG supplies in 2016, cumulative imports to the bloc have reached 2.8 billion cubic metres, the EU said yesterday. In 2017, Europe accounted for more than 10 percent of total US LNG exports, up from 5 percent in 2016, it said. Spain, France and Italy are the largest of nine EU member states purchasing US gas.

“Both sides have much to gain”

The EU's decision to publish historic trade data is unusual - part of the bloc's drive to sway Trump by showing tariff-free trade flows can benefit the United States. Earlier this month, the Euro-

pean Commission published data showing a surge in US soybean imports so far this year as buyers responded to plunging prices after China largely stopped buying US soybeans in a tit-for-tat trade row. "Both sides have much to gain by working together," Juncker added.

Trump said in a Tweet last month that the EU would "be buying vast amounts of LNG", while Juncker said the EU would build more



MARYLAND: Snow covered transfer lines are seen at the Dominion Cove Point Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal in Lusby, Maryland.—Reuters

terminals to handle American LNG. However, three-quarters of Europe's existing import facilities lie empty while demand for US LNG on the continent remains limited. The most lucrative markets for US LNG are in

South and Central America, India and the Far East, with Europe near the bottom of the pile given its relatively low prices and ample supplies of gas via pipelines from Russia and Norway.—Reuters

Thyssenkrupp swings to loss on industrial woes

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: German conglomerate Thyssenkrupp, grappling with a leadership crisis and investor calls for a major revamp, reported a quarterly loss yesterday as cost overruns in its industrial unit weighed on the bottom line. The Essen-based group said it booked a net loss of 131 million euros in the third quarter of its financial year, after seeing a 120-million-euro profit over the same period a year earlier.

Thyssenkrupp, which makes everything from elevators and submarines to car parts, already announced last week it was slightly lowering its 2018 outlook because of slower sales and higher than expected costs in its industrial solutions division. Among the projects causing headaches were a marine project in Turkey, a cement plant in Saudi Arabia and a biofuel power plant in

Australia, it said. The group's underlying, or adjusted operating profit, slumped 46 percent to 332 million euros, while revenues were up two percent to 11.2 billion euros thanks to a rise in overall sales and order intakes.

"We see a mixed picture. The bottom line is, that we are not satisfied with the current results," said interim chief executive Guido Kerkhoff. "Notably the cash flow is unsatisfactory, and that is not a situation which can be sustained long term. We have to improve significantly across all our businesses." The 207-year-old firm has been in turmoil ever since Heinrich Hiesinger quit as CEO last month, shortly after completing a landmark deal merging Thyssenkrupp's steel activities with India's Tata.

Supervisory board chief Ulrich Lehner followed him out the door soon after, warning of "many" job losses if activist investors pushing for an aggressive restructuring of the sprawling group got their way. Looking ahead, Thyssenkrupp said it now expects adjusted profits before interest and tax for its 2017-2018 financial year to reach "around" 1.8 billion euros. But it still predicts net profit will be "significantly better" than the prior year's 271 million euros.—AFP

Pakistan defends its economic partnership with China

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Wednesday defended its economic partnership with China, amid fears that the terms of opaque multi-billion dollar investments by Beijing could be exacerbating Islamabad's economic woes as it considers a fresh IMF bailout. "We have noted recent media reports questioning the viability of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), claiming that it would create an unbearable debt burden for Pakistan," the government said in a statement issued to the media.

"Such media reports are often one-sided, distort facts, and are based on irresponsible statements by individuals who either have no understanding of CPEC or are driven by ulterior motives," the statement continued. CPEC is an ambitious plan by Beijing to build infrastructure in Pakistan, mainly energy and transport, connecting the western Chinese region of Xinjiang with the Arabian Sea. It is part of China's massive "Belt and Road" initiative seeking to revive ancient trade routes through a massive rail and maritime network via \$1 trillion in investments across Asia and Europe.

But the opaqueness of the CPEC terms has led to concerns as Pakistan faces a looming balance-of-payments crisis, with analysts saying it will need to take urgent action, potentially seeking a bailout from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). "It is because of the

favorable financing arrangements that Pakistan opted for Chinese investment under CPEC," said the statement, issued under the caretaker administration currently running the country pending the formation of a new coalition government by election winner Imran Khan.

"China stepped forward to support Pakistan's development at a time when foreign investment had dried up, and economic activity was being crippled by energy shortages and infrastructure gaps," it said, calling CPEC a "win-win". Chinese energy companies have "raised funds from Chinese banks and investors", and these do not constitute any debt obligation on Pakistan, the statement said.

"CPEC projects are financed through a composite financing package comprising long-term government-to-government concessional and preferential loans, as well as grants from the government of China. Repayments on these loans would not commence in the immediate future," it added. The details come after US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo voiced concerns in July over any IMF bailout being used to repay Islamabad's debts to China, with whom Washington is engaged in a trade war. On Tuesday Pakistan's likely future finance minister Asad Umar announced that the decision on a possible IMF loan would be taken by "the end of September".

"There is a general perception that we have picked up very expensive loans from the Chinese. I personally don't think so," he told reporters in Islamabad. "They are like most commercial loans," he said, denouncing the "lack of transparency" by the previous government on the subject. China's financial largesse, in the form of the Belt and Road project, has raised concerns over the vulnerability of poorer nations to such massive debt. Last year Sri Lanka was forced to hand over majority control of its Hambantota port to China after being unable to repay its loans.—AFP

Business

GM squeezes pounds, pennies to attack Ford's pickup profit machine

GM to cut weight in its trucks for lower cost

FORT WAYNE: When General Motors Co engineers were developing the 2019 Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra pickup trucks, some of them joined public tours of Ford Motor Co's Dearborn, Michigan factory to watch aluminum-bodied F-series trucks go down the assembly line. The redesign of the Ford F-series trucks, launched in 2014, set a new standard for fuel economy and lightweight vehicle construction. But armed with stopwatches and trained eyes, the GM engineers believed they saw problems.

"They had a real hard time getting those doors to fit," Tim Herrick, the executive chief engineer for GM truck programs said. His team did more intelligence gathering. They bought and tore apart Ford F-series doors sold as repair parts. Their conclusion: GM could cut weight in its trucks for a lower cost using doors made of a combination of aluminum and high strength steel that could be thinner than standard steel, shaving off kilograms in the process.

These pounds and penny-based decisions will have major implications in the highest stakes game going in Detroit: dominance in the world's most profitable vehicle market, the petrol-fueled large pickup segment. What's more, GM is banking on strong sales of over-

hauled 2019 Silverados and GMC Sierras to fund its push into automated, electric vehicles - a business many investors see as the auto industry's long term future.

The risks are high given the hits automakers have taken from US President Donald Trump's trade policies. Rising aluminum prices spurred by Trump's tariffs are driving up costs on the Ford's F-series, while rising steel and aluminum prices drag on GM results. GM also has a significant risk should the United States, Mexico and Canada fail to agree on a new NAFTA trade deal, given GM trucks built at its Silao, Mexico factory could face a 25 percent tariff if NAFTA collapses.

Interviews with GM executives and a tour at its factory here in north-west Indiana provide a detailed look inside GM's plan for the most important vehicles in its global lineup. These big pickups are everything Tesla Inc's

Model 3 or a Chevy Bolt electric car is not. The mostly steel body is bolted to the truck's steel frame, rather than the one-piece body and frame electric vehicles. The majority of trucks will have a V-8 gasoline engine in front powering the rear wheels - like the classic GM cars of the 1950s.

Some Silverados will have new four-cylinder engines, but there is no electric or hybrid offer-



INDIANA: Assembled trucks are ready for delivery at GM's Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra pickup truck plant in Fort Wayne, Indiana, US. — Reuters

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The risks
are high
”

ing as of now. The new Silverado - GM's top-selling vehicle in the United States - is a technology achievement of a different kind. It is taller and has a longer wheelbase than its beefy predecessor, which can help it more easily meet federal fuel efficiency rules. But it is 450 pounds lighter, and its V-8 engine achieves 23 mile per gallon on the highway that rivals smaller SUVs. Wall Street investors give Tesla and its electric vehicles a higher value than GM's shares.

GM is betting that its core customers in the

American heartland will keep paying premium prices - 27 percent of GM trucks sell for more than \$55,000 - for these vehicles capable of hauling a trailer by day and substituting for a luxury sedan by night. Large pickups generate at least \$17,000 a vehicle in pre-tax profit for GM, the company has indicated in disclosures to investors. GM executives told Reuters that with the new trucks, GM will have a big cost advantage they can use to chop at Ford's leading market share. —Reuters

New York moves to cap Uber, app-ride vehicles

NEW YORK: New York's city council on Wednesday dealt a blow to Uber and other car-for-hire companies, passing a bill to cap the number of vehicles they operate and impose minimum pay standards on drivers. It makes New York the first major US city to limit the number of app-based rides and to impose pay rules, with authorities under pressure to act over pollution and worsening congestion.

The financial capital of 8.5 million is the biggest app-ride market in the United States, where public transport woes and astronomical parking costs have helped fuel years of untamed growth by the likes of Lyft and Uber. But that growth has brought New York's iconic yellow cabs to their knees and since December, six yellow-cab drivers have committed suicide.

Those deaths have been linked to desperation over plummeting income. The increased competition has slashed the value of yellow cab taxi licenses from more than \$1 million in 2014 to less than \$200,000 today. The bill stipulates a 12-month cap on all new for-hire-vehicle licenses, unless they are wheelchair accessible, as well as minimum pay requirements for app drivers-regulated by the Taxi and Limousine Commission.

The TLC, which regulates taxis and is a powerful force in New York politics, commissioned a study recently in a bid to underscore the chaos and push city authorities into taking action. That report recommended a guaranteed income of \$17.22 an hour for drivers-the city's \$15 minimum wage is due to come into effect at the end of 2018 — plus a supplement to mitigate against rest time.

Uber hit back Wednesday, saying the 12-month pause would threaten one of the city's "few reliable transportation options"-a swipe at a burgeoning subway crisis-"while doing nothing to fix the subways or ease congestion." "Uber will do whatever it takes to keep up with growing demand and we will not stop working with city and state leaders... to pass real solutions like comprehensive congestion pricing," a spokesperson said.

Workers prevailed

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, a progressive Democrat, vowed to sign the bill into law, claiming that it would "stop the influx of cars contributing to the congestion grinding our streets to a halt." "More than 100,000 workers and their families will see an immediate benefit from this legislation," de Blasio said. It comes after the city was forced to shelve plans in 2015 to cap the number of vehicles operated by Uber, after the multibillion-dollar corporation fought tooth and nail against the legislation in a slick ad campaign. The Independent Drivers Guild, which represents more than 65,000 app-based drivers such as those from Lyft and Uber, on Wednesday celebrated. —AFP

Deutsche Telekom lifts outlook despite dip in profit

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: Germany's Deutsche Telekom lifted its full-year outlook yesterday despite a dip in quarterly net profit, saying "unbroken" customer growth in US arm T-Mobile would bolster earnings. Net profit at the telecoms giant plunged 43 percent to 495 million euros year-on-year between April and June, dragged down by a one-off charge related to the settlement of a legal dispute.

Deutsche Telekom said it had to pay 600 million euros in the second quarter to end a years-long row with the German government over the delayed implementation of a truck toll system it designed with Daimler. Without the one-off charge, profits increased 3.3 percent year-on-year to 1.2 billion euros. Group revenues were up one percent to 18.4 billion euros, adjusted for currency effects, as Deutsche Telekom won new customers for its mobile, broadband, TV and landline services in Europe and the United States.

In a statement, Deutsche Telekom welcomed a "strong quarter" that saw the group hold on to its leading position in Germany and continue a run of "unbroken customer growth" in the key US market. The group's T-Mobile unit, poised to merge with US rival Sprint, gained another 1.6 million customers to notch up its "21st consecutive quarter of million-plus growth". US wireless operator Sprint and T-Mobile announced in May that they plan to form a new company and push development of a super-fast 5G network.

A first merger attempt in 2014 failed in the face of opposition from US regulators, and some investors remain concerned that regulatory objections could stymie the deal. Deutsche Telekom offered no new details about the merger's progress, saying only that "T-Mobile remains on a successful trajectory after announcing its plans to merge with its competitor Sprint". —AFP

Sports

Tiger still excites rivals as 100th PGA showdown looms

Woods is only eight months into his comeback from surgery

ST LOUIS: Ten years after his last major victory and five years since his last triumph, Tiger Woods is back on the prowl and a new generation of rivals couldn't be more thrilled. When 98 of the world's 100 top players tee off yesterday in the 100th PGA Championship at Bellerive Country Club, there will be more than a few who hope to live out a boyhood dream and battle the 14-time major champion for glory on Sunday.

"He's still Tiger," said Britain's 27-year-old Tommy Fleetwood. "For guys from my generation that would have grown up with Tiger in his prime, how many people get the chance to be in contention or play against Tiger Woods on a final day of a major when he was the guy you watched. He was the hero."

Woods is only eight months into his comeback from spinal fusion surgery after missing most of the past two seasons with severe back pain that had him wondering if he might ever play again.

"Just for me to be able to have this opportunity again is a dream come true," Woods said. "I didn't know if I could do this again, and lo and behold, here I am. "So just coming back and being able to play at this level and compete, I've had my share of chances to win this year as well, hopefully I'll get it done this week." Woods, ranked 51st, has not won a major title since the 2008 US Open and has not won any event since the 2013 WGC Bridgestone Invitational. Woods briefly led the British Open on Sunday but shared sixth last month at Carnoustie, while Fleetwood shared 12th.

"It's something very special for quite a large number of players at the moment that he's had his comeback and he's playing well and we have that chance really, we could eventually be playing with Tiger on a Sunday coming down the stretch," Fleetwood said.

New British Open champion Francesco Molinari of Italy, who played alongside Woods in the final round at Carnoustie, remains impressed with the former world number one and his impact on so many careers. "He has changed the game for our generation," Molinari said. "Being a teenager growing up playing golf, in my generation we were all looking up to him, especially around 2000, 2001, 2002. He was doing unbelievable things."

"He has been a model and an idol for me growing up and it's nice to see him back playing good golf. Hopefully we'll be paired together late on Sunday again this week."



ST LOUIS: Tiger Woods of the United States plays a shot on the tenth hole during the first round of the 2018 PGA Championship at Bellerive Country Club yesterday in St Louis, Missouri. — AFP

LATE STRUGGLES FOR TIGER

Doubters say Woods gets tired late in his rounds and point to scoring averages a full stroke higher on his back nines than his starting sides. "I wish I could figure that out. I don't know what it is. I don't know why I haven't played the back nine as well as I have in the past," Woods said. "If I had an answer to it, I would give it to you, but I really don't know."

To Rory McIlroy, a four-time major winner who plays alongside Woods and defending champion Justin Thomas in the first two rounds, Woods has already achieved a great deal just being

back. "There's a lot of different layers to what Tiger has to go through to win again," McIlroy said. "He has put himself in position. He had to learn how to move again. He had to learn how to swing. I mean, 18 months ago the guy couldn't walk. He was in bed." Experience only goes so far, McIlroy said, noting he hasn't won a major since the 2014 PGA. "Even though he's won 14 of these things, if you haven't done it for awhile, you still have to re-learn a few things, and I think he's going through that stage. But as we saw a few weeks ago, he's right there, which is an unbelievable achievement." —AFP

Australian golfer Jarrod Lyle dead

SYDNEY: Tributes flowed for Australian golfer Jarrod Lyle yesterday after he lost his battle with cancer, dying aged 36 after halting treatment for leukaemia last week. "It breaks my heart to tell everyone that Jarrod is no longer with us," his wife Briony said in a statement.

The former US PGA Tour player, who had children aged six and two, passed away on Wednesday evening at his home outside Melbourne surrounded by family and friends. "Lusi, Gemma and I are filled with grief and now must confront our lives without the greatest husband and father we could ever have wished for," added his wife.

Lyle moved into palliative care on August 1 to see out his final days, saying his body could not "take anymore" after acute myeloid leukaemia returned for a third time. His plight touched people around the world and his wife said the messages of support comforted him as his life drew to a close.

"Jarrod was able to take in many of the unbelievably kind and generous acts and words in his final few days and was overwhelmed by the emotional outpouring," she said. "He asked that I provide a simple message: 'Thanks for your support, it meant the world. My time was short, but if I've helped people think and act on behalf of those families who suffer through cancer, hopefully it wasn't wasted.'"

Lyle, who joined the PGA Tour in 2007 and managed a handful of top 10 finishes, 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.

Pure joy

In an emotional audio message late last week, he said he felt like "the luckiest golfer going around because so many people took an interest in me and took an interest in, I guess, my fight". 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," he said, breathing



MELBOURNE: File photo taken on December 15, 2011 shows Australian golfer Jarrod Lyle chipping out of a bunker during the first round of the Australian Masters golf tournament at the Victoria Golf Club in Melbourne. — AFP

heavily. "They know that all the fighting that I did do was to get back out and play golf again."

The European Tour was among many to pay tribute yesterday. "Full of joy and determination, on

and off the course. This is how we'll remember Jarrod," it said. World number three Justin Rose added: "Such a sad day, we will all miss you so much Jarrod. Thinking of his family at this time." — AFP

Sports

Stanton crushes rare slam as Yanks finish sweep

Peralta, Corbin pace Diamondbacks past Phillies, 6-0

NEW YORK: Giancarlo Stanton hit his first grand slam in over four years, Luis Severino settled down after a shaky start to become the first 15-game winner in the American League, and the New York Yankees beat the host Chicago White Sox 7-3 Wednesday night to finish a three-game sweep.

Stanton gave the Yankees a 6-2 lead when he hooked a full-count fastball by Lucas Giolito (7-9) just inside the foul pole and into the right field seats with one out in the second inning. It was his sixth career grand slam and first since a walk-off grand slam against Seattle's Yoervis Medina on April 18, 2014. Winless in his previous four starts since July 7 at Toronto, Severino (15-5) allowed two of his three runs in the first inning and seven hits in seven innings. The right-hander struck out eight without a walk. Jose Abreu, who drove in all three Chicago runs Tuesday, had an RBI double, but the White Sox were swept at home by the Yankees for the first time since May 2002.

RED SOX 10, BLUE JAYS 5

Rafael Devers hit a two-run homer in his return from the disabled list, Xander Bogaerts had three RBIs, and Brian Johnson pitched seven innings as Boston won at Toronto. Johnson (3-3) allowed five runs, six hits and two walks while striking out six in winning his second straight start. Boston has won the first two games of the three-game series, six in a row overall and 10 of its last 11. Randal Grichuk hit a three-run homer for the Blue Jays, and Teoscar Hernandez added a two-run shot.

DIAMONDBACKS 6, PHILLIES 0

David Peralta continued his torrid streak with four hits, including a two-run triple, and Patrick Corbin threw 7 1/3 scoreless innings as Arizona bested visiting Philadelphia in the rubber match of a three-game series. Peralta had 10 hits in the three games against the Phillies, tying a franchise record set by Luis Gonzalez against Montreal in 1999. Corbin (9-4) gave up four hits and faced only two batters over the minimum, benefiting from two double plays. Cesar Hernandez had two of the Phillies' four hits, and Roman Quinn was the only runner to get as far as second base when he doubled as a pinch hitter in the sixth inning.

INDIANS 5, TWINS 2

Francisco Lindor hit a three-run, walk-off home run with two outs in the bottom of the ninth to give Cleveland the victory over visiting Minnesota. Lindor lined the first pitch from reliever Trevor Hildenberger (2-3) down the right field line for his 29th homer of the season, driving in Jason Kipnis and Brandon Guyer, who had both singled earlier in the inning. Cody Allen (4-4) picked up the win after giving up a game-tying home run to Miguel Sano in the ninth, his third blown save in 24 chances.

BREWERS 8, PADRES 4

Jesus Aguilar, Travis Shaw and Eric Thames hit back-to-back-to-back homers in a five-run first inning as Milwaukee pounded visiting San Diego. The Brewers tied a franchise record with

home runs by five different players in a game. Orlando Arcia connected in the fifth inning, and Christian Yelich went deep in the sixth. Milwaukee's early surge ruined the major league debut of San Diego's Brett Kennedy, who allowed six runs on 11 hits in four innings. He didn't issue a walk while striking out three.

ROYALS 9, CUBS 0

Heath Fillmyer tossed seven shutout innings for his first career victory, and Adalberto Mondesi slugged a three-run homer as host Kansas City routed Chicago. Fillmyer allowed three hits while helping the Royals halt a six-game slide. He struck out three and walked two in a solid 98-pitch effort. Cubs starter Jose Quintana (10-8) gave up five runs and six hits over 6 1/3 innings, striking out four and walking two.

BRAVES 8, NATIONALS 3

Charlie Culberson hit a three-run homer while Tyler Flowers and Ronald Acuna Jr. both hit two-run shots as Atlanta cruised at Washington. All of that power gave starter Mike Foltynewicz (9-7) more than enough offense. The right-hander allowed three runs (one earned) on six hits and fanned seven in 5 2/3 innings while walking two. With the win combined with Arizona's victory over Philadelphia, the Braves climbed to within a half-game of the first-place Phillies in the National League East.

RANGERS 11, MARINERS 7

Joey Gallo hit two home runs and had four RBIs as host Texas defeated Seattle to take two of three games in the series. Texas' Nos. 5-7 hitters, Gallo, Isiah Kiner-Falefa and Ronald Guzman, each had three hits to pace a 19-hit attack. Mike Zunino hit two solo homers for the Mariners, who are 10-19 since having an eight-game winning streak snapped July 4.

ANGELS 6, TIGERS 0

Jaime Barria and three relievers combined on a five-hit shutout in Los Angeles' win over Detroit that completed a three-game sweep in Anaheim, Calif. Barria (7-7) struck out five, walked one and gave up five hits in 5 2/3 innings. Taylor Cole, Hansel Robles and Noe Ramirez combined to hold the Tigers hitless over the final 3 1/3 innings to finish it off. The Angels had 10 hits without center fielder Mike Trout, who missed his seventh consecutive game because of a right wrist contusion. The Angels have an off day Thursday, and Trout is expected back in the lineup on Friday against Oakland.

PIRATES 4, ROCKIES 3

Adam Frazier had three hits, Gregory Polanco doubled and scored a run, and Pittsburgh edged Colorado in Denver. Colin Moran and Corey Dickerson had two hits each, and Chris Archer (4-5) got his first win since being acquired by Pittsburgh at the July 31 trade deadline. Colorado's German Marquez (9-9) turned in a perfect fourth inning when he struck out the side on nine pitches. The feat, referred to as an immaculate inning, was the second one in Rockies history and the first time it happened at Coors



TORONTO: Xander Bogaerts #2 of the Boston Red Sox turns a game-ending double play in the ninth inning over Randal Grichuk #15 of the Toronto Blue Jays at second base at Rogers Centre on Wednesday in Toronto, Canada. — AFP

Field. Colorado reliever Rex Brothers accomplished it at San Francisco on June 14, 2014.

CARDINALS 7, MARLINS 1

Matt Carpenter and Yadier Molina homered to lead St. Louis to victory at Miami. Carpenter leads the National League with 31 homers, and he has reached base in 27 consecutive games, the longest active streak in the majors. He also leads the majors with 21 road homers. Since the All-Star break, Carpenter has 12 homers. The rest of the Cardinals have just 11.

ORIOLES 5, RAYS 4

Trey Mancini hit a go-ahead, two-run double to left field in the ninth inning as Baltimore blew a late lead but came back to trim Tampa Bay in St. Petersburg, Fla. With the Rays on top 4-3, the Orioles' Mark Trumbo, who homered earlier in the game, opened the top of the ninth with a single against Sergio Romo (2-3). Danny Valencia also singled, sending pinch runner Jace Peterson to third. Joey Rickard pinch-ran for Valencia and stole second. Both runs scored on Mancini's double. Orioles right-hander Mychal Givens survived the bottom of the ninth to record his third save. The Rays' Mallek Smith reached on a two-out error, stole second and went to third when catcher Caleb Joseph's throw went into center

field for Baltimore's fifth error of the game. The game ended when Matt Duffy hit a hard line drive to second.

METS 8, REDS 0

Jacob deGrom tossed six scoreless innings and finally received some run support, snapping a seven-start winless streak by earning the victory as New York blanked visiting Cincinnati. DeGrom (6-7) allowed four hits and one walk while striking out 10 in lowering his major-league-leading ERA from 1.85 to 1.77. He win was the first for deGrom since June 18. He went 0-5 with a 2.47 ERA in between victories, a span in which the Mets scored just eight runs while deGrom was on the mound.

ATHLETICS 3, DODGERS 2

Machado's throw to the plate on Khris Davis' ground ball with one out in the eighth inning, breaking a tie and helping Oakland edge visiting Los Angeles. A's newcomer Mike Fiers dueled Dodgers ace Clayton Kershaw on relatively even terms, setting the stage for Oakland's decisive run against the Los Angeles bullpen to gain a split in the two-game interleague series. Blake Treinen worked around a one-out walk in the ninth for his 29th save, snapping the Dodgers' two-game winning streak. —Reuters

Sports

Joe Root growing into England captaincy role

England to be without Ben Stokes at Lords

LONDON: Joe Root believes he is adjusting to the demands of being England's captain in Test cricket after more than a year and 17 matches in charge. Root will look to back-up last week's 31-run win at Edgbaston by leading England to another victory when they face India in the second of a five-Test series at Lord's which started yesterday.

Going 2-0 up would represent a welcome change for Root, all of whose three previous home series as England skipper have been level at 1-1 after two Tests.

In May, a nine-wicket defeat by Pakistan at Lord's meant England had gone eight Tests without a win following series losses in Australia and New Zealand. But they squared a two-match campaign with Pakistan courtesy of an innings and 55-run victory at Yorkshire batsman Root's home ground of Headingley before winning a thrilling opener against India.

"It does take a little bit of time to get used to things ... there has been a lot of learning throughout the year-and-a-half," Root told a news conference at Lord's on Wednesday.

"(But) I think from the start of this summer I had a real clear idea about how we want to go about things," added Root, whose England commitments meant he had limited captaincy experience before being appointed as the successor to Alastair Cook.

This Test season did not start well for England but few things boost collective morale like a hard-fought win such as the one England enjoyed at Birmingham's Edgbaston ground. At Lord's, England will be without Ben Stokes, who took key wickets in the closing stages of the first Test, including the prize scalp of India captain Virat Kohli, because of his ongoing trial in Bristol on a charge of affray.

'STRONG CHARACTERS'

Nevertheless, Root reckoned there were lessons from Edgbaston, where the 20-year-old Sam Curran starred with both bat and ball, for the team as a whole that could yet prove useful at Lord's, even in the absence of all-rounder Stokes.

"It fills you with masses of confidence ... to win a close game," said Root. "One of the most exciting things about last week is that we weren't at our best ... but we found a way to win under pressure, and wrestle momentum back," he explained.

"That's a sign of some strong characters in our dressing room-and having had some indifferent results in the recent past, to pull off a win like that is a really good sign.

"But it's about backing it up now, looking for consistency in back-to-back games, and this is an opportunity to do that." Root, who



LONDON: File photo shows England's captain Joe Root (R) shakes hands with India's captain Virat Kohli after the game ends on the fourth day of the first Test cricket match between England and India at Edgbaston in Birmingham. —AFP

made a valuable first-innings 80 at Edgbaston, played down his tactical contribution to England's win.

"Ultimately, regardless of what you do as captain, your players have to perform-and I

thought they were exceptional," he said. "It's not for me to take the credit for their hard work. "Under pressure we stayed calm ... it would have been easy for us to chase the game on that last morning, but we didn't." —AFP

No play before lunch in England-India Test

LONDON: Rain meant there was no play before lunch on the first day of the second Test between England and India at Lord's yesterday. Early morning overcast skies in north London eventually gave way to gentle but persistent rain which was sufficient to ensure the pitch and square at the 'home of cricket' remained fully covered.

The match had been due to start at 11:00am but with rain still falling no play was possible in the morning session. Lunch was brought forward by 30 minutes to 12:30pm in the hope of a prompt resumption come the scheduled second session of play.

England lead the five-match series 1-0 after a 31-run victory in the first Test at Edgbaston last week. They will, however, make at least two changes to their side. England captain Joe Root confirmed on Wednesday that Ollie Pope, a 20-year-old Surrey batsman, would make his Test debut in place of the dropped Dawid Malan.

The hosts will also be without Ben Stokes, who took three wickets on Sunday's fourth and final day at Edgbaston, including the prize scalp of India captain Virat Kohli, because of the Durham all-rounder's ongoing trial for affray in Bristol.

England have yet to decide whether Chris Woakes, a fellow pace-bowling all-rounder, or off-spinner Moeen Ali will replace Stokes. Neither England nor India, who might also make changes, are obliged to confirm their teams until the toss takes place. —AFP

Cummins, Hazlewood out of Pakistan series

MELBOURNE: Fast bowlers Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood have been ruled out of Australia's test series against Pakistan in the United Arab Emirates after failing to recover from injuries, further depleting an already inexperienced side.

Australia head to the UAE for a test series slated for October without two of their most experienced campaigners, with former captain Steve Smith and his deputy David Warner suspended after a ball-tampering scandal in Cape Town in March.

With Cummins and Hazlewood still recovering from their lumbar bone stress injuries, much sting has been taken out of the attack of the Tim Paine-led squad. "Pat and Josh are progressing well from their lumbar bone stress injuries but are not bowling, so unfortunately they will not be at the level required for Test match intensity come October," team physiotherapist David Beakley said in a statement.

"Barring any setbacks, we are hopeful that Pat and Josh will return via the back-end of the (domestic) JLT One-Day Cup, with the aim of them being available for the ODI Series against South Africa in November as they build towards the Indian test series."

Australia play South Africa in the first one-dayer of the three-match series in Perth on Nov. 4 before hosting India for three Twenty20, four tests and three one-day internationals. Australia's pace spearhead Mitchell Starc, however, remains on track to be fit for the USE tour, Beakley said.

"On a positive note Mitchell Starc is back to unrestricted training and remains on track for the Test Series against Pakistan," Beakley said. —Reuters

Chandimal returns to Sri Lanka T20 squad after ban

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka skipper Dinesh Chandimal returned to their Twenty20 squad yesterday after serving an international ban for breaching the spirit of the game. Chandimal was included in a 15-member squad for the one-off T20 that will round off South Africa's tour of the island nation Tuesday in Colombo, Sri Lanka Cricket said in a statement.

The 28-year-old missed the two-Test series, which Sri Lanka won, and was out of the first four one-day internationals. The fifth and final ODI is on Sunday, but Chandimal was not included in the squad for that match. But he was included in the T20 squad and will play in the day-night game on Tuesday. Chandimal was banned by the International Cricket Council along with coach Chandika Hathurusingha and manager Asanka Gurusinha for refusing to take to the field for two hours during the second Test against the West Indies in June. It was shortly after Chandimal was accused of tampering with the ball.

The Sri Lanka captain was subsequently banned from the third Test against the West Indies and given a fine equal to his match fees. He was later banned for another two Tests and four ODIs after pleading guilty to violating the spirit of the game.

Sri Lanka T20 squad: Angelo Mathews (captain), Dasun Shanaka, Kusal Perera, Dhananjaya de Silva, Upul Tharanga, Kusal Mendis, Thisara Perera, Shehan Jayasuriya, Shehan Madushanka, Lahiru Kumara, Dinesh Chandimal, Akila Dananjaya, Jeffrey Vandersay, Lakshan Sandakan, and Binura Fernando. —AFP

Sports

Sharapova storms past Kasatkina, Wimbledon champion Kerber falls

Simona Halep to play Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova

MONTREAL: Maria Sharapova fired 25 winners past hapless Russian compatriot Daria Kasatkina in a 6-0, 6-2 victory at the rain-hit Montreal WTA event on Wednesday, but Angelique Kerber's first match since capturing the Wimbledon title ended in a sobering defeat.

Sharapova needed just 66 minutes to see off 12th-seeded Kasatkina in an impressive and timely display of big-hitting, with the US Open getting underway in just under three weeks' time. "I came on court having a lot of respect for my opponent because she's up and coming but has already established herself," said the 31-year-old Sharapova. "I knew I had a tough match ahead of me. I was focused from the beginning and I finished it that way."

Kasatkina, 21, managed just three winners in the match. Play was suspended before the start of Wednesday's night matches because of rain, resulting in four contests being added to today's schedule. The action will resume at 11:00 am local time (1500 GMT). World number one Simona Halep will now play Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova in the second match on court central followed by second seeded Caroline Wozniacki in her second round match against Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus.

Venus Williams also had her second match of the tournament moved to Thursday. She beat world number 124 Caroline Dolehide in the first round but will have a tougher test against veteran Sorana Cirstea of Romania. Sharapova next faces French sixth seed Car-

oline Garcia for a place in the quarter-finals. Five-time major winner Sharapova leads the head-to-head against Garcia 4-1 but the French player won their only meeting in the last three years on clay in Stuttgart in April. World number four Kerber, playing for the first time since defeating Serena Williams in last month's Wimbledon final, slumped to a 6-4, 6-1 loss to Alize Cornet of France. German left-hander Kerber committed 32 unforced errors against the 34th-ranked Cornet in her 85-minute second round exit.

CORNET SHINES

Cornet, 28, goes on to face Ashleigh Barty of Australia in the third round. It was her second successive victory against Kerber having also triumphed on hard courts in Beijing last year.

"It was my first match after three weeks now," said Kerber. "It's not always so easy to change the surface. I think I need a little bit more time to get used to hard courts again."

Barty, the Australian 15th seed, defeated Belgium's Alison Van Uytvanck 7-6 (9/7), 6-2 while recently-married Czech ninth seed Karolina Pliskova suffered a 6-2, 6-2 defeat at the hands of Kiki Bertens of the Netherlands. Fifth seed and defending champion Elina Svitolina went through to the third round after in-form Romanian opponent Mihaela Buzarnescu was forced to retire with an ankle injury.

Svitolina was leading 6-3, 6-7 (5/7), 4-3



MONTREAL: Maria Sharapova of Russia hits a return against Daria Kasatkina of Russia during day three of the Rogers Cup at IGA Stadium on Wednesday in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. — AFP

when the weekend San Jose champion turned her ankle and was forced to leave the court in a wheelchair and in floods of tears. "Very tough to see players getting injured that badly on court. I wish @MikiBuzarnescu a

veryyyyy speedy recovery! Stay strong!," tweeted Svitolina. US Open champion and third seed Sloane Stephens also made the third round by seeing off home hope Francoise Abanda 6-0, 6-2. — AFP

Nadal routs Paire to reach third round in Toronto

TORONTO: Rafael Nadal was made to wait before his second-round Rogers Cup match due to several rain delays but did his part to put the schedule back on track with a speedy 6-2 6-3 win over Frenchman Benoit Paire on Wednesday.

World number one Nadal, who kicked off the evening session a little over an hour after its original start time, had some issues with his serve later in the match but still needed only 74 minutes to secure his spot in the third round.

Nadal came out firing a dazzling array of shots that had Paire racing around the blue hard court from the outset and even desperately launching his racquet on one occasion in a failed attempt at a return that gave the Spaniard a 5-2 lead.

Nadal was made to work harder in the second where the players exchanged breaks over six consecutive games before the world number one finally held in the ninth to seal the match when Paire sent a service return wide.

"Of course I was not at 100 percent today," Nadal, 32, told reporters. "It's true that with my serve in the second set I had some troubles but my return was

working well ... it was more about the mistakes from the baseline in my opinion." Nadal will face Stan Wawrinka in the round of 16 after the Swiss rallied to beat Hungarian Marton Fucsovics 1-6 7-6(2) 7-6(10). In earlier action, a solid-serving Novak Djokovic kept his bid for a fifth Rogers Cup title alive with a 6-3 6-4 win over Canadian wildcard Peter Polansky.

The ninth-seeded Serb, competing in his first tournament since his Wimbledon triumph last month, won a dominant 83 percent of his first service points and wrapped up the day's opening match minutes before the first of several rain delays.

"I thought I served well in the moments when I really need it and I was looking for the first serve," said Djokovic. "I thought I found pretty good accuracy and angles with the first serve, and also my second serve worked pretty well. Overall my game was so-and-so. In the moments when I probably needed to set it up, I did."

Next up for Djokovic in the round of 16 is Greek teenager Stefanos Tsitsipas, who upset Austrian seventh seed Dominic Thiem 6-3 7-6(6).

A win for Djokovic would set up a potential quarter-final clash with German second seed Alexander Zverev, who advanced to the third round after a 6-4 6-4 win over Bradley Klahn.

Also advancing to the third round were Wimbledon runner-up Kevin Anderson, fifth seed Grigor Dimitrov, sixth seed Marin Cilic, eighth seed John Isner, Dutchman Robin Haase and Russian Karen Khachanov, who upset Spanish 12th seed Pablo Carreno Busto 6-4 7-6(3). — Reuters

West Ham sign striker Perez from Arsenal

LONDON: West Ham United signed striker Lucas Perez from Arsenal on a three-year contract, both Premier League clubs confirmed yesterday. The 29-year-old is West Ham's seventh signing of the close season. Financial details of the deal were not disclosed, but local media said West Ham had paid about 4 million pounds (\$5.16 million) for the Spaniard.

Perez joined Arsenal in August 2016 from Deportivo la Coruna but started just two Premier League games for the London club, making another nine appearances off the bench, before being loaned back to the Spanish side the following season.

"I'm very happy to be here at such an historic club," he said in a statement <https://www.whufc.com/news/articles/2018/august/09-august-west-ham-united-sign-striker-lucas-perez->

arsenal on West Ham's website.

"I'm very excited, as West Ham are giving me the chance to stay in the Premier League and I'm very happy to be part of this new project." With Andy Carroll set to miss West Ham's season opener at Liverpool on Sunday due to injury, West Ham director of football Mario Husillos said Perez's arrival would increase new manager Manuel Pellegrini's options up front.

"His style is different from the other strikers we have available to us, and that gives the manager more options for our attacking play," Husillos said. "Lucas also has experience of the Premier League with Arsenal, and is familiar with life here in London, which of course means that he will take less time to adapt and be ready." — Reuters

Sports

Mixed day for Ledecky at start of Pan Pacific championships

Lilly King wins women's 100 metres breaststroke gold

TOKYO: Five-time Olympic gold medallist Katie Ledecky beat one resurgent teenager but lost to another on a dramatic first day of the Pan Pacific Swimming Championships yesterday.

The American comfortably held off Australia's Ariarne Titmus to set a championship record in the 800 metres freestyle and win the opening race before 18-year-old Canadian Taylor Ruck set a meet record to beat Ledecky who finished third in the 200. All eyes were on Ledecky and she did not disappoint in her first race as she opened up the championships with a scorching race in the women's 800m freestyle to win in a time of 8:09:13. The 17-year-old Titmus came into the final as the most likely to challenge Ledecky following her three gold medals at the Commonwealth Games earlier this year.

However, she could not stay with Ledecky and finished second almost seven seconds back, although she did set an Australian record of 18:17:07. American Leah Smith with third. Ledecky, who won five golds at the 2014 Pan Paces aged just 17, was shocked in the 200m as Ruck outlasted the American to clinch the gold with a meet record of 1:54:44.

The teenager, who won this event at the Commonwealth Games, said it had been daunting coming up against Ledecky in the past. "She was kind of getting into my head but then my coach saw that it was and so he told me to focus on my lane and my race so that really helped me," said Ruck. Japan's Rikako Ikee produced a national

record 1:54:85 to split claim the silver, almost taking the roof off the Tatsumi International Swimming Centre and meaning Ledecky had to settle for bronze, her first medal of that colour at a major event. "I think there is an initial disappointment with the 200," said Ledecky. "But I think when I look at the grand scheme of things I was faster in both races than I was at this meet four years ago and so that is a positive I can take from it." "I have two more years to see what I can do."

KING CROWNED

Compatriot Lilly King held off a late charge from Australian Jessica Hansen to win the women's 100 metres breaststroke gold and maintain her dominance of the event.

The double Olympic champion is the world record holder and has not lost a 100m event since 2015. "It's been a while (since I have lost) and it has definitely been my baby," said King. "I don't know how I would take losing so I am just going to keep winning."

Aoki Reona's bronze was Japan's first medal of the meet and the passionate home crowd did not have to wait long for their first gold as Yasuhiro Koseki stormed to victory in the men's event to retain his title from four years ago.

Koseki's time of 59.08 was enough to edge out a field that saw six swimmers go under a minute. Jake Packard of Australia took silver and Joao Luiz Gomes was third to clinch Brazil's first medal of the meet. There was more glory to



TOKYO: Katie Ledecky of the US (L) smiles with compatriot Allison Schmitt after their heat in the women's 200m freestyle competition at the Pan Pacific Swimming Championships in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

come for the hosts as Yui Ohashi claimed gold in the women's 400 metres individual medley. Ohashi led from the front and dominated the race to finish in 4:33:77 and beat American Melanie Margalis into second whilst fellow

Japanese Sakiko Shimizu was third. However, her feat could not be matched by Japan's men as Chase Kalisz of the United States beat Olympic champion Kosuke Hagino and Daiya Seto into second and third respectively. — Reuters

Kalisz fires Olympic warning with Pan Pacific gold

TOKYO: American Chase Kalisz broke the pain barrier to beat Japan's Kosuke Hagino and Daiya Seto to gold in the 400-metres individual medley at the Pan Pacific swim championships yesterday. The double world champion fired a warning for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics as he schooled the two local favourites to win in four minutes, 7.95 seconds with Rio gold medallist Hagino settling for silver in 4:11.13.

"I think it was pretty obvious I was hurting on my freestyle," Kalisz told AFP after bagging a fifth American gold and dealing a psychological blow to his Japanese rivals two years before the Tokyo Games. "But it's a championship-level meet and it's about getting your hand on the wall first, not so much about the times." A deflated Seto admitted: "Kosuke and I went out really hard and just kind of died out there together."

"I don't know how I would take losing so I'm just going to keep winning." Jordan Wilimovsky led an American one-two in the men's 1,500m freestyle in 14:46.93 before Yasuhiro Koseki took gold in the 100m breaststroke, winning in 59.08 seconds to the delight of the home crowd. Yui Ohashi won a second gold for the host team as she won the women's 400m individual medley in 4:33.77, while American Townley Haas captured the men's 200m free title in 1:45.56. — AFP

Etheridge hopes EPL presence can make impact in Philippines

HONG KONG: In the Philippines, where basketball rules the sporting scene and football is a minor player, Neil Etheridge is hoping he can make a positive impact with his Premier League debut this weekend.

Goalkeeper Etheridge will become the first player from South East Asia to feature in the top flight of English football when he makes his debut tomorrow afternoon for Cardiff City against Bournemouth. But while millions of fans in Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia will be tuning in, Philippines is more likely to be focused on the fate of the nation's basketball team as they hone their preparations for this month's Asian Games.

Etheridge knows his presence in the world's most watched league might not do much to change the sporting landscape in Manila and beyond, but he is optimistic it can have a long-term impact on Filipino football.

"I think, if we're being realistic, we're a long way from being able to compete with basketball," the England-born custodian told Reuters. "It's a cultural thing more than anything. For me, it's just about getting younger players to play for the national team and hopefully helping the Philippine league progress. We are far away from other sports but we've got to start somewhere."

Etheridge qualifies for the Philippines through his mother and made his debut for the country a decade ago having previously represented England at youth level and over the past 10 years

has made more than 50 appearances for the nation. The last year, though, has seen his career scale new height. After struggling at a succession of clubs, Etheridge was signed by Cardiff where he established himself as first choice goalkeeper and helped the Welsh side return to the Premier League after four seasons in the Championship.

On the international front, Etheridge played a leading role in the Philippines securing a place at the finals of next year's Asian Cup, the first time the country has qualified for the continental championship. "The national team and the federation have made mistakes in the past but we're just trying to iron everything out so that we can move forward as a country in football," said the 28-year-old. "I do believe me playing in the Premier League will help, along with some sort of success in the Asian Cup."

"Us getting to the Asian Cup is a massive success. We're trying our hardest. It's not easy but we're trying our hardest." The Philippines' preparations for January's Asian Cup have been hit by Terry Butcher's decision to quit as manager less than two months after signing up, having not led the team in a single training session.

"I think it's tough for any Europe-based or western player, coach or manager in general to understand the culture of South East Asia and the Philippines because it's a developing country and there has to be a lot of patience involved," says Etheridge.

"It's not like other national teams or federations where you've got a coach from elsewhere and they live in their home country and they fly over for internationals. "For a country that's developing like the Philippines a lot of time needs to be invested being there and constantly being on top of things. Even for myself it took some time to understand the culture and how things were."

Etheridge is looking forward to the challenge he faces in the coming season when he plays against some of the biggest names in the game. — Reuters

Sports

World Cup hangover lingers over Premier League kick-off

Chase to catch champions Manchester City begins in earnest today

LONDON: There is little time for the Premier League's stars to shake off a World Cup hangover as less than a month on from Russia's summer showpiece, the chase to catch champions Manchester City begins in earnest today.

On top of the quick turnaround from the World Cup, a shortened transfer window that closes 24 hours before the season kicks off has left many sides scrambling at the last minute to strengthen their squads, none more so than Manchester United.

The Red Devils raise the curtain on the campaign at home to Leicester tonight hoping to put a troubled pre-season dominated by manager Jose Mourinho's outbursts behind them.

Mourinho has rounded on the club's hierarchy for failing to sufficiently strengthen in his opinion despite the signings of Brazilian international midfielder Fred and Portuguese full-back Diogo Dalot.

As United dither, Liverpool have emerged as second favourites for the title behind City after splashing over £170 million (\$220 million) on goalkeeper Alisson and midfielders Fabinho, Naby Keita and Xherdan Shaqiri. "The other

clubs who compete with us are really strong and already have fantastic teams. Or they are investing massively like Liverpool, who are buying everything and everybody," warned Mourinho.

"If we don't make our team better it will be a difficult season for us." United are further hamstrung with a host of key players including Paul Pogba, Romelu Lukaku and Marcus Rashford involved in the later stages of the World Cup limiting their pre-season preparations.

FAST START FOR LIVERPOOL?

By contrast, Liverpool are well-placed to hit the ground running ahead of Sunday's kick-off at home to West Ham as Virgil van Dijk, Keita and Fabinho missed out on the World Cup, while Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane bowed out at the group stage with Egypt and Senegal.

Jurgen Klopp's men demonstrated their ability to beat City on the big occasion last season, winning three of the four meetings between the sides, including a 5-1 aggregate win in the Champions League quarter-finals.

However, they finished 25 points back in the league as Pep Guardiola's men romped to the

title with a record 100 points. "The players from last year are responsible for the excitement, and then we brought in a few new players as an icing on the cake," said Klopp on the club's promising pre-season tour in the States.

"It's not just that we have to be more consistent, we have to create circumstances where we can be more consistent," he added. "Nobody is consistent with 11 players. What we are working on is the depth of the squad because you need it."

CITY STILL FAVOURITES

City haven't dipped into the deep pockets of their Abu Dhabi owners as significantly as Guardiola's first two summers in charge, but have still strengthened with club record signing Riyad Mahrez.

No side since United nine years ago have retained the title with Chelsea twice and Leicester failing to even make the top four in past three seasons.

Despite missing a host of World Cup stars, City looked in ominous form as they dismissed Chelsea 2-0 to lift the Community Shield at the weekend but face a tough start as Arsenal begin

the post-Arsene Wenger era at the Emirates on Sunday. Unai Emery has enjoyed the luxury of having most of his squad available for pre-season with Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, Henrikh Mkhitaryan, Mesut Ozil and Alexandre Lacazette forming a fearsome front four.

Chelsea also have a new boss but are already playing catch-up with Maurizio Sarri only appointed a month before the start of the campaign. However, the Blues swung into action late Wednesday when they agreed to sell goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois to Real Madrid in a deal which paved the way for Athletic Bilbao 'keeper Kepa Arrizabalaga to move to Stamford Bridge on a seven-year deal worth an estimated £71 million.

Kepa becomes the most expensive goalkeeper of all time.

In contrast to the change across London, Tottenham Hotspur have yet to add a single signing ahead of their first season in a new 62,000 capacity stadium. Yet, based on the World Cup performances of Golden Boot winner Harry Kane, Hugo Lloris and Christian Eriksen among others, there is still plenty for Mauricio Pochettino to look forward to. — AFP

Mourinho frustrated as Premier League clubs race to beat deadline

LONDON: Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho does not expect to add to his squad as the Premier League transfer window closed yesterday, despite warning a difficult season lies ahead for the English giants without further recruits.

For the first time the Premier League deadline has been moved forward to the day before the season kicks off when United host Leicester City today. Unlike in England, the window for the rest of Europe's leading leagues doesn't close until later in August, meaning Premier League clubs have faced even more inflated prices when buying from the continent. Chelsea shattered the world record fee for a goalkeeper with an 80-million euro (£71.6 million, \$92 million) swoop for Athletic Bilbao's Kepa Arrizabalaga on Wednesday to replace Belgian international Thibaut Courtois, who has joined European champions Real Madrid.

As part of that deal, Croatia midfielder Mateo Kovacic has also joined Chelsea on a season-long loan deal. However, there has been little other late movement from the top six clubs with Mourinho in particular frustrated at missing out on a host of targets to bolster his options in central defence.

Harry Maguire, who could face United for Leicester on Friday, Bayern Munich's Jerome Boateng and Toby Alderweireld of Tottenham were all linked with United, while Atletico Madrid's Diego Godin emerged as a late target on Thursday. But Mourinho now says he is focusing on the players already at his disposal.

"The information I have is no," said Mourinho when asked if he would be adding to his squad. "I'm not confident, I'm not confident and the market closes today so it is time at least for me to stop thinking about the market because the market will be closed."

LIVERPOOL STEAL A MARCH

Mourinho has been further irked by seeing rivals Liverpool steal a march on United to emerge as the second favourites for the title behind Manchester City thanks to a more than £170 mil-



MIAMI: File photo shows Manager Jose Mourinho of Manchester United gestures during the International Champions Cup match against Real Madrid at Hard Rock Stadium on July 31, 2018 in Miami, Florida. — AFP

lion splurge on new signings. However, Liverpool did their business early and are not expected to be busy on deadline day after recruiting Brazilian international Alisson Becker for a short-lived world record 72.5 million euro fee for a goalkeeper and midfielders Fabinho, Naby Keita and Xherdan Shaqiri.

Despite slashing a club record £60 million on signing Riyad Mahrez, City have enjoyed a quieter window after spending over £200 million last summer on assembling a squad that smashed a host of Premier League records in romping towards the title.

Australian teenager Daniel Arzani joined the English champions from sister club Melbourne City on Thursday but is expected to be sent on loan to Celtic.

Tottenham Hotspur boss Mauricio Pochettino has been one of the more outspoken critics of the shortened window with time running out for Spurs to make a single signing this summer.

The move was designed to ease disruption in the first few weeks of the campaign after a number of high-profile players including Alexis Sanchez, Philippe Coutinho and Virgil van Dijk missed matches at the start of last season due to transfer specu-

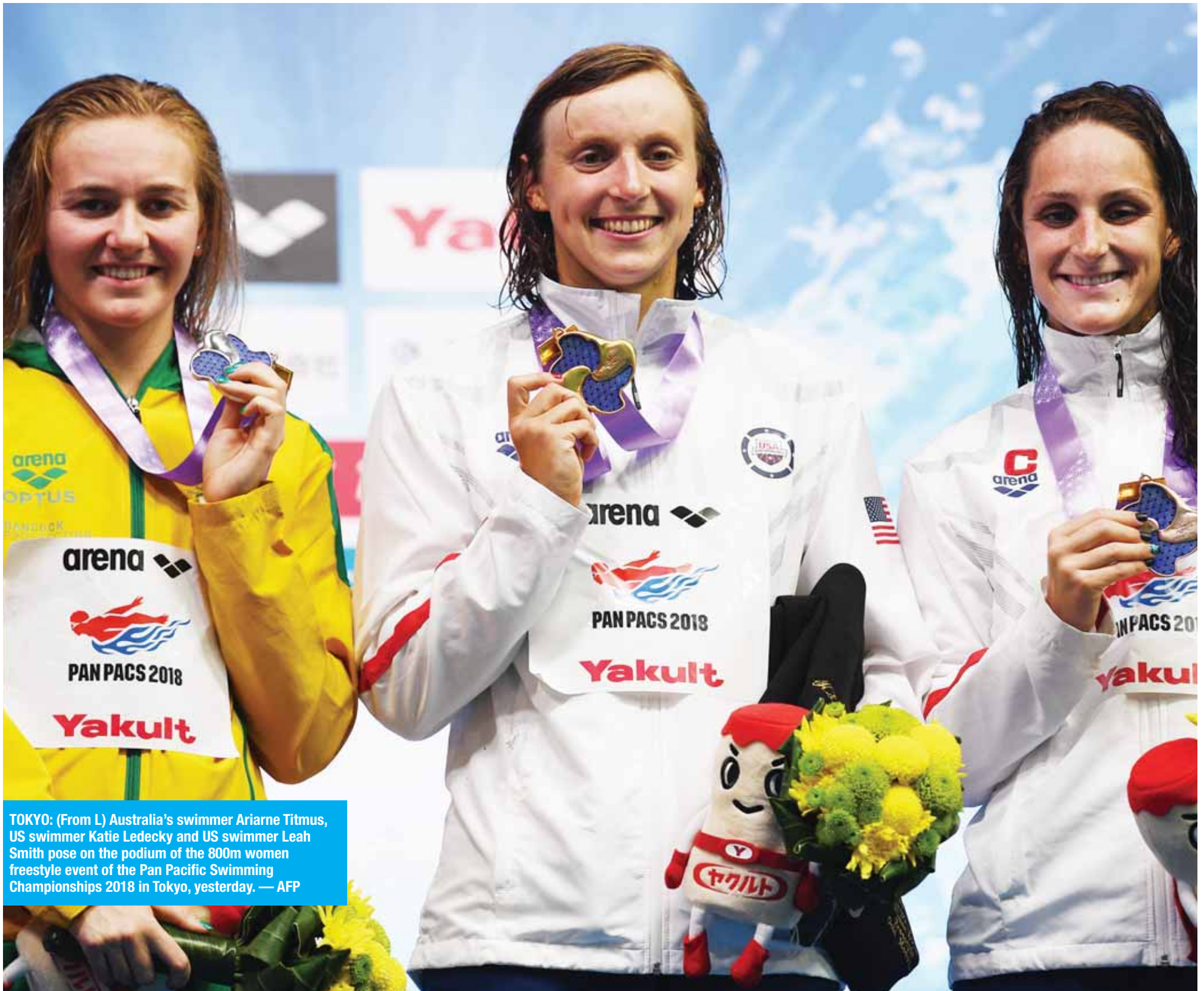
lation. "If you compare with Europe, you are at a complete disadvantage and it does not help the clubs in the Premier League," Pochettino said on Spurs' tour of the United States. "It's not going to help the Premier League clubs because we're going to compete in Europe and in the Champions League but have 20 days less." So far Tottenham's interest in Aston Villa midfielder Jack Grealish has been rebuffed with the Championship club holding out for a reported fee in excess of £30 million. — AFP

MATCHES ON TV LOCAL TIMING

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Man United v Leicester City
beIN SPORTS HD 2

22:00



TOKYO: (From L) Australia's swimmer Ariarne Titmus, US swimmer Katie Ledecky and US swimmer Leah Smith pose on the podium of the 800m women freestyle event of the Pan Pacific Swimming Championships 2018 in Tokyo, yesterday. — AFP

Mixed day for Ledecky at start of Pan Pacific championships

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